

# **The Constitution of** ***Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church***

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## **Preface**

This document is intended to serve a legal, a practical and a spiritual function. Legally, it enables Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church, to comply with federal and state regulations regarding the establishment and use of corporate by-laws. Practically, it is an attempt to define, regulate and provide guidance for the business affairs of the corporation. Spiritually, it is provided to explain our understanding of how the church should be governed and guided according to Scripture, God's Holy Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. Spiritually then, insofar as its present form accurately reflects the truth of Scripture in these matters, it also provides protection from straying toward unbiblical standards or unbiblical forms of church government.

The intention of the framers of this constitution was to have its guidelines and contents in complete conformity with the standard of God's Word. The intention of any revision of this document should always be to ensure that it is only changed in such a way that it more clearly brings itself into line with the standard of Scripture. God's Word is the final authority for all matters of life, doctrine and practice. We recognize that all men are fallible, and that therefore, all man-made documents are potentially fallible. Where it is determined that the contents of this constitution are either unclear or not consistent with biblical truth, the Bible should be held as the final authority and arbiter of what is right. In other words, this man-made document is not to be held sacred in any way, or held as a higher authority than God's Word itself.

## **Article I – Name**

The name of this Corporation is Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. It is a New Hampshire nonprofit religious Corporation with its principal offices in Plainfield, New Hampshire.

## **Article II – Purpose**

This Corporation is organized exclusively for religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to church ministry, as defined by Scripture) and is dedicated to worship and service by believers to the glory of God. Its mission is summarized as follows:

We exist to worship Jesus Christ, edify believers, and evangelize unbelievers, as instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20).

## **Article III – Corporate Membership**

### ***Section 1 – Members of the Corporation***

In this section, “members of the corporation” refers to the legally designated responsible parties according to the laws of the state of New Hampshire. Members of this Corporation shall consist of the elders of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. Thus, any action, which, under New Hampshire law, would otherwise require approval by a majority of all church members, shall only require approval of the elders. All rights and responsibilities, which would otherwise vest in the church members, shall vest in the elders. This legal distinction is consistent with the biblical model of a plurality of elders leading and governing the church (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1).

### ***Section 2 – Members of the Church***

Nothing contained in Section 1 of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of the Corporation to refer to persons associated with the corporation as “church members” even though such persons are not members of the corporation.

The members of this Corporation may confer by amendment of this Constitution some or all of the rights of a member as set forth in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Corporation Law, upon any person or persons.

## **Article IV – Church Membership**

### ***Section 1 – Church Membership***

In the New Testament a distinction is made between those who joined themselves to the church, and those who remained apart from it (Acts 5:13; 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13). Some kind of formal church membership in the early church can, therefore, be inferred from a number of passages in the New Testament. There are statements in Scripture that imply that the early church leaders at least generally accounted for those who were numbered among them (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7).

Maintaining a formal membership accomplishes at least three purposes. First, it is one means the leadership uses to guard the flock from error. We will know at the very least that individuals who have joined with us in the ministry of this local church understand, believe, and have professed loyalty to the gospel. Second, it provides the new member a forum to declare publicly their intention to join in ministry and mutual accountability with the body. Third, it provides the leadership a forum to publicly affirm their conviction that the new member has professed salvation, and is personally devoted to Jesus Christ.

Church membership in Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church shall be open to all persons who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who have been baptized by immersion. These persons, who have applied for church membership and have been duly accepted, shall constitute a body, united for purposes set forth in Article II of this Constitution (see Acts 2:36-41).

### ***Section 2 – Responsibilities of Church Members***

Church members shall promote the philosophy and ministry of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church (Romans 15:5-6), participate regularly in the corporate worship of this church (Acts 2:42), support this ministry prayerfully and financially (2 Corinthians 9:5-8), exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body (Ephesians 4:15-16) and willingly submit to the biblical oversight of the elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17; Heb. 13:17).

### ***Section 3 – Applications for Church Membership***

Requests for church membership shall be made to a pastor, elder, deacon or member of the church staff. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for church membership.

