

The Church of the Resurrection



~ Foundational Documents ~

Statement of Faith (Constitution)

Church Bylaws

Commitment to Relationship

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Our Statement of Faith

Article I. Our Mission Statement

- In the best way that we can...
- 1. TO KNOW God truly and experience Him intimately;
 - 2. TO GROW together as a reconciled community in relationship with Jesus and each other;
 - 3. TO SHOW God's love to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit through the words and works of Jesus.

The Church of the Resurrection exists to create a communal culture that is defined not only by its institutional or denominational life but by its missional life; not only by how it satisfies the needs of its members but by how it serves the needs of others, particularly the poor and the persecuted; not only by what it asks members to do for the church missions programs, but by what it asks members we can do to help them to realize their personal vision and mission for the stewardship of their lives and resources for God’s world. We want to be a community whose ecclesiology of the Church (what we are as a church) will be shaped and determined by our missiology (how we serve God’s world).

Article II. What we believe...

Section 2.01 Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures embodied by the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed. We believe that it reveals for all peoples His character and purposes, that it is a lighted lamp to guide the feet of a lost world from the depths of sin and sorrow to the heights of righteousness and glory; a sharp two-edged sword to convict of sin and evil doing; a strong cord of love and tenderness to draw the penitent to Christ Jesus; a balm of Gilead, inbreathed by the Holy Spirit that can heal and quicken each drooping heart; the only true ground of Christian fellowship and unity; the loving call of an infinitely loving God; the divine, supreme and eternal tribunal by whose standards all men, nations, creeds, and motives shall be tried. (cf. *Ps. 119:59-60, Ps. 119:105, Is.8:20, Mt. 5:18; Mt. 24:35, Jn. 5:39, Jn. 16:12-13, Acts 17:11, Eph. 6:17, Phil. 1:9-11, Phil. 3:16, 1 Thess. 5:21, 2 Tim. 2:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12, 2 Pet. 1:19-2, 2 Pet. 1:19-21, 1 Jn.4:1, 1 Jn.4:6, Jude 3*)

Section 2.02 The Godhead

We believe in one true and living God who is the Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three Persons are coexistent, coeternal, and coequal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the work of redeeming a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory that He has graciously purposed from eternity. (cf. *Gen. 1:1, Dt. 6:4, Is. 43:10-11, Mt. 28:19, Jn. 17:11, 2 Cor. 5:17, 2 Cor. 13:14, 1 Jn. 4:16, 1 Jn. 5:7*)

(a) The Person and work of the Father

We believe that God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth, the source of all that is good. By His Word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing. Through the same Word He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in His unfathomable grace gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory. (cf. *Ex. 33:20, Ps. 145:13, Dan. 4:3, Jn. 1:1-3, Jn. 3:16, 1 Cor. 8:6*)

(b) The Person and work of Jesus

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the promised Messiah to all men and women, and the only begotten Son of God, who was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross under Pontius Pilate. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, 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 witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of His physical

resurrection by which our justification is made sure. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry as Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. We believe Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all. (cf. *Job 38:4-7, Is. 43:11, Is. 53:4-6, Mt. 1:23, 14, Luke 1:35, John 1:1-14, John 14:6, Acts 1:9-10, Rom. 3:24, Rom. 8:34, Rom. 14:9, 1 Cor. 15:20, Eph. 1:7, Eph. 2:18, Col. 1:15-20, Col. 2:13-15, 1 Tim. 2:5-6a, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 1 Pet. 2:24, 1 Pet. 4:5, 1 Jn. 2:1-2*)

(c) The Person and work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead; the Spirit of the Father shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon earth. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ and makes the work of Christ effective to sinners, convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, giving spiritual life to sinners and placing them into the Church. He indwells all believers at the time of salvation, empowers them to love, serve, witness and obey God, equips them with gifts, and transforms them to be increasingly like Christ. He is our Comforter, Helper, Teacher and Guide in our life-long pursuit of sanctification. He builds up the Church, gifting us for ministry and driving back the Kingdom of Satan by the evangelization of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus. (cf. *1 Jn. 5:7, Jn. 15:26, 2 Cor. 13:14, Mt. 28:19, Rom. 8:11, Jn. 16:7-14, Jn. 16:8-11, Jn. 20:22, 2 Cor. 3:6, 1 Cor. 12:12-14, Rom. 8:9, Eph. 5:18*)

We believe that Christ gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples after His resurrection and that the Holy Spirit was then poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers and releasing the gifts of the Holy Spirit to them. We believe in the filling or the empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience that is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth, for ministry today and the need to be continually filled. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the exercise of all the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Holy Spirit, for healing and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and to serve the Church. (cf. *Mt. 3:11, Mark 16:20, Luke 24:49, Jn. 1:33, Jn. 7:37-39, Jn. 20:22, Acts 1:4-8, Acts 2:1-24, Acts 2:42-43, Acts 4:8, Acts 6:6, Acts 8:12-17, Acts 9:17, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 11:14-16, Acts 13:3, Acts 15:7-9, Acts 19:1-6, Acts 28:8, 1 Cor. 12:1-31, 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6, Heb. 6:2*)

Section 2.03 The Human Condition

We believe that man, male and female, was created in the image and likeness of God as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him. Tempted by Satan, our original parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God falling from grace, bringing sin, sickness and God's judgment of death to the earth. Through Adam, all people inherited sin's nature, are alienated from God, and are under His wrath, and are all in need of a Redeemer whom God promised to our original parents. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to him, man became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections, a total the defacing of every aspect of human nature that God intended. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts also gained access to God's good creation. Creation as a whole now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born in sin, subject to God's judgment of death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be

rescued, reconciled and renewed. (cf. *Gen. 1:26-31, Gen. 3:1-19, Is. 59:2, Jer. 5:25, Jn. 12:31, Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12-19, Rom. 6:23, Rom. 8:19-22, 1 Cor. 6:11, Eph. 2:1-3, 12, 1 Jn. 5:19*)

