



CONSTITUTION

of

Parma Heights Baptist Church

Booklet contains an addendum
of Non-Constitutional items

CONSTITUTION OF
PARMA HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH
 Amended 12/11/2022

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PREAMBLE

We, the members of Parma Heights Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit.

We embrace wholeheartedly the following Articles of Faith:

1. The Bible was written by holy men of God; the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired and inerrant in the original writing and should be accepted in all doctrine. We further believe that the Bible is the supreme standard for all human conduct, creeds, and opinions (II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16, 17).
2. The Godhead exists in three equal persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and perfection, each executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption and plan of God (John 14:26; John 15:26).
3. Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man (Luke 1:35).
4. God created man in His image; man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Genesis 1:26,27). God wonderfully and immutably created each person male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Genesis 1:27, Deuteronomy 22:5).
5. The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sin as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; on the basis of His shed blood, we are justified by faith apart from human merit (II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8,9) and that our salvation is sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of His coming. (Ephesians 1:13,14; Ephesians 4:30)
6. The Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, was bodily resurrected, ascended into heaven, and in His present work is there for us as High Priest and Advocate (John 20:27; Acts 2:29-32; Hebrews 5:7-10, Hebrews 7:23-26; I John 2:1,2).
7. The "Blessed Hope" set before us is the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19, 20).
8. The bodily resurrection of man will bring everlasting blessedness to the righteous and everlasting damnation to those who have not been "born again" (John 3:7; John 5:28, 29; Matthew 25:46; I Corinthians 15).

9. Satan and the other evil beings are real personalities in rebellion against God, and are seeking to deceive all men (Matthew 4:10; Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:9).
10. The ordinances of the Church are: (1) water baptism (immersion) for believers (Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47, 48; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 28:19) and (2) the Lord's Supper for those walking in fellowship with Christ (I Corinthians 11:23-29).
11. Believers are to pattern their living after the life and teachings of Christ, and faithfully witness to all men (II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ezekiel 33:7-9).
12. We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are exclusively married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:18-25, Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19, Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16, Matthew 19:4-6, 9, Romans 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 15-20, 7:2-5, 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Hebrews 13:4, Jude 1:7).

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be Parma Heights Baptist Church, Parma Heights, Ohio.

ARTICLE II - STATEMENT OF MISSION

Our mission is to help people find and follow Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III - AFFILIATION AND GOVERNMENT

Parma Heights Baptist Church (PHBC) shall be democratic and autonomous. However, it shall maintain cooperation with and support of the North American Baptist Conference. It also recognizes that there are other churches and organizations which are a part of the body of Christ and may cooperate with them in matters with which it is in agreement.

We believe in the “congregational” form of church government. Hence, the government of PHBC shall be vested in the body of members who compose it. Specifically, the membership of this church shall have the sole authority to govern in the following areas as described in this constitution:

1. Calling of the Senior Pastor and all full time Pastoral Staff
2. Affirmation by vote of the Deacon leadership
3. Approval of the purchase or sale of any land or property
4. Approval of the church budget and any non-budgeted increases
5. Approval of major capital projects
6. Approval of Constitutional revisions

All other areas of authority will be the responsibility of the Board of Deacons; however, the day-to-day leadership and management of the church shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor.

Members of this church shall have no property rights and shall not be entitled to any interest in its assets. In the event of dissolution of this corporation, the real and personal property assets shall be conveyed to the North American Baptist Conference for use within the Great Lakes Association.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP - QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, followed by baptism by immersion, who subscribes to the Articles of Faith in the

Preamble and this Constitution, and is willing to enter into covenant with this church to help accomplish our mission and vision and will strive to reflect our Core Values, may be eligible for membership after completing the necessary admissions procedures by approval of the Deacons.

Members of this church commit themselves by the aid of the Holy Spirit . . .