A pastor, or elder shall then meet with the applicant. In the presence of an elder, the applicant shall testify of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and shall subscribe to the church's Statement of Faith, ("*What We Believe*") and Constitution. They must also attend a membership class and/or read and understand the material presented in said class.

### ***Section 4 – Admission of Applicants***

Applicants admitted to church membership must have been in attendance and under the pastoral care of the elders of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church for a six-month period. Applicants admitted to church membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the pastor-teacher and elders. At this service, applicants shall publicly affirm their church membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as church members.

### ***Section 5 – Denial of Church Membership***

If, upon review of an application for church membership or after meeting with a prospective church member, the elders determine the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior or there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, church membership shall be denied. The decision made by the elders shall be final, and there shall be no appeal to any court regarding the decision.

### ***Section 6 – Voting***

Church membership shall not vest in any church member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the church member to vote at meetings of the church members on those matters submitted to the church membership by the elders. Voting privileges are restricted to church members who are at least (16) years of age. The elders should take care and caution to proceed consistently with the provisions of Article VI, Section 5 of this constitution, taking the opinions of the

congregation into account. However, no result of any vote of the membership of the church shall obligate the elders to decide a matter according to the result of said vote.

### ***Section 7 – Reproof and Restoration***

The purpose of reproofing and restoring a person who errs is to bring about a return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1), to maintain purity in the local church (I Corinthians 5:6) and to deter sin (I Timothy 5:20).

Persons who err in doctrine or conduct shall be subject to dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before dismissal, however, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. It shall be the duty of any person in the church who has knowledge of the erring person's heresy or misconduct to warn and to correct the erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
2. If the erring person does not heed this warning, the warning person shall again go to the erring person, accompanied by one or two witnesses, to warn and correct the erring person, seeking repentance and restoration.
3. If the erring person still refuses to heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the elders. The elders, upon careful and prayerful consideration, shall inform the church. If the erring person is an elder himself, he would be disqualified from serving in that capacity at this point, which is consistent with I Timothy 3:1-7, 5:20, Titus 1:5-9, and Article VI, sections 2 and 8.
4. If the erring person refuses to heed the warning of the elders and the church, the erring person shall be publicly dismissed from the church.

It is understood this process will continue to conclusion whether the erring person leaves the church or seeks to withdraw from church membership. If after dismissal the person heeds the warning, repents,

demonstrates repentance and requests reinstatement, he or she shall be publicly restored to the church membership.

### ***Section 8 – Removal from Church Membership***

A church member who shall be absent, without plausible reason or excuse, from the services of this church for a period of one (1) year shall be removed from church membership at the discretion of the elders.

## **Article V – Church Membership Meetings**

### ***Section 1 – Regular Meetings***

A regular annual meeting of the church members shall be held at the meeting place of the church in June of each year. At the regular annual meeting, church members shall hear and/or receive written reports of the affairs of the Corporation and transact any business the elders determine shall be brought before the meeting. Presentation of those who shall serve as elders, deacons and deaconesses for the ensuing year shall be made at the meeting.

### ***Section 2 – Special Meetings***

Special meetings of the church membership may be called at any time by the pastor-teacher, by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, or by the elders.

### ***Section 3 – Notice of Meetings***

Notice of the regular annual meeting of the church membership shall be given from the pulpit and shall be published in the church bulletin for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall also be published in the church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting.

## ***Section 4 – Quorum***

At all meetings of the church membership, whether regular or special, the church members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **Article VI – Elders**

### ***Section 1 – Number of Elders***

The authorized number of elders shall be not less than three (3) nor more than twenty (20).

### ***Section 2 – Qualifications***

Each elder must be a church member and possess the qualifications described in Scripture.