Section 2.04 Salvation

We believe that man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. We believe that Christ died for all of us while we were STILL sinners; He took the punishment for our sin. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. With His own blood, He purchased salvation and redemption for all people of every culture and age who believe in Him. By God's grace the repentant sinner, through trusting alone in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, is put right with God, adopted by the Father into His family and receives eternal life. No person can be good enough to earn salvation, and "being good" does not contribute to receiving God's love and favor. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God, according to the hope of eternal life. The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit. The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple. We believe that the change which takes place in the heart and life at conversion is a very real one; that the sinner is then born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that the old things are passed away and all things are become new; insomuch that the things once most desired are now abhorred, while the things once abhorred are now held most sacred and dear; and that now having imputed to him the righteousness of the Redeemer and having received of the Spirit of Christ, new desires, new aspirations, new interests, and a new perspective on life, time and eternity, fills the blood-washed heart so that his desire is now to openly confess and serve the Master, seeking ever those things which are above. (cf. *Ps. 1:1,2, Is. 53:5, Luke 24:47, Jn. 1:12, Jn. 3:3, Jn. 3:16, Acts 2:38, Rom. 3:24-25, Rom. 8:16, Rom. 10:9-15, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 1:7, Eph. 2:8-10, Eph. 4:24, Gal. 2:20, Titus 2:11-14, Titus 3:5-7, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 1 Jn. 1:9*)

Section 2.05 The Church

(a) Membership

We believe that the true or universal Church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true Church finds local expression in communities of believers called by God to worship, fellowship, proclaim the Gospel, and make disciples among all peoples, reflect God's character, engage in works of compassion, contend for truth and justice, and celebrate baptism and communion. We believe that it is essential for all believers to join with and become part of such a congregation of other believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer. (cf. *Ps. 112:9, Mt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 1:8, 1 Cor. 12:13, 1 Cor. 12:28, 1 Cor. 14:12, Gal. 2:10, Gal. 6:10, Eph. 1:22-23, Eph. 2:22, Heb. 10:24-25, Heb. 12:23, James 1:27*)

(b) Ordinances (Sacraments) of the Church

Water baptism is intended only for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin. As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. It is a memorial of His suffering and death while being a prophecy of His second coming. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body. (*cf. Mt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 10:47-48, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:4, 1 Cor. 11:26-28, 2 Cor. 5:13, Col. 2:12, 1 Peter 3:20-21, 2 Pet. 1:4*)

(c) Ministry of the Body and Leadership

All members of the universal Church are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God, and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. Women play a vital role in the life of the church and can teach under the covering of the elders, but in keeping with God's created design they are not permitted "to exercise authority over a man." Leadership in the church is male and plural under the title of elders. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in his service in relation to one another and to the world. (*cf. Acts 14:22-23, Acts 15:6, 1 Cor. 11:3, 1 Cor. 12:7, Eph. 4:11-16, Col. 1:12, 1 Th. 5:11-14, 1 Tim. 2:12, 1 Tim. 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9, James 5:14, 1 Pet. 5:1*)

Section 2.06 The Spirit World

The holy angels are personal spirit beings who glorify God, serve Him, and minister to His people. We believe that Satan, a spiritual being created by God was originally a good angel, but rebelled against God and was cast out of God's presence due to his sin taking a host of rebellious angels along with him. He, along with other evil spirits, is the enemy of God and humanity, and as a usurper of God's authority established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth. He has been defeated by the work of Christ upon the cross, is subject to God's authority and faces eternal condemnation. (*cf. Ez. 28:13-17, Is. 14:12-15, Mt. 28:19-20, Mark 4:15, Luke 10:18-20, Jn. 8:44, Eph. 6:12, Col. 2:14-15, 1 Pet. 5:8, 1 Jn. 5:19, Rev. 12:3-17, Rev. 20:2-3*)

Section 2.07 The Ministry of Spiritual Gifts

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts His supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced. All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian

Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry. This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as: an overflowing fullness of the Holy Spirit, a deepened reverence for God, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost. (cf. Mark 16:16, *Mark 16:20, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:42, Acts 4:8, Acts 8:12-17, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 11:14-16, Acts 15:7-9, Jn. 7:37-39, Acts 2:43, 1 Cor. 12:1-31, Gal. 5:22-23, Heb. 12:28,*)

We believe in the motivational gifts of God the Father listed in Rom. 12:1-8, the ministry of God the Son to the Church listed in Ephesians 4:10-13 and in the nine gifts of God the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 v. 8-10 are all available today to all believers. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowing of spiritual gifts. It is, however, the believer's responsibility to attempt to develop their sovereignly given spiritual gift(s). We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accordance with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. We believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to minister according to the gift(s) and grace of God that is given to him. We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us we need to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues. We believe that God wants to heal and transform us so that we can live healthy and prosperous lives in order to help others more effectively. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8-10, Eph. 4:10-13, Jn. 15:7, 1 Jn. 5:14-15, Rom. 12:1-8, 1 Pet. 4:10-11, Josh. 1:8, Mt. 8:16-17, 1 Thess. 5:23, 3 Jn. 2, 2 Cor. 9:11)