1. To be faithful in all scriptural responsibilities essential to the Christian life in our daily walk:
 - a. To openly walk with Christ in all that we do.
 - b. To walk together in Christian love (John 15:12).
 - c. To exercise Christian care and concern for one another (Colossians 3:12-14).
 - d. To pray for one another, sharing burdens, sorrows, and joys (Ephesians 4:2; Galatians 6:2; James 5:16).
 - e. To be thoughtful and courteous to one another, to be slow to take offense, and to be quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31-32; Romans 12:15-19).
 - f. To guard the spiritual and scriptural purity, peace, and advancement of the church, and to promote a positive witness to the saving grace of God (I Timothy 5:22, 6:20,21; II Timothy 2:22-26).
 - g. To live our lives in such a way as not to bring discredit, disgrace or dishonor to our faith or our Lord, striving to live our lives before a watching world in a manner that is above reproach. (Colossians 3:5-14, James 1:22-25, I Thessalonians 5:11-22).
 - h. To bring up such children as may be entrusted to our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).
2. To faithfully attend services and scheduled business meetings (Hebrews 10:25).
3. To consistently support this ministry with tithes and love gifts (Malachi 3:10, II Corinthians 9:6-7).
4. To share our time, talents and spiritual gifts for the edification of the church and the fulfillment of our mission (Romans 12:6-8).
5. To share our faith with others that we may lead them to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; I Peter 3:15).
6. To live within the confines of biblical marriage and biblical human sexuality. The term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. To behave as God intends, sexual intimacy is to occur only between a man and a woman who are exclusively married to each other. To do what God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between one man and one woman. To refrain from any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior,

bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) which is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:18-25, Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19, Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16, Matthew 19:4-6, 9, Romans 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 15-20, 7:2-5, 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Hebrews 13:4, Jude 1:7).

7. To live as the gender you were born into, God wonderfully and immutably created each person male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:27, Deuteronomy 22:5)
8. To be faithful in following PHBC's Articles of Faith and standards of conduct.
9. To submit to the authority of the pastoral and deacon leadership of PHBC in matters of church discipline.

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DEACONS

Members of the church shall affirm by vote a Board of no less than ten Deacons (also referred to as Deacons or Board) who, with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff, will give spiritual guidance and leadership to the church.

Section 1 - General Provisions

Each Deacon will be affirmed to a term of three years, beginning July 1, with approximately one-third of the Deacons affirmed each year. After serving a full term, a deacon may be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee and re-affirmed by the church membership for an additional term. There shall be no term limits for the office of Deacon. The Board shall meet on a regular basis.

The spiritual qualifications for the Deacons shall be as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:3, and Titus 1:5-9, and they shall have exemplified a spirit of servanthood. Those affirmed shall be members of the church in good standing and have been observed in ministry involvement at PHBC for at least two years and shown themselves "above reproach and blameless" in agreement with 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, with evidence of sound marital and family relationships; have been consistent financial supporters of this ministry; and who teach or hold no doctrine contrary to the Articles of Faith as stated in the Preamble. They shall have demonstrated a faithful commitment to this church and faithful service in other ministries of this church.

Section 2 - Duties and Responsibilities of All Deacons

A. Shepherding

- 1) Praying for God's guidance and direction for the church, discerning God's will.
- 2) Leading and giving direction to the church (leading the flock), modeling Christ-like behavior; putting teaching into practice, setting an example.
- 3) Preaching/teaching the Word of God to the church (feeding the flock).
- 4) Caring for the church (carry the lambs, seek those who have strayed), praying for, encouraging, and visiting those with needs.
- 5) Protecting the church (protecting the flock from savage wolves);
- 6) Protecting from false teaching (maintaining doctrinal purity),
- 7) Dealing with sin and the discipline of members who have not upheld our Core Values.

B. Overseeing (as a father manages/cares for his family, so the Deacons manage and care for the church)

- 1) Ensuring that PHBC's mission and vision is supported and carried out by the ministries and ministry teams of the church.
- 2) Giving oversight and direction to the Finance Committee to fund our mission.

C. As Shepherds, they shall:

- 1) Jointly, with the Senior Pastor, give biblical direction and guidance to the church.
- 2) Devote time to prayer and study, and earnestly seek to discern the Holy Spirit's leading for the church.
- 3) Be responsive to the needs of the church and be responsible for maintaining harmony, unity, and encouragement in the faith.
- 4) Confirm that the teaching of God's Word is accurate and applicable.
- 5) Institute discipline when required to maintain a sound, healthy, spiritual church. On occasion, members of the church may conduct themselves in a manner contrary to biblical standards of conduct and the PHBC Articles of Faith. It shall be a high priority for the Church to restore such persons into conformity with fellowship. If biblical discipline is necessary, the Pastors or Deacon Board have the authority to place individual(s) under church discipline (including termination of membership), in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1 (See ARTICLE XI, Section 2B).

D. As Overseers, they shall

- 1) Annually approve formation or continuation of various Ministry Teams that work to accomplish our mission and vision and reflect our Core Values.

