

Bylaws of Vida Springs Church

These Bylaws are being adopted this 9th day of March, 2016 by the unanimous written consent of the Board of Directors, hereafter referred to as “Board of Overseers”, of the Corporation, hereafter referred to as the “church,” and these Bylaws will continue in full force and effect until modified or altered by the Board of Overseers.

ARTICLE I

AFFIRMATION OF BIBLE BELIEFS

Introduction

We believe that true Christian unity only comes about by holding to the “whole counsel of God,” rather than simply trying to find a few things upon which we can agree. At the same time, we do not claim to be perfect in this affirmation of our beliefs. While they are communicated imperfectly, this document represents our best understanding of the teachings of the Bible and we believe these truths passionately. They are the grounds of our unity.

At the core of our beliefs is the good news of Jesus Christ—the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ was crucified and raised from the dead so that sinful people would trust in Jesus and be reconciled to God. This gospel is our primary passion and the driving influence in preaching, worship, small groups, prayer, and church planting. We hold to the absolute truth found in the Bible and, thus, we turn to the Bible on every area of what we believe, how we live, and how we participate in church life together. We believe that local churches are to be the primary means of inviting people to Jesus, making mature disciples, equipping people to serve, learning to worship, and planting new churches. All of this is done through local churches as is outlined in the Bible, so that people of all ages, cultures, and ethnicities will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, being saved from their sins and reconciled to God.

The Bible

We believe the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament, is the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God’s self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Bible is both fully and verbally inspired by God, and is without error in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. It is totally sufficient and must not be added to or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or culture. Every belief, lifestyle, and practice must be put to the test of the truth of God in the Bible, to determine whether it is true or false, right or wrong. We are to approach the Bible with humility and prayer as we seek to understand and rightly apply the Bible in our lives, staying true to the historical context and intentions of the original authors.¹

The Trinity

We believe in one God: infinite, eternal, glorious, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal,

¹ Deut. 4:1-2; Matt. 5:17-20; Lk. 1:1-4; Jn. 3:31-36; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Rev. 22:18-19

co-eternal—each is fully God. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.²

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth. By his Word and for his glory, he created the universe and everything in it from nothing. Through the same Word he daily sustains all his creation. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be stopped. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him and, in his wonderful grace, gave his Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sin. He made us for relationship with himself and created all things to exist for his glory.³

God the Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He is the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. He lived his life in human flesh, perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He has always been with God and is God. Through him all things were created and came into being. He was before all things and in him all things are held together by the word of his power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in him the fullness of God dwells bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world and, having shed his blood, he died a substitutionary death on the cross. By his death in our place, he revealed God's love and upheld God's justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, on the third day he rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness, and for a period of 40 days appeared to more than 500 eye-witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of his resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, he intercedes for his people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of his body, the Church, and is to be worshiped, adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.⁴

God the Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel he works to bring people to repentance and faith in Jesus. By the work of the Holy Spirit a person is regenerated, born again, made new by grace through faith. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about this new birth, and dwells within those who believe. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit as our Helper and Counselor and we are to be responsive to the Holy Spirit's daily leading in our personal lives and in the church. He empowers believers to follow Jesus as authentic disciples and gives spiritual gifts for the purpose of doing his works and proclaiming his word. He leads the church in right understanding and right application of the truth of the Bible. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God the Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity.⁵

Mankind

We believe that God made Mankind—male and female—in his own image, as the crown of creation, for relationship with him. Tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve rebelled against God and fell into sin and darkness. Because of their sin and the separation it caused from God, all have inherited a sinful nature,

² Gen. 1:1-2; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6-8; Jn. 1:1-5; Jn. 17:1-5

³ Gen. 1-2; Heb 1:3; Ps. 19; Isa. 40:9-31; Jn. 3:16-21; Rom. 11:33-36

⁴ Isa. 52:13-53:12; Jn. 1:1-5, 14-18; Jn. 10:22-30; Jn. 19-20; Acts 10:34-43; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Gal. 4:4-8; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-23; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1