Section 2.08 Christian Living

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Although indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Holy Spirit we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Since a believer comes into the Kingdom by grace, we believe that our continued fellowship with God, and with others, is an extension of that same grace. It is this overwhelming confidence in the grace of God that causes us to believe for the restoration of broken lives, to minister in humility and the fear of the Lord, to honor each person God has created, and to commit our lives to the fulfilling of the Great Commission. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word, and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, fasting, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end, which is most certain. We put a high regard on the biblical injunction to walk in community. We believe that the whole church, including all leaders, should be in significant relationships with other believers and other leaders. (cf. 2 Thess. 2:13, 2 Pet. 3:17-18, Jn. 15:10, 1 Jn. 2:3-4, 1 Jn. 5:2-3, Titus 2:7, 1 Pet. 2:11-12, Rom. 12:10, Phi. 2:3, James 5:11, 2 Thess. 1:3-4, Mt. 12:36, Rev. 20:12, 1 Thess. 5:17))

Section 2.09 Christ's Return and Eternal Destiny

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. Married to Christ as his

Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving him and giving him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new. (*cf. 1 Cor. 15:50-56, 1 Thess. 4:14-18, Luke 12:35-37, Jn. 16:11, Rev. 20:10-15, 2 Cor. 5:10, Mt. 13:41-43, Jn. 14:2, Rev. 21:4, Rev. 22:5*)

Article III. Our Core Values

- The calling to serve Pinedale, Wyoming and its surrounding communities.
- The commitment of every member to take personal responsibility for their loving and obedient relationship with God, and for their participation in church life.
- The freedom to develop and express our unique corporate personality and God-given ministry.
- The conviction that we are to love and reach people who do not have a relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- The primacy of worship as expressed through praising, praying and preaching.
- The necessity of biblical teaching that is doctrinally pure and culturally relevant.
- The function of home groups as the fundamental context for life change and ministry.
- The plurality of servant leadership and the equality of all members and ministries.
- Openness to the ministrations of the Holy Spirit.
- The willing expression and dutiful stewardship of everyone's spiritual gifts.
- The purity of fellowship as we live in Christ and in community, characterized by love, acceptance and forgiveness, valuing all members, respecting our diversity and preserving our unity.
- The practicality of service through good deeds and kind words to all.
- An informed engagement with what God is doing in the world and a prayerful involvement in the specific missions projects with which we are entrusted.
- Relationship with and accountability to other churches and ministries in the Body of Christ.
- The effective administration of our resources.
- Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as the governing characteristics of all expression of our lives.

Article IV. Abridged Statement

The following synopsis draws from the complete text of the Statement of Faith in the previous three articles and is meant solely as a brief concise of the entirety.

We believe –

- That the Holy Scriptures embodied by the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed.
- In one true and living God who is the Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- That God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth, the source of all that is good. By His Word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing.

- That Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the promised Messiah to all men and women, and the only begotten Son of God, who was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man.
- That the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead; the Spirit of the Father shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon earth.
- In the reality and personality of the devil.
- That man, male and female, was created in the image and likeness of God as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with Him, but that through the sin of our original parents, man became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God.
- That the blood of Jesus the Christ is the only propitiation for sin and therefore, salvation is by grace through faith and not of works.
- In water baptism by immersion at an age of accountability.
- In the subsequent personal baptism of the Holy Spirit as received by the apostles and the early church.
- In divine healing by means of the atonement and in the anointing of oil and prayer for the sick.
- In the evangelization and discipleship of all the nations and all peoples of the world.
- That the true Church finds local expression in communities of believers called by God to worship, fellowship, proclaim the Gospel, and make disciples among all peoples, reflect God's character, engage in works of compassion, contend for truth and justice, and celebrate baptism and communion.
- That the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the determining character of the true Church governed by the Holy Spirit.
- In the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for today according to scriptural injunctions for order and decency.
- That God has delegated church government, to whom loyalty and obedience is expected as those in delegated authority over us in the Lord.
- In the resurrection of our literal bodies, both of the just and the unjust.
- That there is a literal heaven and life everlasting for all true believers.
- In a final day of judgment for the incorrigible wicked and in their everlasting punishment.
- In Christian tolerance to all denominations of the Christian, biblical faith.
- That in essentials there should be unity, in non-essentials there should be liberty, and in all things there should be charity.

Bylaws

Article V. Name of Church

The name by which this organization shall be known in law shall be "Church of the Resurrection," referred to herein as "the church."

Article VI. Constitution

The Constitution of the church, which is subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of the "Statement of Faith". Whenever possible, these Bylaws shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Constitution; should any bylaw be found to contradict a provision of the Constitution, the Constitution shall control.

Article VII. Organization and Incorporation

The organization shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Wyoming.

Article VIII. Purpose and Limitations

The purposes of the church are:

- a. To bring glory and honor to the triune God by promoting true worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness;
- b. To operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual; and no substantial part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above;
- c. To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.
- d. The church shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. No part of the income or assets of the church shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration. The church is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation of a member or officer of the church. No member or officer of the church has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or activities of the church. The church may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision.

Article IX. Location of Office

The registered office of the church shall be located within Wyoming at the address of the church's registered agent. The Board of Directors (also known as the Board of Elders) or a majority of the members may change the registered agent and the address of the registered office from time to time, upon filing the appropriate statement with the Secretary of State.