- 2) Annually approve the members on the Ministry Teams.
(Members of short-term committees organized or appointed for specific projects (e.g., planning a specific event) for specified periods of time do not require Deacon approval.)
- 3) Give guidance to and work with the various Ministry Teams towards accomplishing our mission and vision and reflecting our Core Values. It may overrule any decision of a Ministry Team or committee if it is in the best interest of the spiritual well-being of the church. The Chairman may assign a Deacon to any of the Ministry Teams, or committees for an annual term to attend meetings, give guidance and report their progress to the Board.
- 4) Review the annual goals of the ministry teams and give direction as necessary.
- 5) Approve the annual budget developed by the Finance Committee prior to presentation to the church membership.
- 6) Determine that appropriate written policies and procedures are in place for the church and approve those policies and procedures.
- 7) Select a search committee to fill vacancies for additional persons as required for the Pastoral Staff (ARTICLE XI, Section 7).
- 8) Make recommendations to the church membership on (1) buying or selling real property, (2) calling full- time Pastoral Staff (3) authorizing expenditures above or in addition to the annual budget and (4) any other business that they deem appropriate.
- 9) Administer the Benevolent Fund.
- 10) Interview candidates for membership and oversee the maintenance of an active membership roll.
- 11) Appoint task forces for special projects for specific periods of time.
- 12) Be responsible for administration of the ordinance of communion.
- 13) Appoint Deaconesses for an annual term as needed to:
 - a. Assist with communion and baptism.
 - b. Coordinate lunches for members who have lost immediate family members.
 - c. Extend hospitality to official guests.
 - d. Assist Deacons on membership interviews.
 - e. Assist Deacons where appropriate.
- 14) Act as the corporate officers of this corporation (See ARTICLE XI, Section 5).
- 15) Work with Pastoral Staff to supply the pulpit during an extended absence of the Senior Pastor.
- 16) Approve the times and days for regular, weekly corporate worship services.
- 17) The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Administrative Deacons whose terms will begin on July 1, will be selected from its members.

- 18) Be responsible for the consistent application and interpretation of this constitution.
- 19) Establish admission requirements for church membership and oversee execution of those requirements.

E. Special responsibilities and duties of the administrative deacons

A minimum of two Deacons from within the Deacon Board, gifted in administration, appointed by the Deacon Chairman, will oversee matters of administration, personnel and finance.

The Administrative Deacons shall:

- 1) Perform annual reviews of the Senior Pastor jointly with the Deacon Chairman and/or Vice Chairman.
- 2) Annually, review all Pastoral Staff with the Senior Pastor.
- 3) Determine Pastoral, Administrative, and Support staff salaries, benefits, and personnel policies. All salaries, benefits and personnel policies require approval of the Board Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- 4) Recommend to the Deacons additional persons required for the Pastoral Staff.
- 5) Approve and oversee the filling of vacancies or adding additional personnel for all positions.
- 6) Recommend to the Deacon Board the employment of Pastoral Staff to fill vacancies on an interim basis for a specified period of time. (Interim positions shall not require affirmation by the church membership.)
- 7) Support the Senior Pastor in overseeing church administration.
- 8) Appoint an audit committee (see ARTICLE IX - Section 1).
- 9) Be accountable to the Chairman of the Deacon Board and shall report their administrative activities at regularly scheduled Deacon Board meetings.

Section 3 - Termination

A Deacon may be terminated from office for any of the following reasons:

- A. He has missed two regularly scheduled meetings within a six-month period without good cause as determined by the Board.
- B. He has submitted his resignation in writing.
- C. His conduct (1) violates the spiritual qualifications as given in ARTICLE V, BOARD OF DEACONS, Section 1, General Provisions, or (2) he has failed in his Duties and Responsibilities as given in Section 2 - Duties and Responsibilities of All Deacons, or (3) his conduct violates the member qualifications and responsibilities as stated in ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP -

QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES impairing his ability to render responsible leadership. Termination in such instance will require a meeting of the Deacon Board with 80% present to constitute a quorum and a 75% majority vote required to terminate.

ARTICLE VI - SENIOR PASTOR AND PASTORAL STAFF

The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained minister of the North American Baptist Conference or properly credentialed by the same upon his call and meet the spiritual qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Acts 6:3. As the under shepherd, he shall have in his charge the spiritual welfare of the church, working in harmony with the Deacons and Pastoral Staff to cast vision and to give guidance and direction to the church in accomplishing the church mission. He shall have primary preaching responsibilities as well as oversee baptism and communion. The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of the Pastoral Staff and office/facility operations. The Senior Pastor, along with the Administrative Deacons, will perform the annual reviews of Pastoral Staff members.