⁵ Matt. 28:18-19; Lk. 12:11-12; Jn. 3:5-8; Jn. 7:37-39; Jn. 14:15-31; Jn. 16:4-15; Acts 1:4-5; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; Tit. 3:5

have become subject to God's wrath, and are utterly incapable of returning to God. Apart from the saving work of God to rescue, all live under the dominion of sin and death and evil—separated from God forever. All people, whatever their circumstance, are subject to sin and, thus, have no hope of eternal life without God's act of salvation in Jesus Christ.⁶

The Gospel

We believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is the good news of God revealed in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. The gospel makes this joyful and amazing assertion: Jesus came to save us from our sins. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God where Jesus bore our sins on the cross and died in our place, satisfying the demands of God's perfect justice and turning away his holy wrath. It also demonstrates his love and reveals his all-surpassing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which we must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that sinful people, saved by grace, are reconciled to God because of what Jesus has accomplished.⁷

Election

We believe that God acted before creation in choosing some people to be saved. This was not because of any goodness or merit foreseen in them, but simply in his good pleasure and by his sovereign choice. Those who have been appointed for salvation will respond to his irresistible grace, turn from sin, and believe when the effective call of God comes to them through the human preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Regeneration is the work of God in which he gives new spiritual life to the elect who were dead in sin and, thus, they repent and receive faith in Jesus and the salvation given by grace through the cross.⁸

Our Response

We believe that our response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely turn from their sins and, by God's grace, trust in Jesus. Because we do not know who the elect are, we declare the gospel of grace to all people, longing that they would come to Jesus and be saved. Those who are genuinely regenerated will live their life for Jesus, growing in Christian maturity and will persevere in following Jesus to the end of their days.⁹

Salvation

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God provided by grace alone through faith. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and trusting Jesus and his substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Jesus is imputed and the person is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God the Father and receives adoption as a son or daughter. The believer is forgiven the debt of sin and, through the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit. Biblical salvation is characterized by continual progress and growth in Christian

⁶ Gen. 1:26-31; Gen. 3; Gen. 5:1-2; Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 5:12-14; Eph. 2:1-3; Jas. 2:10; Jas. 3:9

⁷ Jn. 1:11-13; Jn. 6:35-40; Acts 2:38-41; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; Gal. 3:1-9

⁸ Jn. 6:35-40; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:8-9

⁹ Matt. 28:16-20; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:6-11; Acts 2:37-41; Rom. 10:14-15

maturity, lived out in love, devotion and service to Jesus and his people, the church.¹⁰

Sanctification

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce his character in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though Christians continue to struggle with sin in this life, the Spirit of God leads us as we grow in knowledge and maturity, learning to live for Jesus in a way that honors him. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their words and actions in this life. The spiritual disciplines, especially studying the Bible and applying it to our lives, prayer, worship and confession, are vital for our maturity and transformation. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in God's promise to preserve his people throughout this life and to the end.¹¹

Empowered by the Spirit

We believe that in addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to invite others to Jesus and for daily Christian service. Upon salvation the Holy Spirit indwells all believers. In addition, there is an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit after conversion that may occur from time to time throughout a Christian's life. The Holy Spirit empowers believers, imparts his spiritual gifts for the building up of the church and the work of disciple making, and gives assurance of our adoption as sons and daughters. Believers should desire to be full of the Holy Spirit and to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, cooperating with him in obedience as he carries out his work. In addition, Christians are to earnestly desire spiritual gifts so that we may serve others and be effective in the work that Jesus has given to his church.¹²

The Church

We believe that Jesus builds his church, calling sinful people from all nations into relationship with himself and with one another. The church is not simply a religious institution or a human organization. Rather, the church universal is made up of all those who have been saved by Jesus throughout the generations and have become genuine followers of Jesus. The church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve him by declaring his word and faithfully doing his work throughout the earth. The mission of the church is to make disciples for Jesus through the preaching of the gospel and the planting of healthy local churches. When God saves people, they are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to Bible teaching, genuine relationship, serving, giving, worship, and prayer. Jesus intends that all Christians be a vital and committed part of a specific local church.¹³