*It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of an overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (I Timothy 3:1-7 – NASB)*

*Namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the*

*teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:6-9 – NASB)*

### ***Section 3 – Nomination, Selection, Affirmation and Service***

- A. In keeping with the example of the early church in Acts, chapter 6, those chosen to serve the church in a leadership capacity should be identified and affirmed by the congregation and the current leadership. In the early church those men were identified only as circumstances arose that made it necessary to fill an existing need. When the need arises to replace or add men to the existing elder board, recommendations to fill the office of elder shall be requested from all church members. A Nominating Council consisting of not less than five (5) church members shall be appointed by the elders, who will also designate a chairman of the council. This council shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. Nominees should be men who are qualified biblically (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), who have proven gifts for teaching and shepherding, and who have a desire to serve in this capacity. Members of the Nominating Council may be nominees, but no council member shall nominate himself.
- B. A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Council shall be submitted to the pastor and other staff members designated by the elders for their review and comment. Upon receiving their comments, the Nominating Council shall submit the slate of nominees (which may be revised) to the elders, along with any relevant comments. The elders shall then approve, disapprove, add to, or subtract from the list of nominees.
- C. Annually the Secretary shall publish the list of any possible nominees, together with the names of those presently serving as a pastor or elder, all of whom shall have been previously approved by the elders. This list must be published at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting of the church members. During this four-week period, any church member having a concern about the character, the giftedness, or the calling of a particular nominee, present pastor, or board member shall first speak privately with that individual concerning his sin (in keeping with Matthew 18:15), or their lack of gifts or calling; if the concern is not resolved, the member shall speak with the nominee in the presence of one or two witnesses,

elders if possible and appropriate (consistent with Matthew 18:16); if still unresolved, the matter shall then be brought before all the elders and the elders will resolve the matter (consistent with the provisions of Article IV, section 7, if it is a pattern of sin, or prayerfully applying biblical wisdom if it is a matter of discerning his gifts or calling).

- D. At the annual meeting of the church members, those men whom the elders have unanimously agreed to appoint to serve as elders and pastors, shall be presented to the church membership. At that time the church members present will publicly affirm, through a verbal affirmation, their approval of those men.
- E. A newly appointed elder will come forward, either at this meeting, or at another designated meeting of the church, in order to be publicly commissioned through the “laying on of hands” by the present elders (Acts 6:6; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 5:22). He shall assume office immediately and faithfully serve the people for the duration of his ministry. That duration will be until he no longer desires the office (I Timothy 3:1), until he becomes biblically unqualified to serve (see section 2 above), or until he becomes physically or mentally unable to fulfill his duties and responsibilities as an elder (see also Article VI, section 8).

#### ***Section 4 – Biblical Responsibilities***

Elders, pastors, and overseers are to concern themselves primarily with the spiritual well being of the flock. They are especially responsible for:

- A. Shepherding the flock (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:5).
- B. Teaching and exhorting the flock (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:11-13).
- C. Managing God’s Church and ruling well (I Timothy 3:5, 5:17).
- D. Being examples to the flock (I Peter 5:3).
- E. Standing up for truth, refuting those who oppose truth and confronting those who teach contrary to truth (Titus 1:9, 11).
- F. Visiting those in need (James 1:27).

G. Protecting the flock of God (Acts 20:29-31).

H. Leading the flock to walk in a worthy manner (Ephesians 4:1-3).

### ***Section 5 – Church Membership Involvement***

In the execution of their responsibilities and in keeping with their role as shepherds of the flock, the elders shall diligently seek the counsel of the church membership through personal interaction, open forums, councils and other ministry teams on all matters under their consideration.

### ***Section 6 – Administrative Responsibilities***

The elders of the church constitute the legislative body of the church. They pass all resolutions binding upon the Corporation in accordance with Article VI, Section 5. Neither they nor the church membership shall have any equity in the real property of the Corporation. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

Subject to limitations of the Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and pertinent restrictions of the Corporation code of the State of New Hampshire and all the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the elders, including the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. To appoint and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, staff and employees of the Corporation, to prescribe such duties for them consistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation or with this Constitution and to fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- B. To authorize disbursements from the funds and properties of the Corporation as are required to fulfill the purpose of this Corporation as set out in the Articles of Incorporation; to conduct, manage and control the activities and affairs of the Corporation; and to make such rules and regulations consistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution.
- C. To adopt and use a corporate seal and to alter the form of the seal if and when necessary.