Article X. Membership

- a. The membership shall consist of all communicant and non-communicant members, all of whom have the privilege of pastoral oversight, instruction, and government by the church. Communicant members are those who have been baptized, have made a credible profession of faith in Christ, and have been received into membership as provided in section 6.b. Non-communicant members are the children of communicant members.
- b. A person may be received into membership by a letter of transfer from another church of like faith and practice approved by the Board of Elders, by reaffirmation of faith, or by confession of faith. In order to be

received into membership, a person must complete the membership course, submit a Membership Application, sign a Membership Covenant, and be accepted by the Board of Elders.

- c. All communicant members who are at least eighteen years old and in good standing in the church shall be voting members. ("Good standing" means that a member is not presently under the censure of suspension or deposition.) Any voting member in attendance at a duly called meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregation. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. The elders shall also be entitled to vote.
- d. Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to His gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded (see Matt. 18:12-20; Bylaw 13; Guidelines on Church Discipline).¹
- e. Members may also be removed from membership by the Board of Elders when they: persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of the church; unite with a church of another denomination; cannot be found for a period greater than one year; or are removed by excommunication for persistent impenitence. Non-communicant members may be removed from membership with their parents or when they reject the covenantal responsibility of submission to home or church and neglect the ongoing exhortation of the Board of Elders to profess faith in Christ.

Article XI. Elders and Deacons

- a. Elders must be male voting members. In order to be eligible for election, a man shall have been a member in good standing in the church for at least one year, shall have received appropriate training under the direction or with the approval of the Board of Elders, and shall have served the church in functions requiring responsible leadership.
- b. Elders are to lead the church in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. Evils that they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the Board of Elders. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for doctrine and conduct of the members and help them in their labors.
- c. Deacons shall show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. As delegated and directed by the Board of Elders, they shall minister to

¹ The last sentence in this section is designed to provide for informed consent from members for the church to proceed with discipline in situations where a person may try to avoid discipline by attempting to withdraw from membership. This language can help to reduce exposure to the type of legal liability that was imposed by the Oklahoma Supreme Court in *Guinn v. Church of Christ of Collinsville*, 775 P.2d 766 (Oklahoma, 1989).

the temporal needs of members and friends, manage the church finances, and see to the care and maintenance of church property.

- d. Any voting member may propose to the Board of Elders nominations for the offices of elders and deacons. The Board of Elders shall certify those nominees whom, upon examination, it judges to possess the necessary qualifications for office. An elder or deacon who had been previously certified but who resigned from or was divested of the office must be re-certified. At least one Lord's Day preceding the date appointed for the election, the Board of Elders shall announce to the church the names of those it has certified. Election shall be from those certified. Voting on the election of elders and deacons shall be done by secret ballot, and each vote shall be cast either in favor of or against the election of each candidate, and those candidates receiving the vote of a majority in favor of their election shall be deemed elected. Elders and deacons shall be elected for three-year terms of service. If an elder or deacon is elected at a meeting other than the annual congregational meeting, his regular term shall expire at the time of the second annual congregational meeting following his election.
- e. An elder or deacon may be divested of his office by church discipline for an offense in doctrine or life. He may also be divested upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation. An elder or deacon also may resign from his office.

Article XII. Board of Elders (Board of Directors)²

- a. The Board of Elders is the governing body (Board of Directors) of the church and consists of the ruling elders. The Board of Elders shall have the power and authority to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Wyoming, the Constitution, and these Bylaws. The Board of Elders shall manage the business affairs of the corporation, oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, and it shall concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the church, supervise the activities of the Board of Deacons and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of the church property.
- b. The Board of Elders shall choose its own moderator (chairman) and secretary annually from among its members. The Board of Elders may also choose a vice-moderator from among its members, and shall appoint a treasurer, who must be a voting member and shall ordinarily be a deacon.
- c. The Board of Elders shall have final authority for affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by civil law for nonprofit corporations. In particular, the Board of Elders shall be responsible for the acquisition and disposition of church property, which includes the management of its financial resources. Neither the Board of Elders nor its delegates shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, pledge

² This section is drafted in such a way that the Board of Elders serves not only as the spiritual director of the church but also as the board of directors of the nonprofit corporation. (In fact, the entire set of Bylaws has been drafted so as to make the church and the nonprofit corporation one and the same organization.) Such a merging of functions helps to prevent some of the confusion and even competition that can occur if there are different supreme governing bodies within the church. (Peacemaker Ministries has actually arbitrated lawsuits between the elders and trustees in the same church!) It also serves to cloak all of the Board's and the church's activities with the legal protection afforded to nonprofit corporations by state and federal laws. There is at least one drawback to this arrangement, however: many church governing boards already think and act too much like "boards of directors" (tending to business or maintenance matters more than spiritual matters). Therefore, if by using this dual arrangement, we should be careful to remind ourselves continually that the primary responsibility of elders is to look to the spiritual well-being of the flock.

or in any manner encumber any church property worth more than \$5,000, nor to incur any indebtedness exceeding the sum of \$5,000, unless first authorized to do so at a congregational meeting, either through the adoption of the annual budget or by special action of the congregation. The Board of Elders may delegate to the Board of Deacons or to other communicant members such of these responsibilities as it deems appropriate.