Jesus appoints pastors and overseer/elders of local churches to do the job of equipping members of the church to works of service so that each Christian and the whole church grows to full maturity. These pastors and overseer/elders are chosen by existing, proven overseers as the Holy Spirit leads from among the faithful Christian men and they are to give their lives to care for the church that Jesus died to save. In the context of this loving leadership in the local church, new disciples are added to the local church as Jesus saves them and all of the believers are cared for and mature as followers of

¹⁰ Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 5; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Gal. 3:23-29; Eph. 2:1-10; Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 4:9-10

¹¹ Jn. 6:40; Rom. 6:15-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 3:12-18; Phil. 3:12-16; Tit. 2:11-14; Jas. 1:22-25; 1 Pet. 1:13-25; 1 Jn. 2:1-6

¹² Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 1:4-5; 1:8; 2:1-4; 4:31; 6:3; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 16:6; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 5:18-19

¹³ Matt. 16:18; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 2:11-22; Eph. 4:1-16; Col. 1:15-18

Jesus.¹⁴

Baptism

We believe in baptism as an ordinance of the church for every believer after they have come to repentance and faith in Jesus. They are immersed in water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a public confession that they have been saved by Jesus and a demonstration that their old, sinful life has been buried with Christ. They come out of the water as Jesus rose from the dead to new life. It is also a sign that the person being baptized has been cleansed of their sin through faith in the work of Jesus on the cross. Baptism is an act of obedience done in faith by each person after they have been saved by grace.¹⁵

The Lord's Supper

We believe in the Lord's Supper as an ordinance of the church, like baptism, to be observed by those who have genuine faith in Jesus. The bread and the cup symbolize the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian's life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Jesus, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Jesus' church.¹⁶

The Return of Jesus

We believe that at the end of all things there will be a visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ. At that time, all who have died will rise from the dead. All will stand before Jesus at the final judgment to give an account of their life. Satan with his hosts and all those apart from Jesus will endure eternal punishment and misery. Then will come the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth where those saved by Jesus shall live and reign with him forever in resurrected bodies. Believers will have unspeakable joy in the presence of God forever, serving him and giving him unending worship and glory.¹⁷

Our Values

Truth. In an age where many do not believe in absolute Truth, we hold to the Bible in all that it teaches as the very Word of God. So we study and teach the Bible carefully, striving to live out the Truth in our daily lives. We speak this Truth in love and gentleness to those who do not believe it and seek to avoid being argumentative about our beliefs.

Following Jesus. Being a Christian is not just about attending a church. Our intent is to be people who believe Jesus' words, hold to his teaching, and live in obedience to Him. Because he loved us and gave his life to save us from our sins, we want nothing more than to live our entire lives following him and telling others of his love.

Worship. God is the only one worthy of worship and we were made to worship Him. Because of all that Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross, we love Him and want to sing of his excellence,

¹⁴ Matt. 20:25-28; Acts 14:21-23; Acts 20:17-38; Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 13:7; 17; 1 Pet. 5:1-5

¹⁵ Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 10:44-48; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal 3:27; Col. 2:12-13

¹⁶ Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11:17-34

¹⁷ Matt. 25:31-46; Jn. 14:1-3; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 9:27-28; 2 Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 21

beauty, and grace. We sing our songs to God in awe of Him and experience the wonder of his presence in the midst of the church.

Small Groups. To grow as disciples in a church, Christians need a smaller context beyond the larger gathering of a Sunday service. The Bible lays out this model in the book of Acts. We gather in small groups during the week to apply the Bible to our lives, pray together, and enjoy new friendships.

Prayer. Prayer is a primary way that we cooperate with Jesus in his work and stay in close relationship with him. We spend time with him in prayer and know that he hears us. We pray to him alone and we pray when the church is gathered. We pray for each other and we present our needs in prayer, thanking him for everything he has done.