- D. To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of this Corporation.
- E. To assist in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- F. To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose of the Corporation and to cause to be executed and delivered, in the corporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations or other evidences of debt and securities.
- G. To carry on business and apply such profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage.

### ***Section 7 – Vacancies***

An elder may resign immediately following written notice to the Chairman or the Secretary unless the notice specifies a later resignation date. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected before that time following the process described in Article VI, Section 3.

A vacancy or vacancies shall exist in case of the death, resignation or removal of an elder or if a need exists and the specified limit is not exceeded.

No reduction of the maximum number of elders, given in Article VI, section 1, shall have the effect of removing any elder from office.

### ***Section 8 – Removal of Elders***

Any elder will be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated or biblically unqualified (I Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9).

### ***Section 9 – Time and Place of Meetings***

Any meeting (whether regular, special or adjourned) of the elders may be held at any place.

Regular meetings of the elders shall be held without call or notice on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, unless otherwise modified by the elders. Meetings shall be open to church members except where a need for confidentiality may require them to be closed.

### ***Section 10 – Special Meetings***

A special meeting of the elders can be called at any time by any elder or group of elders. Notice of special meetings shall be given to each elder at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of meeting. Where all elders agree on time and location, a special meeting may be called immediately, waiving the 24-hour notice.

### ***Section 11 – Quorum***

Except as otherwise provided, a majority of the elders currently authorized to serve shall constitute a quorum.

Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a pastor or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the elders currently authorized to serve.

Except as the Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law may provide, the unanimous act or decision of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the elders as a whole.

### ***Section 12 – Participation Without Attendance***

Elders may participate in a meeting through the use of conference calls or similar communication equipment, as long as all members participating in the meeting can hear one another.

### ***Section 13 – Adjournment***

The elders, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn an elders' meeting to another time and place. Notice of the time and place of holding a reconvened meeting shall be given prior to the time of the reconvened meeting to the elders who were not present at the time of the adjournment.

## ***Section 14 – Action Without Meeting***

Any required or permitted action may be taken without a meeting if all the elders shall individually consent in writing to a duly prepared resolution. This consent shall have the same effect as a unanimous vote of the elders and shall be documented by the signed resolution.

## ***Section 15 – Conduct of Meetings***

Meetings shall be conducted according to scriptural principles as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8. After prayerful consideration, decisions shall be reached by unanimous vote in a spirit of unity and humility, with each elder regarding the others before himself.

## ***Section 16 – Rights of Inspection***

Every elder shall have the right to inspect all books, records and documents as well as the physical properties of the Corporation for a purpose reasonably related to his responsibilities as an elder.

## ***Section 17 – Compensation***

Elders shall not receive compensation for their services as elders. However, elders may serve in another capacity and receive compensation. Indemnification is not considered compensation.

Any persons receiving compensation directly or indirectly from this Corporation shall not participate in any action to determine the nature or amount of the compensation.

# **Article VII – Officers of the Corporation**

## ***Section 1 – Officers***

The officers of the Corporation shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer. These officers shall be members of the Corporation. Other officers, who shall not be officers of the Corporation,

may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of this article.

### ***Section 2 – Selection***

The officers of the Corporation, except officers appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of this Article, shall be chosen annually as needed by the elders at the first meeting of the elders following the annual meeting of the church members. Each officer shall hold his office until he resigns, is removed, becomes otherwise disqualified to serve or until his successor is qualified and appointed by the elders.

### ***Section 3 – The Chairman***

The Chairman, subject to the direction of the elders, shall have general supervision and oversight of the activities and officers of the Corporation and shall act in all legal matters pertaining to the Corporation. He shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

### ***Section 4 – Vice Chairman***

In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall perform all the duties of the Chairman. He shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions placed upon the Chairman. The Vice-Chairman shall also have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

### ***Section 5 – Secretary***

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office of the Corporation, a book of minutes of all meetings of the membership and meetings of the elders and its ministry teams. These minutes shall include the time and place of holding, whether regular or special (if special, how authorized and the notice given), the names of those present at the meetings and the proceedings, as well as a record of any actions taken without a meeting. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Corporation the original and a copy of the Corporation's Article of Incorporation and Constitution, as amended.