- d. The Board of Elders shall meet at least monthly and shall convene at the call of the moderator, the members, any two members of the Board of Elders, or upon its own adjournment. Either oral or written notice, including the date, time, and place of a meeting, shall be given at least two days before a meeting. If mailed, notice shall be deemed to be effective the day after the letter is postmarked. Notice may be waived either orally or in writing. An elder's attendance at a meeting waives his right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival), he objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting, and does not vote for or assent to action taken at the meeting.
- e. A quorum is a simple majority of the number of elders sitting upon the Board of Elders. In no case may the Board of Elders conduct its business with fewer than two elders present who are entitled to vote.
- f. The act of a majority present at a Board of Elders meeting at which a quorum is present (when the vote is taken) shall be the act of the Board of Elders. An elder shall be deemed to have approved of an action taken if he is present at a meeting of the Board of Elders unless: (1) he objects at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival) to holding it or transacting business at the meeting; or (2) his dissent or abstention from the action taken is entered in the minutes of the meeting; or (3) he did not approve the action and he delivers written notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer of the meeting before its adjournment or immediately after adjournment of the meeting.
- g. If at any time there are less than three persons on the Board of Elders, the congregation may elect from the Board of Deacons and, if necessary, from among the voting members, individuals who will temporarily serve as directors of the church for the purpose of carrying out any required corporate business. The terms of such temporary directors shall expire when sufficient elders have been elected and ordained to bring the number of the Board of Elders to three or more
- h. The Board of Elders may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the telephone meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.
- i. The moderator shall be the chairman of the Board of Directors and the principal executive officer (president) of the corporation. The moderator shall be subject to the control of the Board of Elders, and shall in general supervise and control, in good faith, all of the business and affairs of the church. The moderator shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board of Elders, and shall conduct such meetings so as to facilitate free and respectful debate and decision making. The moderator may sign, with the secretary or any other proper officer of the church that the Board of Elders has authorized, corporation deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other Board of Elders authorized instruments.

- j. If the Board of Elders appoints a vice-moderator (vice-chairman), he shall perform, in good faith, the moderator's duties if the moderator is absent, dies, is unable or refuses to act. If the vice-moderator acts in the absence of the moderator, the vice-moderator shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the moderator. If there is no vice moderator, or the vice moderator is unable to, or refuses to act, then the secretary shall perform the duties of moderator.
- k. The clerk shall be the secretary of the church and shall in good faith: (1) create and maintain one or more books for the minutes of the proceedings of the members and of the Board of Elders; (2) provide that all notices are served in accordance with these Bylaws or as required by law; (3) be custodian of the church and corporate records; (4) subscribe the minutes of all meetings of the members and of the Board of Elders; (5) when requested or required, authenticate any records of the church; (6) keep a current register of the post office address of each member; and (7) in general perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and any other duties that the moderator or the Board of Elders may assign to the secretary.
- l. The treasurer shall: (1) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the church; (2) receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the church from any source, and deposit all moneys in the church's name in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the Board of Elders shall select; (3) submit the books and records to a Certified Public Accountant or other accountant as directed by the Board of Elders; and (4) in general perform all of the duties incident to the office of treasurer and any other duties that the moderator or Board of Elders may assign to the treasurer.
- m. The Board of Elders may establish such committees as it deems necessary for the work of the church.

Article XIII. Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall oversee the ministry of mercy in the church and shall collect and disperse funds for the relief of the needy. Other forms of service for the church may also be committed to the deacons. The Board of Deacons shall choose its own officers from its membership.

Article XIV. Congregational Meetings

- a. An annual meeting of the church shall be held in January of each year at a date, time, and place to be determined by the Board of Elders. At the annual meeting, the voting members shall elect elders and deacons, adopt an annual budget, and transact any other business as may come before the meeting.
- b. Special meetings of the church shall be called at a date and location to be determined by the Board of Elders whenever the Board of Elders deems it to be in the best interests of the church or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth (1/4) of the voting members of the church in good standing.
- c. The date, time, and location of all congregational meetings must be announced orally or in the church bulletin at least two (2) Sundays prior to the time set for the meeting, or by letter mailed at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the voting members adjourn any congregational meeting to a different date, time, or place, notice of a new date, time, and place need not be given if the new date, time, and place is announced before adjournment. A member entitled to a notice may waive notice of the meeting (or any notice required by laws of the State of [state] or these bylaws) by a written notice signed by the member. The member must send the notice of waiver to the church (either before or after the date and time stated in the notice) for inclusion in the minutes or filing with the church records.

- d. The purpose of a meeting shall be announced in advance if it involves: a proposed amendment to the bylaws or articles of incorporation; the election or removal of officers; the acquisition or disposition of property worth more than \$5,000; the dissolution of the church; or a question regarding the church's denominational affiliation. When a meeting is called for the transaction of specific matters of business, no business shall be conducted except that which is stated in the notice.
- e. A member's attendance at a meeting: waives the member's right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting; and, waives the member's right to object to consideration of a particular matter at the meeting that is not within the purpose or purposes described in the meeting notice, unless the member objects to considering the matter when it is presented.
- f. One-fourth (1/4) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at congregational meetings. Unless provided otherwise in these Bylaws, a majority vote of those in attendance, a quorum being present, is sufficient to decide any matter.
- g. The moderator and the clerk of the Board of Elders shall serve as moderator and clerk respectively in congregational meetings.

Article XV. Church Records

- a. The Board of Elders shall keep the following records: (1) minutes of its meetings, including a record of the administration of the sacraments and changes in the membership of the congregation; (2) minutes of the meetings of the congregation; (3) rolls of the members in the congregation (communicant, non-communicant, and voting), with the dates of their reception; (4) resolutions adopted by the Board of Elders; (5) appropriate accounting records; (6) its articles or restated articles of incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect; and (7) its bylaws or restated bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.
- b. A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the Board of Elders, any of the church records described above, provided the Board of Elders finds that the member has a proper purpose and is acting in good faith. The Board of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

Article XVI. Relational Commitments

Relational Commitments: Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled "Relational Commitments," which is incorporated into these Bylaws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, preserving marriages, protecting children, biblical counseling, confidentiality, accountability, and church discipline. These Commitments shall apply both to members and to attendees of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these Bylaws may be amended.