Multi-Ethnic. We are a church committed to love and unity among people of many cultures, races, and nations together in Christ. Our command from Jesus is to reach “all nations” with the gospel so we seek to heal the wounds caused by the sin of racism and division. The church best represents Jesus’ intention when made up of every race and ethnicity in one unified family.

Multi-Generational. People of all ages are needed to build a healthy church. We have a specific passion to reach university students, but a biblical church also reaches grandparents, families, young professionals, youth, and children. This is the Bible’s model and all generations are essential for effective, disciple-making churches.

Relationship. A biblical church is made up of people who grow in real, loving friendship that is lived out in unity of purpose. We need each other and help one another as we grow to maturity in Jesus. In healthy churches, people enjoy following Jesus together and constantly make new friendships as Jesus adds people to His church.

Leadership. Jesus gives leaders to equip, instruct, encourage, and protect His church. Without leadership the church is ineffective. We are careful that our pastors and leaders are trustworthy and meet the Bible’s qualifications. Because of this, we are able to follow them with trust and confidence as we serve Jesus together.

Church Size. Churches can get too large to most effectively do the work of relational disciple making. We do not attempt to grow mega-churches or do multiple campuses. We believe the ideal size for a relational local church may be under 1,000 people.

Church Planting. Local churches are the primary means of making disciples for Jesus. Thus, we constantly train church planting pastors, worship leaders, and planting teams to start new churches in other cities. Biblical missions are best lived out through sending new churches where the gospel is preached and people become authentic Jesus followers.

Mercy. God extended mercy to us when Jesus died for our sin to rescue us. Because of this, we extend mercy to others who want to know Jesus and experience his forgiveness. Jesus has taught us to forgive others as we have been forgiven by him. The church is to be a place of healing, restoration, freedom, and new life.

We also believe that the Apostle’s and the Nicene Creeds embody the fundamental facts of Christian faith,

and we endorse these historic orthodox creeds of the Christian Church:

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*The use of catholic here literally means “universal.”

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, holy catholic [universal] church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The church exists in order to carry out the purposes as stated in the Articles of Incorporation and all of said purposes are hereby incorporated in the Bylaws by reference.

The purpose of the church is to make disciples for Jesus who grow to maturity, commit to membership in His church, are equipped to serve others, and learn to worship the Living God.

No part of the net earnings [church giving] of the church will inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its Members, Board of Overseers, Elders, Trustees, Officers, or other private persons, except that the church will be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein. No substantial part of the activities of the church will be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the church will not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the church will not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a church exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by a church, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Upon the dissolution of the church, the Board of Overseers will, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the church, dispose of remaining assets in the following manner: All assets will be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or will be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of will be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court will determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE III

GENERAL

This church is and will remain an independent organization, but it may associate with other organized entities.

All activities will forward this purpose of making disciples and building up a healthy local church.

The Board of Overseers governs the church, in accordance with the provisions of Article V. All Members, Overseers, Pastors, staff members, and other persons acting on behalf of the church, or at the request of the church, will abide by these Bylaws.

All contributions will be used to carry out the purpose of the church. Budgeting and spending resources will be the responsibility of the Board of Overseers.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a local church is a Biblical issue. The Bible is clear that every genuine Christian ought to be devoted in a specific local church, living out Bible truths in a genuine and winsome manner. In Acts 2:42-47, we see the life and practices of some of the earliest Christians, right after Jesus saved them, living out their new faith in the community of the church. "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...and all the believers were

together...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved". It is normal for all Christians to be a committed member of Jesus' church. We are referred to as Christ's body (Eph. 4:12), his people (1 Peter 2:9), his family (2 Cor. 6:18), and his house (1 Peter 2:5). The Bible says, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). To become a devoted member of a local church is the calling of every Christian, willingly and joyfully following Jesus and learning to obey his commands in the midst of genuine relationships and loving leadership.