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Corporation, a current list of all church members with their addresses and phone numbers.

The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the church membership, elders and councils or committees as required by the Constitution, shall keep the seal of the Corporation in safe custody and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

### ***Section 6 – Treasurer***

The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation.

The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the elders. He shall disburse or arrange for the disbursement of the funds of the Corporation as may be directed by the elders, shall render to the elders, whenever they request it, an account of all transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders. He shall present financial reports at each regular meeting of the elders and at the annual meeting of the church members.

The Treasurer shall not be a member of the Pastoral Staff nor shall he be financially remunerated by the Corporation for his services.

### ***Section 7 – Inability to Act***

In the absence or inability of any officer of the Corporation to fulfill the responsibilities of their office, the elders may delegate the corporate or administrative responsibilities of the officer to any other church member whom the elders may select.

## ***Section 8 – Resignation and Removal***

An officer may resign at any time without prejudice to the rights of the Corporation under any contract to which the officer is a party, by giving written notice to the elders, to the Chairman or to the Secretary of the Corporation. The resignation shall take effect on the date the notice is received or at a specified later time. The acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

An officer may be removed by the remainder of the elders at any regular or special meeting of the elders.

## ***Section 9 – Vacancies***

A vacancy in an office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the Constitution. The vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis.

# **Article VIII – Deacons and Deaconesses**

## ***Section 1 – Deacons***

A. Deacons shall be church members who possess the qualifications described in Scripture:

*Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach... Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons, obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13 – NASB)*

The elders shall assign responsibilities for service to the deacons as the needs of the congregation require, enabling the elders to focus their attention on the spiritual affairs of the church. This is intended to follow

a pattern established in Acts 6:1-4. There are three primary responsibilities.

*Managing the Finances.* The deacons will prepare a preliminary annual budget for review by the elders before it is submitted to the congregation one month prior to the annual meeting of the church. In addition, they will monitor revenue and expenditures during the course of the year.

*Maintaining the Physical Plant.* This includes maintenance of the grounds, maintenance of the equipment and the facility, repairs and improvements for the facility, and regular upkeep of the facility.

*Assisting the Elders.* Particularly in areas that have financial or facility related issues, the elders may rely on the deacons for input and policy-making decisions.

## ***Section 2 – Deaconesses***

A. Deaconesses shall be church members who possess the qualifications described in Scripture:

*Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:11 – NASB)*

B. They shall prepare the communion elements, assist at baptismal services, aid in the general spiritual care of the church in ways consistent with their biblically defined role (1 Timothy 2:9-12; Titus 2:3-5), aid in the care of the sick and needy and perform other duties as determined by the elders.

## ***Section 3 – Nomination, Selection, Affirmation and Service***

The nomination, selection and tenure of office of deacons and deaconesses shall be the same as for elders, as set forth in Article VI, Section 3, of this Constitution.

## ***Section 4 – Vacancies***

The elders shall determine the number of deacons and deaconesses to be appointed. If during the period between annual meetings a vacancy

occurs among the deacons or deaconesses, the elders may fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

## **Article IX – Councils and Ministry Teams**

### ***Section 1 – Purpose***

To assure effective participation in all decisions by the church members, the elders may appoint various councils and ministry teams, which shall perform tasks specifically designated by the elders. These councils and ministry teams shall have general responsibility to:

- A. Provide a wider base of counsel to the elders concerning specific church ministries by reflecting the needs and desires of the members of the church.
- B. Bring recommendations to the elders thereby serving as the principal source of operation-level direction of specific church ministries.

### ***Section 2 – Formation and Limitations***

Councils and Ministry teams shall exist for the period of time specified by the elders. A council or ministry team shall be composed of at least two church members, one being an elder, and have powers and duties as the elders delegate to it, with the following exceptions:

- A. The approval of any action for which the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law also requires church membership approval (must be approved by the elders as a whole).
- B. The filling of vacancies in any office.
- C. The amendment, repeal or adoption of a new Constitution.
- D. The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the elders.
- E. The appointment of other councils or ministry teams composed of the elders or the membership.