Article XVII. Church Discipline

Church discipline shall be carried out as explained in our Relational Commitments and the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Board of Elders.

Article XVIII. Ownership and Distribution of Property

- a. The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws.
- b. "Dissolution" means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefore; (2) assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Board of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Board of Elders; and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine, provided such organizations are part of the [denomination].

Article XIX. Indemnification of Officers

- a. The Board of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
- b. Subject to the provisions of paragraph c. of this section, the church shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:
 - (1) The conduct of the elder or deacon was in good faith;
 - (2) The elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and
 - (3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.
- c. The church may not indemnify an elder or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the elder or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

Article XX. Rules of Order

All meetings of the church, the Board of Elders, and its various boards and committees shall be conducted pursuant to the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Article XXI. Amendment of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended or repealed only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present at a duly-called meeting of the church called for such purposes.

Article XXII. Attachments

Attached to these bylaws shall be the following documents:

1. A copy of our "Statement of Faith"
2. A copy of "Our Relational Commitment"
3. A copy of "Robert's Rules of Order"

Relational Commitments

Article XXIII. Introduction

The following Commitments and Church Covenant are designed to help the people who attend our church relate to one another in a way that honors God and promotes authentic relationships. These Commitments cover important relational issues, such as peacemaking and reconciliation, marriage and divorce, protecting children from abuse, counseling, confidentiality, and mutual accountability.

These Commitments are intended to help us build a strong community of faith. By *community*, we mean a group of people who have voluntarily joined together to encourage and support one another as we worship God, grow in our understanding of His love for us, and seek to tell others about the salvation and peace they, too, can find through faith in Jesus Christ.

We know that true community isn't easy to achieve. Each of us brings our own expectations and agendas into the church. This diversity usually leads to rich discussions and creative ministries; but sometimes it can lead to conflict. As James 4:1-2 warns, *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it."*

That certainly describes us! At times, no matter how hard we try to build a close community of faith, our desires and expectations still clash. That's where these Commitments come in. They pull together key principles from God's Word and serve as our relational guidelines. These Commitments accomplish several important purposes:

- They remind us of our mutual commitment to work together to pursue unity, maintain friendships, preserve marriages, and build relationships that reflect the love of Christ.
- They help to prevent surprises, disappointed expectations, confusion and conflict by describing how we expect to relate to one another within the church.
- They provide a clear track for us to run on when conflict threatens to divide us, and they remind us how to move quickly toward reconciliation.
- They establish guidelines for how our leaders will counsel others, guard confidential information, and protect our children from abuse.

- They define and limit the spiritual authority of church leaders and thereby insure that all members are treated fairly.³
- Finally, they reduce our church's exposure to legal liability by clearly establishing our relational practices and by affirming our mutual commitment to resolve conflict biblically.⁴

As you read our Relational Commitments, we encourage you to study the Bible passages that are cited next to particular provisions. We want you to be confident that these Commitments are based solidly on the Word of God. If your study does not answer all of your questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to approach our leaders, who will be happy to talk with you about these principles.

We encourage you to expressly embrace these Commitments and formally join our church by going through our membership class, acknowledging your faith in Christ, and signing the Church Covenant provided at the end of this document. (See page 18 for more information about church membership.)

If you are not yet ready to become a member, you and your family are certainly welcome to attend our worship services, find fellowship in a small group, and seek assistance from our leaders. Please realize that if you continue relating to us in any of these ways, we will assume that you have consented to these Commitments, even if you have not yet formally joined the church. (See the story on the next page to learn why these Commitments apply to both members and attendees.)

As followers of Christ, we will do all we can to encourage you to grow in faith and godliness and to live a disciplined life that honors our Lord Jesus Christ and enhances the witness of His church.

The Leaders of Church of the Resurrection

Adopted on [Date]

These Relational Commitments are adapted from *The Peacemaker Church*.

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Edition 1.1 www.PeacemakerChurch.net

³ When we use the term "leader" in these Commitments, we are referring to the elders of our church.

⁴ See www.PeacemakerChurch.net for information on how these Commitments can help to prevent conflict and reduce exposure to legal liability in our church.

Article XXIV. A Tale of Two Families

Two boys, John and Luke, lost their mother at a young age. When they were in their teens, their father was reported to have died when his plane crashed into the ocean. The boys had no other relatives, so two neighboring families took them in.

The Friendly family did all they could to make John feel welcome in their home. They gave him his own bedroom, provided his meals, and encouraged him to join in family activities. Not wanting him to feel any pressure, they did not explain to him any of the family rules. Instead they hoped that he would notice how their other children behaved and decide on his own to act the same way.

Not knowing exactly what was expected of him, John frequently disappointed the family by violating unspoken rules. Feeling judged and unconnected to the family, he became increasingly independent. He came and went at any hour, played loud music, and spent long hours in his room with a variety of girls. When Mr. Friendly finally tried to talk with him about his behavior, John said, "I'm not your son, so you have no right to tell me how to live my life. I like having a bedroom and meals whenever I decide to be here, but I'll still do whatever seems right to me."

Tensions continued to build, and finally Mr. Friendly asked John to leave. Fortunately for John, there was another Friendly family in town, and they were happy to take him in. But there the cycle started all over again.

John's brother had an entirely different experience. Luke was taken in by the Loving family. They wanted him to feel welcome, so they gave him a room, provided meals, and encouraged him to join in family activities. But they also wanted to avoid misunderstandings and conflict. So shortly after Luke arrived, Mr. Loving explained the family rules to Luke, so he would know how to get along with the rest of the family. He said, "Even though you are not my son, I will be glad to look out for you the best I can. But as long as you are in my home, I also will expect you to behave as my other children do."