The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Deacons and be an ex-officio member of the Deacon Board without voting rights. His term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time.

Pastoral Staff shall be called to maintain effective leadership in equipping the members of the church for ministry. The Senior Pastor and Deacons will assess the needs for adequate staff and recommend to the church membership such persons and responsibilities required to meet those needs. Each Pastoral Staff member shall have met the qualifications established by the Deacons and shall serve under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

Each Pastoral Staff member shall be accountable for managing the budget of their respective areas of ministry.

ARTICLE VII - MINISTRIES

Under the guidance of the Deacon Board, various Ministry Teams shall implement the church's mission and program. Each year, existing Ministry Teams and their members must be re-approved by the Deacon Board. As needed and pending an available Chairperson and willing workers, new Ministry Teams may be established by approval of the Deacon Board. Approval of Ministry Teams and membership will ideally occur during the months of June-August prior to the start of the programmatic year in September. Ministry Team Chairpersons and members must be members of the church. Pastoral Staff may serve as the Ministry Team Chairperson.

In the event that a Ministry Team Chairperson becomes vacant, the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Board will be responsible for finding a temporary or permanent leader for that Team.

- A. Each Ministry Team shall set annual goals, plans and strategies toward accomplishing the church's mission. All Ministry Team annual goals must be presented to and approved by the Deacon Board and have a clearly defined purpose that is directly related to our mission, Foundation and Core Values.
- B. The Chairperson shall be charged with the task of identifying willing and gifted workers for their team and helping to equip their team to accomplish the goals, plans and strategies of their Ministry Team.
- C. The Chairperson shall be responsible to manage any budget within his/her ministry.

ARTICLE VIII - CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

The Christian School Board (School Board) shall oversee the development and administration of Parma Heights Christian Academy (PHCA) and Sonshine Preschool (Sonshine). The School Board shall consist of five regular members and one additional financially-trained member. Each School Board member must be a member of the church and possess a heart for Christian Education. The financially-trained member shall possess adequate financial training or experience to provide financial oversight for both PHCA and Sonshine.

All regular members of the School Board shall be affirmed by vote of the church membership for a term of three years beginning July 1. After serving a full three-year term, a member may be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee and re-affirmed by the church membership for an additional term with no term limits. The financially-trained member shall be appointed annually by the Deacon Board effective July 1 with no limit on the number of one-year appointments. A Chairperson able to work in tandem with the Christian Schools Administrator shall be elected annually by School Board members at the first meeting after the affirming vote and may serve consecutive one-year terms.

Specific duties of the School Board include but are not limited to:

- 1) In regard to PHCA, setting policies and procedures that provide Christian Education, academic growth and development, primarily to Christian students in our community.
- 2) In regard to Sonshine, oversee the development, promotion and operation of this ministry as an outreach to our community.

With regard to both schools, the School Board shall:

- 1) Approve curriculum.
- 2) Provide oversight of finances including approval of an annual budget.
- 3) Approve the hiring of all personnel including the Sonshine Preschool Administrator. The hiring of the Christian Schools Administrator, permanent or interim, requires the additional approval of the Deacon Board.

The Sonshine Preschool Administrator reports to the Christian Schools Administrator who shall be accountable to the Christian School Board. The Christian School Board is accountable to the Deacon Board.

Annual financial budgets for both PHCA and Sonshine shall be submitted to the Finance Committee and Administrative Deacons for review and then to the Deacon Board for final approval. Regular financial reports shall be submitted to the Finance Committee and Administrative Deacons.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Audit Committee

The Administrative Deacons shall appoint an audit committee of three qualified persons who shall ensure that the management of finances is within the policies established in this constitution and proper accounting procedures. Audit scope shall include the Church, the Academy and the Preschool. No Finance Committee member or person involved with managing the church's finances may serve on the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee itself or an independent accounting firm shall examine and submit a written report detailing the financial condition of the church no less than every third year. The availability of the audit report shall be posted in the church bulletin and made available to church members for review in the church office.

Section 2 - Nominating Committee

A. General Provisions

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members affirmed by vote of the church membership for a term of three years, beginning July 1, with two members affirmed each year. The Deacons shall nominate candidates for the Committee. After serving a full term, Nominating Committee members may be re-nominated by the Deacon Board and be re-affirmed by the church membership for an additional term. There shall be no term limits.