The membership of this church is open to any person who has been saved by and confesses faith in Jesus Christ, who is living a life and holds to beliefs consistent with the Bible, who is willing and able to be in healthy relationship with others, and who completes the following process for membership:

1. Be baptized as a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Complete Series classes and Membership Bible Training.
3. Make a membership commitment by completing and signing a Membership Form.
4. Meet with a pastor for membership approval and to discuss your Christian growth.
5. Be received into the church at a team meeting.

The commitments made by our members on the Membership Form are as follows:

1. Remain faithful to our Affirmation of Bible Beliefs and Values.
2. Attend a Sunday Service and a Small Group consistently.
3. Serve others in at least one area at your local church and attend the monthly Team Meeting.
4. Tithe consistently to support your local church and give generous offerings as you desire.
5. Follow the leadership of the Pastors and Overseers under the provisions of our by-laws.

The church office will maintain a list of current Members. This list may be reviewed and updated at any time by the Board of Overseers. The overseers reserve the right to deny membership to anyone who is unwilling to follow the biblical commitments outlined above. The overseers may also remove anyone from membership who does not continue in good faith to live out their membership commitments. Loving, patient, and reasonable effort will be made to help members who are struggling with keeping their commitment, before removing them from membership, if they are still in regular attendance at the church.

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

Members are not entitled to vote. Decision making regarding beliefs, programs, leadership, direction, and plans of the church are the responsibility of the staff pastors and the Board of Overseers.

Members of the church have the privilege of having weddings conducted by our pastors and in our facilities as provided for in the guidelines available in writing at the church office. We do not lease or loan our facility to other individuals or organizations for their use; the needs for the facility for our own church services and activities (and for the use of members for weddings and funerals) will not allow us to accommodate other needs.

Marriage is ordained by God in the Bible for the joy and blessing of those who choose to enter the marriage

covenant. From the very beginning of the Bible, God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18). The chapter goes on, “So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man....Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:21-22;24-25). The Bible clearly indicates that marriage is intended to be between one man and one woman, created by God and born male and female, for as long as they both live. Jesus affirmed the same things: “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6).

Members may ask one of our pastors to participate by officiating at their wedding. We take very seriously the responsibility of being able to confidently affirm the promise and potential of a healthy marriage in weddings where our pastors officiate. In cases where neither person is a member of the church, we will gently decline. We reserve the right, for any reason, to decline officiating over a wedding.

Members also have the privilege of having funerals conducted by our pastors in our facilities. Our pastors will conduct funerals for the deceased who were 1) professed believers in Jesus Christ, and 2) regular attenders of our church, or 3) family members of regular attenders. Our pastors will conduct funerals for those who do not fall into the above three categories at a funeral home or other venue, but not in our church facilities. We reserve the right, for any reason, to decline officiating over a funeral.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS AND LEADERSHIP

The leadership of the church is based on the authority of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Bible. The Board of Overseers consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and any others chosen by the President and ratified by the board. Overseers serve under the President of the Board, who is also to function as the Lead Pastor of the church. The Board is the governing body of the church and is responsible for matters of administration/finances (i.e., financing & budgets, buying or leasing of facility, maintenance, contract negotiations, etc.), beliefs/doctrine, leadership/hiring staff, and church discipline when necessary. Meetings are held quarterly (or as needed) to consider and make decisions on any issues presented by the Lead Pastor and/or other overseers. The Board of Overseers has authority to amend the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and any policy of the church as needed.

Members of the Board of Overseers are appointed by the President (hereafter referred to as Lead Pastor) and the appointment must be ratified by a unanimous agreement of the board. For new churches, the sending church board will appoint a temporary board of existing overseers, until such time as we can identify, train, and release local overseers. When at least 2 local overseers have been appointed, in addition to the Lead Pastor, the governing of the new church will be turned over to the local board. The Board of Overseers will not be more than 8 or less than 3 members. While there may be exceptions, the goal is that the Board will be made up of at least 2 members not supported full-time by the local church. Potential board members must be members of the church and meet the Biblical requirements of an overseer in order to be appointed to the Board (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 & Acts 20:17-38). In addition, they

must not be family members of the Lead Pastor, other existing board members, or of the church bookkeeper. Each new overseer will initially serve in this role for one year, and then may continue indefinitely after the initial year at the request of the Lead Pastor with ratification of the Board. A vacancy on the board because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, will be filled by appointment of the Lead Pastor and ratified by the Board of Overseers. If at any time the Board does not unanimously agree on the appointment of a new board member, the person will not be on the Board until such time as there is agreement.