Like any normal teenager, Luke sometimes broke the rules. When he did, Mr. Loving sat down with him, pointed out what he'd done wrong, and held him accountable to the same standards he had established for his other children. Luke sometimes resented this discipline, but he eventually realized it was always done in love, and it kept him out of a lot of trouble.

After a few months, Mr. Loving approached Luke and said, "Since you are living here like part of the family, we would like to make it official. If you feel this is where you'd like to stay, we'd like to adopt you and make you our son."

Luke gladly accepted and formally committed himself to the family. In doing so, he changed from being an orphan who merely resided in the home to being a son who willingly accepted and enjoyed all of the same responsibilities and privileges of his new brothers and sisters.

Suppose that John and Luke's father is rescued from an island two years later. When he is reunited with his sons and hears what has happened to them, which family will he thank the most? The Friendly family, who were kind enough to give John a place to hang out, but could not bring themselves to give him any boundaries? Or the Loving family, who welcomed Luke in, held him accountable to the same rules as the rest of the family, and invited him to be a son?

The answer is obvious. And there is a real Father who one day will evaluate the way we care for the people who come into our church family. Therefore, we are glad to welcome people and give them a place to worship, grow and serve. But being "friendly" is not good enough. We want to be loving, as God defines loving (Heb. 12:5-6; 10:24). Therefore, we will encourage and expect everyone who attends our church to live out the biblical principles that are summarized in these Relational Commitments.

And when people have lived like part of our family for a while, we will encourage them to "make it official." Living like an orphan, with its illusion of independence and self-determination, may seem appealing to some. But it cannot compare to the security, privileges, and sense of belonging that come from joining a biblical church and living as truly committed brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Article XXV. Commitment to Peacemaking and Reconciliation

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God (Matt. 5:9).

Our church is committed to building a "culture of peace" that reflects God's peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of His only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, we look to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us His wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation:

Section 25.01 Personal Peacemaking

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the "logs" out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If we have a problem with others, we will talk *to* them, not *about* them.
- We will make "charitable judgments" toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).

- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as He has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
- When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others' interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

Section 25.02 Assisted Peacemaking

- When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, we will seek the mediation of wise people in our church and listen humbly to their counsel (Matt. 18:16; Phil. 4:2-3). If our dispute is with a church leader, we will look to other leaders for assistance.
- When informal mediation does not resolve a dispute, we will seek formal assistance from our church leaders or people they appoint, and we will submit to their counsel and correction (Matt. 18:17-20).
- When we have a business or legal dispute with another Christian, we will make every reasonable effort to resolve the conflict within the body of Christ through biblical mediation or arbitration, rather than going to civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If the other party attends another church, our leaders will offer to cooperate with the leaders of that church to resolve the matter.
- If a person coming to our church has an unresolved conflict with someone in his former church, we will require and assist him to make every reasonable effort to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18).
- When a conflict involves matters of doctrine or church discipline, we will submit to the procedures set forth in our *Commitment to Accountability and Church Discipline*.
- If we have a legal dispute with or within our church and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will obey God's command not to go into the civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Instead, we will submit the matter to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration.
- Above all, we pray that our ministry of peacemaking will bring praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and lead others to know His infinite love and peace.

Article XXVI. Commitment to Preserving Marriages

So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate (Matt. 19:6).

God designed marriage to reflect the beauty and permanence of Christ's loving relationship with His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7). Therefore, He established marriage to be a life-long, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman (Matt. 19:4-6). God also designed it to provide mutual companionship through life's joys and difficulties, to create stability for raising and nurturing children, and to give strength and cohesiveness to society in general.

In our society, marriages fail under a wide range of circumstances. Many people have gone through a divorce before having a relationship with Christ, and others have experienced divorce through no desire or decision of their own. Still others may have divorced because of their own wrongful choices, but have since experienced

the repentance and forgiveness offered through our Lord Jesus. We want all of you to know that you are welcome in our church.

Because our church recognizes both the divine origin of marriage and the devastating effects of divorce, we are deeply committed to preserving marriages and preventing divorce. Toward this end, we will devote a significant portion of our preaching and teaching ministry to strengthening marriages and families. We require and provide thorough premarital counseling to ensure that couples enter into marriage advisedly and are well prepared for its many challenges.

We also encourage couples to nurture their marriages by participating in weekly fellowship groups in which people can grow together in their love for God and for one another (Heb. 10:24-25). As relationships deepen within these groups, we expect husbands to spur each other on in loving and cherishing their wives, and wives to encourage one another in respecting and loving their husbands (Eph. 5:33).

Our leaders are committed to providing counsel and support to couples who face marital difficulties. We will discourage couples from using divorce as a way to run away from issues that instead can be resolved through Spirit-guided counseling, repentance, forgiveness and ongoing discipleship.

We recognize, however, that there are times when God permits a believer to seek a divorce without sinning against God or a spouse. We believe divorce is permissible when the other spouse has been sexually involved with a person outside the marriage (Matt. 5:31-32), or when an unbelieving spouse abandons a marriage (1 Cor. 7:12-16).

Even though divorce is *permissible* in these situations, it is not *required*. God patiently bears with our sins, repeatedly calls us to repentance, and freely forgives us when we turn back to him (Ps. 103:8-12; Isa. 55:7). When divorce becomes an option, an offended spouse can imitate God's love by offering a straying spouse these same evidences of grace (Eph. 5:1-2). This may involve patiently bearing neglect or lovingly confronting serious sin (Col. 3:12-14; Gal. 6:1). In some situations, love may require asking the church to initiate formal discipline to rescue a spouse and a marriage from the devastating effects of unrepentant sin (Matt. 18:12-20).