It shall prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in determining the best-qualified candidates (incumbents or new), especially meeting the spiritual qualifications so described for each office, and present candidates, with approval of the Deacon Board and input by the Pastoral Staff, to the church in the Sunday bulletin one week prior to the Sunday designated for the affirming vote. For incumbents of all affirmed offices, there shall be no term limits. The committee shall fill such vacancies that occur throughout the year by appointment for the remaining portion of the year, until the next affirming vote. The part-year appointment will not be counted against future consecutive year service in that office. Any currently serving officeholder must be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee, re-approved by the Deacon Board and re-affirmed by the church membership prior to serving a second term. If the Nominating Committee is unable to fill all open positions, it shall continue searching the membership for a willing and qualified candidate. If a suitable candidate is found and approved by the Deacon Board with input by the Pastoral Staff, and there are more than 6 months until the affirming vote in May, the Nominating Committee shall hold a special affirming vote for the candidate. If a suitable candidate is found and approved as stated above and there is less than 6 months until an affirming vote, the Nominating Committee shall appoint the candidate to serve in the position as a full member until the next affirming vote. All positions affirmed by vote of the church membership, and part-year appointments, must be held by members of the church.

B. Nomination & Affirmation Procedures

The Nominating Committee shall secure names in writing from the church for positions to be affirmed by vote of the church membership. The Nominating Committee shall review and evaluate potential candidates in consultation with the Deacon Board and Pastoral Staff, prior to submitting the names to the church membership for affirmation. No nominations shall be taken from the floor. Each nominee must receive a majority of affirmative votes cast. Candidates for all offices must be affirmed by May 31. All terms will begin July 1. Deacons may only serve on standing Church Committees or Ministry Teams to which they are assigned as a Deacon Representative or to which they are appointed (e.g., Ministry teams or Finance Committee). However, Deacons may serve on temporary committees (e.g., Search, Constitutional Review) and as delegates to association and national meetings. Officeholders other than Deacons (e.g., Finance Member-at-large, Moderator, Nominating Committee) could serve on another Ministry Team or committee with Deacon Board approval.

Section 3 - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of a Chairperson and a minimum of two other members appointed annually by the Deacon Board. There shall

be no term limits for these annual appointments. The appointment should be made effective July 1. At least one Administrative Deacon shall also serve on the committee and is a voting member.

The Finance Committee is responsible to the Deacon Board and is accountable to the Chairman of the Deacon Board or designee. The designee cannot be the Administrative Deacon serving on the committee.

The Finance Committee will be responsible for:

1. Oversight of the church's finances, ensuring that income and expenses are in agreement with the approved budget and any policies established by the Deacons and the church membership.
2. Preparing the annual budget from recommendations of the ministry areas, and the Administrative Deacons, and submit it to the Deacons for approval. After approval by the Deacon Board, it shall present the proposed budget to the church membership for approval at the annual Regular Business Meeting.
3. It shall, in conjunction with the Pastoral Staff, manage the operating and capital budgets of the church, promote effective stewardship within the church, and receive and deposit all tithes and love gifts. It shall appoint a financial secretary to keep confidential giving records of each contributor.
4. It shall promote and invest endowment funds for the ministry and provide for counsel to the church for estate planning, bequests, and other financial matters related to giving.
5. The Finance Committee, by and through the Finance Manager, shall provide regular reports to the ministry teams, Pastoral Staff and to the Deacon Board, detailing income and expenditures.
6. The Finance Committee shall be responsible to ensure that recommendations made by the independent auditor or Audit Committee are implemented, and deficiencies, if any, are corrected.

ARTICLE X - AFFIRMED OFFICEHOLDERS

Section 1 - Moderator

A moderator shall be affirmed by vote of the church membership for an annual term with no term limits. The Moderator shall preside over the Regular and Special Business Meetings in an impartial and objective manner. The Moderator must be filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3; Galatians 5:22). In the temporary absence of the moderator, the Vice Chairman of the Deacons shall preside.

Section 2 – Church Secretary

A Church Secretary shall be affirmed by vote of the church membership for an annual term with no term limits. The Church Secretary shall keep the

minutes of all Regular and Special Business Meetings and establish the quorum through the church office for conducting business.

ARTICLE XI - BY-LAWS

Section 1 - Admission of Members

The following are prerequisites for church membership: (1) Confession of one's faith in Jesus Christ with evidence of personal salvation (2) baptism by immersion following a confession of faith, (3) subscribe to the Articles of Faith in the Preamble and the Constitution, (4) strive to reflect our Core Values and (5) completion of any other requirements for membership established by the Deacon Board.