As the church grows and the needs of the board change, there may need to be changes in board members for the effective functioning of the board. Should this become necessary, board members should be willing to resign and allow others to serve as needed. This is also true in cases where changes in the life circumstances of a faithful board member do not any longer allow them to continue functioning effectively (such as work schedule, health, family needs, conflicts of interest, etc.). We assume that these changes would be mutually agreed upon by all board members. In rare cases, a board member may need to be removed. Grounds for removal include: departure from the Affirmation of Bible Beliefs and Values as set forth in these Bylaws, breach of other provisions of these Bylaws, departure from Biblical lifestyle, and failure to faithfully fulfill the duties of an overseer. Any board member may be removed by the unanimous agreement of the rest of the board.

The President of the Board (Lead Pastor) may be removed from this position by the following provision:

1. Grounds for removal of the Lead Pastor include: departure from the Affirmation of Bible Beliefs and Values as set forth in these Bylaws, breach of other provisions of these Bylaws, departure from Biblical lifestyle; and failure to faithfully fulfill the duties of a Lead Pastor.
2. In the event that the Board unanimously agrees for removal of the Lead Pastor, the final decision will be made (including all but the Lead Pastor). Additional counsel for the local board may be obtained from other pastors, as needed.
3. If the entire Board concur that the Lead Pastor should terminate his leadership of the church, the Lead Pastor will resign, or be terminated.
4. In the event that the local Board is not in unanimous agreement on the removal of the Lead Pastor, no decision shall be made. Every effort will be made to help the Lead Pastor and local board to be in unity and, if the Lead Pastor must be removed, to make provision for healing and resolving the issues behind the disqualification. Removal of the Lead Pastor may also include revoking his ordination and/or placing him under church discipline.

A new Lead Pastor will be appointed by the unanimous choice of the remaining Board Members.

The Board oversees the business of the church under the leadership of the Lead Pastor. Subject to limitations of the Articles of Incorporation and other sections of the Bylaws all authority of the church is exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Overseers and the affairs of the church will be led by the Board which has the following authority:

- a. To identify pastors and overseers and to appoint staff members to serve the church.

- b. To appoint a Contracts Team that is led by the Lead Pastor with other non-staff overseers and any others as appointed by the board, to fix compensation, approve contracts, and decide job responsibilities. In the case of the Lead Pastor's contract, the Board will consult an outside party of their choosing. No pastor or staff member will be involved in setting their own salary or benefits.
- c. To conduct, manage, and control the affairs of the church, and to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with laws, the Articles of Incorporation, or the Bylaws.
- d. To borrow money, and incur indebtedness for the purpose of the church and for that purpose to be executed and delivered, in the church's name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, pledges, or other evidence of debt and securities.
- e. The Board of Overseers may authorize anyone they choose to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the church and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent or other person will have any power or authority to bind the church by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

While most meetings will occur in person, some may be held by telephone, email, or video, so long as all Members of the Board of Overseers participating in the meeting are involved in the communication. In such cases, all Board Members will be counted as present in person at the meeting. All decisions made by the Board in person or by email, telephone, or video will be documented in minutes by the secretary and approved at the next board meeting.

The Board of Overseers will receive no compensation for their services as Members of the Board specifically. The Board Members may be compensated for other services actually rendered to the church such as pastoring, teaching, leading, administrating, etc.

It is anticipated that Board Members will make decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible the Lead Pastor will allow time to prayerfully consider the issues in an effort to yet reach consensus. In unusual cases where the board is unable to reach consensus, overseers agree to delay the decision until consensus is possible.