### ***Section 3 – Meetings***

Unless the elders or the council or ministry teams shall otherwise provide, the regular and special meetings and other actions of a council or ministry team shall be governed by the provision of the Article applicable to meetings and actions of the elders. Minutes shall be kept of each meeting of each council or ministry team and maintained by the Secretary of the Corporation (Article VII, Section 5).

## **Article X – The Pastor-Teacher**

### ***Section 1 – Selection and Tenure***

The pastor-teacher shall be selected by the elders in accordance with Article VI, Section 5. He shall be responsible to the elders and shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time.

### ***Section 2 – Duties***

The pastor-teacher shall be responsible for all public and regular services of the church and for the general oversight and spiritual welfare of the church.

### ***Section 3 – Resignation or Dismissal***

The elders reserve the right to dismiss the pastor-teacher upon giving him one month's written notice. In doing so, the provisions of Article VI, Section 5, shall be exercised to the extent practical.

The pastor-teacher must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a pastor-teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the pastor-teacher and the elders, by mutual agreement, provide otherwise. Dismissal may be immediate and without the pastor-teacher's consent in the case of biblical disqualifications (I Timothy 5:17-22 – see Article VI, Section 8).

## **Article XI – Ordination, Licensing and Commissioning**

### ***Section 1 – Ordination***

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd and qualifications to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

### ***Section 2 – Licensing***

Licensing is issued by the elders and is given in recognition of a man's call to the ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church.

### ***Section 3 – Commissioning***

Commissioning is issued by the elders and is given in recognition of a person's call to the ministry. Its aim is to allow a person to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church within the sphere of his or her ministry.

## **Article XII – Receipt, Investment and Disbursement of Funds**

### ***Section 1 – Receipts***

The Corporation shall receive all moneys or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the Corporation was formed. However, nothing contained herein shall require the elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind, which the elders deem will not be prudent.

## ***Section 2 – Investments and Disbursements***

The Corporation shall hold, manage and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of this Corporation.

## **Article XIII – Corporate Records and Reports**

The Corporation shall maintain accounts, books and records of its business and properties. All books, records and accounts shall be kept at its principal office.

## **Article XIV – Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, the elders shall cause the assets to be distributed to another Corporation with purposes similar to those identified in Article II of this Constitution.

## **Article XV – Other Provisions**

### ***Section 1 – Endorsement of Documents and Contracts***

The elders, except as the Constitution otherwise provides, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or agreement, to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, contract, conveyance or other instrument in writing and any assignment or endorsement executed or entered into between this Corporation and any other person, when signed jointly by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and the Secretary and the Treasurer of this Corporation, shall be valid and binding on this Corporation in the

absence of actual knowledge on the part of the other person that the signing officers had no authority to execute the same.

### ***Section 2 – Instruments in Writing***

All checks, drafts, demands for money, notes and written contracts of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, as the elders may designate.

### ***Section 3 – Representation of Shares of Other Corporations***

The Chairman or any other officer of officers authorized by the elders are each authorized to vote, represent and exercise on behalf of the Corporation all rights incident to any and all shares of any other corporation or corporations standing in the name of the Corporation. The authority herein granted may be exercised either by the designated officer in person or by another person authorized to do so in proxy or power of attorney duly executed by the designated officer.

### ***Section 4 – Construction and Definitions***

Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions contained in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Corporation Law and in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law shall govern the construction of this Constitution.

### ***Section 5 – Amendments***

This Constitution may be amended or the elders may make a new Constitution at any time. Prior to the adoption of such changes, the elders shall notify the church members of the nature and purpose of the proposed changes and provide a period of at least 15 days for receiving comments from the members. Changes made to the Constitution shall be communicated to the church members at the annual meeting or at a special meeting.

### ***Section 6 – Record of Amendments***

Whenever an amendment or new Constitution is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Constitution, in the appropriate place. If any portion of this Constitution is repealed, the fact

or repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted shall be stated in the book of minutes.