Section 2 - Dismissal of Members

Any member may request withdrawal or be dismissed from the membership in one of the following methods:

A. LETTER of TRANSFER or WITHDRAWAL

Any member may request a letter of transfer to another church or withdraw from membership by making a written request to the Deacons.

B. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Should a member, by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct (Galatians 5:19-21), failure to adhere to the Articles of Faith and Membership guidelines, become an offense to the Gospel, promote discord (Titus 3:10), or injure the unity and effectiveness of the church, the Senior Pastor and the Deacons shall respond by making every effort to bring that member to reconciliation. The approach must be loving and redemptive. Opportunity shall be given to the member to present a defense. If reconciliation and restoration cannot be achieved, upon the action of the Deacon Board, that person's membership shall be terminated. The principle of Scripture in Matthew 18:15-17 will be applied.

C. INACTIVITY

Any member who has failed to participate in services of worship for a period of six months, except for illness, infirmity, absence from this area, or temporary employment in another area, shall be considered an inactive member. Inactive members shall not have voting rights, nor have voice, or hold an office. Inactive members that do not

respond to reasonable efforts to restore their member relationship after a period of one year shall have their membership terminated.

Section 3 - Membership Status

The Pastoral Staff shall semi-annually review the membership rolls and make recommendation to the Deacon Board to place each member in one of the five following categories:

1. Active Adult Resident Membership – Members 18 years of age and over living within a 100 mile radius of the church
2. Inactive Membership [see ARTICLE XI, Section 2C]
3. Non-Resident Membership – (e.g. temporary relocation, college students, missionaries etc.) those living outside a 100 mile radius of the church.
4. Children and Youth – Members under 18 years of age
5. Shut-ins – Members who are home bound or in nursing homes

Section 4 - Statement on Legal Disputes

Members of the church from time to time may have legal disputes with one another and/or with the church. Members are first encouraged to try to settle such disputes with an attitude of reconciliation. Lawsuits between believers and/or the church, or threats of lawsuits, are a matter of grave concern to the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Corinthians 6:1-7). Should a dispute still be unresolved and escalates, members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute to mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator.

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties.

Section 5 - Officers of the Corporation

The Deacon Board shall act as legal officers of the corporation in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio. It shall purchase or sell property only when ratified by members of the church. The officers of the corporation shall be the Chairman (president), Vice Chairman (vice president), and Secretary of the Board, and they shall have the authority to sign documents on behalf of the church.

Section 6 - Senior Pastor: Search, Calling & Termination

A. SEARCH COMMITTEE

When the Senior Pastorate becomes vacant, the church membership shall select a Search Committee totaling nine members (to include three Deacons) representing a proper cross-section of age, occupation, gender, and area of ministry. Church members may suggest names to be considered for the search committee. All names received in nomination will be reviewed by the Deacons, and nine candidates (including three Deacons) shall be recommended to the church membership for approval by majority vote. Each member must be filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3; Galatians 5:22). The Search Committee shall choose a Chairperson from those selected.

B. CALLING

When the Senior Pastorate is vacant, the Senior Pastor Search Committee will survey the church to discern the qualities desired in the pastoral candidate. It shall investigate the merits of each applicant and, after approval by the Deacons, shall present a candidate to the church membership for extending a call as the Senior Pastor. A Special Business Meeting shall be held for this purpose with such notice being given no less than ten days prior to the time of meeting both from the pulpit and through written notice. A 75% majority of the votes cast by the church membership shall be required to extend a call. Voting shall be by written ballot.

C. TERMINATION

- 1) Initiated by Senior Pastor: The professional relationship between the Senior Pastor and the church may be terminated by written notice to the Chairman of the Deacons pursuant to timelines stipulated in the Personnel and Policy Manual.
- 2) Initiated by Deacon Board: After objective and serious deliberation, the Deacon Board may take action to terminate. This action will require a meeting of the Deacon Board with 80% present to constitute a quorum and a 75% majority vote required to terminate. The termination shall be immediate.
- 3) During the vacancy of the Senior Pastorate, an Interim Senior Pastor shall be appointed by the Deacon Board to assume appropriate interim responsibilities.