ARTICLE VI

PROPERTY

All property purchased by the church will be held in the name of the church. All funds received by the church will be held in an account of the church. No property will be distributed to overseers or staff members or church members (unless of insignificant value). As a general rule, unused property will be sold for reasonable value or donated to another church or charity.

ARTICLE VII

INDEMNIFICATION OF OVERSEERS AND STAFF

The church indemnifies each of its Pastors, Board Members, and Staff against reasonable expenses, judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any proceeding, event, or decision arising out of the fact any such person is or was a Pastor, Member of the Board of Overseers or Officer of the Church and will advance to such person expenses incurred in defending any such proceeding to the maximum extent permitted by such laws provided such proceeding, event or decision was lawful and in accordance with the By-laws and Affirmation of Bible Beliefs and Values of the Church. The Board of Overseers may in its discretion provide by resolution for such indemnification of, or advance of expenses to, other representatives of the church.

ARTICLE VIII

ORDINATION

God calls and ordains men for service as pastors in his church. The calling of a pastor is not the result of a title; rather, the title is a result of his calling. It is the privilege of the overseers of the church to ratify the ordination of God when it is obviously placed on a man's life. The purpose of this Article is to provide for the ordination of pastors in the church.

The qualifications for ordination are as follows:

- a. Be a baptized follower of Jesus Christ.
- b. Be in agreement with the church's Affirmation of Bible Beliefs and Values.
- c. Be in unity with the Vision and Goals of the church.
- d. Meet the Bible's requirements for the office of Elder/Overseer as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- e. Have a track record of obedience to Jesus and effective ministry that confirms a call to be a pastor.

The procedure for ordination is as follows:

The Lead Pastor will recommend candidates for ordination to the Board of Overseers for ratification. This will, in most cases, be done in conjunction with a decision to bring the person on staff as a full-time pastor. When hiring pastoral staff, the Board of Overseers may choose to require a probationary period before the actual ordination takes place. Ordination will take place in a gathering of the leaders and/or members of the church.

Ordination may be revoked by the following procedure:

A pastor may be removed and have the ordination revoked if he falls into doctrinal error or moral failure. Depending on the nature of the offense, the overseers could alternatively decide on disciplinary action with hope of restoration, as decided by the Board of Overseers. Either course of action requires that reasonable due process be given the pastor, as agreed upon by the Board of Overseers.

The Lead Pastor and Board of Overseers must unanimously agree for the removal and revocation of a

pastor's ordination. If they also agree that the action is necessary, the pastor will be removed immediately and his ordination revoked. The Board of Overseers may choose to offer severance pay as they feel appropriate.

ARTICLE IX

MISCELLANEOUS

The church keeps in its principal office the original or a copy of its Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and board minutes, as amended to date, certified by the Secretary/Treasurer. These records are available to board members for review upon request.

It is the policy of this church under these bylaws that any church participant who is so identified by the Board of Overseers as a regular attender and/or giver whether or not officially on the membership roll, will be subject to the Lead Pastor and Board of Overseers, and consents to be bound by all provisions of these Bylaws and policies as set by the pastoral staff or the Board. Anyone who is disruptive, divisive, or repeatedly causes relational division and conflict, who shows no evidence of repentance or reasonable effort to repair or remedy the harm being done, whether or not a member, will be asked to no longer attend the church or participate in any church activities (Titus 3:10-11).

All disciplinary actions are considered to be the responsibility of the overseers and will be carried out under the Bylaws in keeping with the clear teaching of the Bible. Due process will be provided to any Participant to be heard by the overseers and/or a special Disciplinary Board appointed by the overseers either orally or in writing at the time and place set by the overseers and/or Disciplinary Board prior to any disciplinary action.

ARTICLE X

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The principal office of the church is located at 2925 NW 39th Ave, Gainesville, FL, 32605.

Bylaws adopted on March 9, 2016.

Amended on January 7, 2025.