Section 7 - Calling & Termination of Pastoral Staff

The Deacons and Pastoral Staff shall recommend to the church

membership positions and candidates for additional full-time Pastoral Staff to give adequate leadership to the church's ministry. A Special Business Meeting shall be called when the Search Committee (see ARTICLE V, Section 2D, Item 7), after approval by the Deacons, is prepared to present such a candidate to the church membership with notice given from the pulpit at least ten days prior to the meeting time. A 75% majority vote shall be required to extend a call. Pastoral Staff members shall serve for an indefinite period. Termination of their service shall follow the process from Section 6C, Item 2 above.

Section 8 – Worship

Weekly worship services shall be held each Sunday and on other days as approved by the Deacons. Hours of worship shall also be approved by the Deacon Board. No business shall be transacted by the church or any group during such worship services. Communion shall be observed at least every other month.

Section 9 - Finances

Necessary finances for conducting the ministry of this church shall be obtained from tithes and offerings of members and friends. Even though budgets are adopted, the church will not expend more than its income for its general operation. This does not preclude specially financed capital projects as the church membership may approve. Any special fund-raising for specific projects by various groups must be approved by the Deacons.

Section 10 - Business Meetings

A. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

One annual business meeting shall be held no later than three weeks prior to the end of the fiscal year for the purpose of adopting the annual budget and any other needed business.

B. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Deacons, Senior Pastor, or 15% of the active, adult, resident membership, provided that notice shall be given ten days in advance from the pulpit and shall state the purpose and nature of the business to be transacted. No business other than that stated can be conducted during that session. No business shall be transacted other than at a meeting as prescribed by this constitution.

C. QUORUM

The presence of 10% of the active, adult resident membership (see ARTICLE XI, Section 3, Item 1) shall constitute a quorum for transacting any business at any Regular or Special Business Meeting. The number for the quorum shall be determined by the Church Office. Absentee ballots can be secured by active adult resident church members from the Church Office ahead of the meeting. Absentee ballots will not count toward a quorum. Absentee ballots will be counted unless the motion to which they apply has been changed or amended.

Section 11 - Rules of Order

Christian conduct (Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 14:40) shall be the guideline for conducting the business of the church.

The Moderator shall judge the nature of any matter under discussion and shall have the liberty to refer a matter back to the Deacon Board for further study.

Only active church members (Adult and Youth) shall have the right of voice at a business meeting. Only active adult resident members shall have the right to vote.

Section 12 - Amendments

Any proposed amendment to this constitution must be recommended by the Deacons and affirmed by vote by the church membership at any regular or specially called meeting provided that notice shall be given two Sundays prior to the meeting date in the church bulletin and from the pulpit. Printed copies of the proposed changes must also be available to the membership two Sundays prior to the meeting date with copies mailed to members upon request. Amendments will require a 66.7% majority of affirmative votes for adoption.

Section 13 - Delegates to Annual Meetings

The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Chairman of the Deacon Board, shall appoint a minimum of two delegates to represent its constituency at association and national meetings. These delegates shall act in accordance with the direction of the church.

Section 14 - Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures shall be established regarding various activities and ministries. They will not be listed as part of this constitution but will be established by action of the Deacon Board.

Non-Constitutional Items

Our Mission

Helping People Find and Follow Jesus Christ

We strive to be a church with a desire to fulfill the Great Commands and the Great Commission of Christ. These commands and commission are summarized as:

- *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37)*
- *“Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39)*
- *“Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)*

If we truly love God, we will obey him. Therefore, we seek to go into our world and make disciples. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a follower of Jesus and requires a relationship and commitment. Hence, we seek to help people come to know Jesus (i.e., to “find him”) and to make a life-changing and life-long commitment to him (i.e., follow him).

All that we do as a church has its roots in this mission and is reflected in the following Foundation and Values statements.

Our Foundation

Our relationship with God, based on faith in Jesus Christ, is important above all else and is the foundation for all that we are and do. It is a personal, growing, intimate, love relationship with Jesus Christ. He is our Lord, Savior, and Friend and we long to know him, serve him, and glorify him daily. Because of our relationship with him, we hold strongly the following values:

Our Core Values

These things we highly value:

God’s word is our guide

We value God’s word as the inspired and divine revelation of God’s plan and truth for all people of all ages. It is in and through the Bible, guided by the Holy Spirit, that we learn about and meet Jesus Christ. It is the basis and only authority for living a holy life acceptable to God and demands our total obedience. (II Timothy 3:14-17; Colossians 3:16)

Prayer

We believe that through prayer we are given the strength, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s purposes. We also communicate with our loving Father to confess our sins and express our thanks, praise, concerns, fears and needs. (Philippians 4:6, 7; Matthew 7:7, 8; James 1:5, 6; Luke 19:46)

Commitment to personal holiness

We believe that we were created to honor and glorify God daily in all that we do. We believe that our life honors God best when it reflects the life and character of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. We believe this life can only be lived through the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. As believers, we value a lifestyle that seeks personal holiness, purity and integrity in a life fully surrendered and devoted to God. (I Peter 1:15, 16; II Peter 3:11; Romans 12:1, 2)

Christ-reflecting relationships between believers

We believe as we relate to one another as members of a family with openness, honesty, acceptance, love and forgiveness that we can become a God-honoring community. We value relationships of love, care, encouragement, fellowship and accountability that help each of us to grow to be more Christ-like. (I Corinthians 12:12-27; John. 15:17; Romans 12:9-21)

Redemptive relationships with non-believers (Outreach)

We believe God loves everyone and desires a personal love relationship with each one of us. It is God's plan that each believer has been given a ministry of loving, caring and sharing with non-believers in our community and around the world with the hope of bringing them into a love relationship with God. (John 13:35; Matthew 19:19; Matthew 22:39; Luke 6:27-35 36; II Corinthians 5:18, 19; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 9:19, 22, 23)

Meaningful worship

We believe that worship is our response to the nature and awesome character of God, an expression of our love and reverence to Him. It is to exalt Jesus Christ and focus on God, not ourselves. Its form should be meaningful and relevant in the sense that people of all ages and backgrounds should be able to participate in a way that expresses their love and adoration to God. (John 4:21-24; Psalm 100; Matthew 22:37, 38; Matthew 28:17; Revelation 4; I Chronicles 16:28, 29)

Biblical View of Marriage

From the Bible we believe . . .

That God's intention for marriage is established throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

This is expressed in creation and the creation story, the Law of Moses, the wisdom literature, and in the prophetic tradition. The Divine establishment of marriage is confirmed by the words of Jesus and the New Testament authors. They provide guidance for perfecting marriage, and affirm its spiritual significance. Chaste singleness and marriage are both honored as

faithful and holy lifestyles ordained by God.

That God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman.

Our creation as man and woman, who are complementary to one another, has significance in revealing aspects of the image of God and His relationship to humanity. The permanence of the marital bond mirrors God's faithfulness, just as its monogamy reflects God's singular devotion to His people and His people's singular devotion to Him.

That sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage.

The commands of God are clear. Sexual activity profoundly affects people emotionally and spiritually. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage, promiscuity, common law relationships, adultery, homosexual acts, exploitation, incest and sexual perversion contradict God's purpose for human sexuality.

That marriage is more than a contract between two persons: It is a covenant before God.

God is committed to every marriage between a man and a woman. In the covenant of marriage, God joins a man and a woman together "in one flesh," and forbids anyone to break it. This covenant is unique among human relationships. God intends the married couple to recognize and celebrate His call to an irrevocable commitment to love, to cherish and remain faithful which transcends the quid pro quo of contracts.

That in Christian marriage, the Church acts as an agent of God's blessing, as a primary witness and as a supportive community.

The church declares the blessing of God but does not create that benefit. Therefore the church cannot confer the spiritual blessing of marriage on other relationships.

That a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children.

The practical benefits of marriage are inherent to its form. A healthy marriage is a unique source of benefits for children including the stability of the family and the access of children to a mother and a father. God intended that children should receive nurture from male and female parents, and in turn learn to honor both. Neither the church nor anyone else can confer the innate benefits of marriage or other forms of relationships or unions.

Every believer is a "gifted" minister

We believe that every believer is a minister called to serve with excellence. We value working together and using our spiritual gifts to accomplish God's work to the best of our ability. I Corinthians 12:4-31; Romans 12:3-8; I

Peter 4:10, Colossians 3:17; II Corinthians 5:15

Every believer is a steward

We believe we are stewards and not owners of all we have, including our spiritual gifts, abilities, time and possessions. As stewards who will be held accountable, it is our responsibility to be found faithful in using wisely and giving generously of all that has been entrusted to us. (I Corinthians 4:2; I Corinthians 4:1-5; II Corinthians 8:1-7; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 6:19-21)

Unchanging message, culturally relevant methods

We believe that the message and beliefs of the church never change, but methodologies will. Our methods in outreach, worship, teaching and serving must be relevant to our culture while remaining true to God's Word. (Matthew 24:35; II Timothy 4:2-4)