Just as church leaders are involved in beginning a marriage, they should be involved when it ends. Therefore, when someone is considering divorce, he or she is expected to bring the situation to our leaders and cooperate with them as they determine whether grounds exist, promote repentance and reconciliation, and exhaust redemptive discipline, if appropriate.

Separated spouses who have filed for divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court issues a divorce decree. Thus they should refrain from dating or any other activity that is inconsistent with being married.

We are always interested in helping divorced people restore their previous marriage if that is possible and appropriate. We will support a decision to pursue a second marriage to a different person only when we have determined that it is biblically valid and that every reasonable effort has been made to seek and grant forgiveness of the sins that contributed to a previous divorce.

We rejoice that divorce never diminishes God's free offer of love, grace and forgiveness. He cherishes and loves every person who has been unwillingly divorced, as does our church. God graciously extends this same love to those who have wrongly left their marriages. That love moves him (and us) to call them to repentance, to

encourage and aid reconciliation when possible, and to gladly restore those who have done all they can to rebuild broken relationships.

Article XXVII. Commitment to Protecting Our Children

The prudent see danger and take refuge (Prov. 27:12a).

Children are a blessing from God, and He calls the church to support parents in their responsibility to train children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Therefore, the church should be a safe and blessed place for children, where they can grow, play, form friendships, and learn to experience and share the love of Christ.

Since sin affects every person and organization in the world, however, it is possible that children could be harmed even during church activities. We cannot guarantee that such things will never happen within our fellowship, but we are committed to taking every reasonable precaution to protect our children from foreseeable harm. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, the following steps:

- We do not allow anyone to work regularly with our youth (children or teenagers), unless he or she has regularly attended our church for at least six months and is a formal member.
- We require all of our youth workers to complete a detailed application and screening process.
- We require that, whenever practicable, youth workers serve in teams of two or more and be visible to other workers.

If a child is harmed in our church, we will take immediate steps to inform the parents, to accept responsibility for our role in the situation, and to hold offending youth workers fully responsible for their actions. We will also evaluate our practices and procedures, considering changes that might reduce the likelihood of such harm to children in the future.

Article XXVIII. Commitment to Biblical Counseling

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another (Rom. 15:14).

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships. Whenever believers are unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through personal efforts, God calls them to seek assistance from other believers, and when needed from church leaders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its people to seek counsel from and confess sins to each other and to our leaders.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, our counseling is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Unless they specifically state otherwise, none of those who counsel in this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

God calls our leaders to set an example for us “in speech, in life, in love, and in faith and purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Therefore, we expect them to treat counselees with every respect and courtesy, and to avoid even the appearance of impropriety or impurity during counseling (Eph. 5:3). We also expect counselees to promptly report to the leadership team any conduct that fails to meet this standard.

To prevent our leaders from being placed in situations that might compromise their pastoral commitments, we, the members and attendees of this church, agree that we will not try to compel them to testify in any legal proceeding or otherwise divulge any confidential information they receive through pastoral counseling or ministry (Prov. 11:13, 25:9).

There are occasions when our leaders do not have sufficient time to meet with every person who asks for counseling. At such times we expect our leaders to give first priority to people who have formally joined the church (Gal. 6:10), and to serve those who only attend the church by referring them to another source of godly counsel.

Article XXIX. Commitment to Confidentiality

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret (Prov. 11:13).

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 26:20), invites confession (Prov. 11:13), and thus encourages people to seek needed counseling. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of the local church, all members and attendees are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our leaders will carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when our leaders believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- when a leader is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other leaders in our church or, if the person attends another church, from the leaders of that church (Prov. 11:14);
- when the person who disclosed the information, or any other person, is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov. 24:11-12);
- when a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to promote repentance through accountability and redemptive church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20); or,
- when leaders are required by law to report suspected abuse (Rom. 13:1).

Article XXX. Commitment to Accountability and Church Discipline

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24).

Like all of our Relational Commitments, the principles and practices described below apply to all the people who attend our church (both members and attendees).

Section 30.01 A. Accountability and Discipline Are Signs of God's Love

God has established the church to reflect His character, wisdom and glory in the midst of a fallen world (Eph. 3:10-11). He loves His church so much that He sent His Son to die for her (Eph. 5:25). His ultimate purpose for His church is to present her as a gift to His Son; thus Scripture refers to the church as the "bride" of Christ (Rev. 19:7). For this reason the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are continually working to purify the church and bring her to maturity (Eph. 5:25-27).

This does not mean that God expects the church to be made up of perfectly pure people. He knows that the best of churches are still companies of sinners who wrestle daily with remaining sin (1 John 1:8; Phil. 3:12). Therefore, it would be unbiblical for us to expect church members to live perfectly. What we can do, however, is confess our common struggle with sin and our mutual need for God's mercy and grace. We also can spur one another on toward maturity by encouraging and holding each other accountable to love, seek after, and obey God with all of our hearts, souls, minds and strength, and to love others as we love ourselves (Mark 12:30-31; Heb. 10:24-25).

The Bible sometimes refers to this process of mutual encouragement and accountability as "discipline." The Bible never presents church discipline as being negative, legalistic or harsh, as modern society does. True discipline originates from God himself and is always presented as a sign of genuine love. "The Lord disciplines those He loves" (Heb. 12:6). "Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law" (Ps. 94:12). "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline" (Rev. 3:19).

God's discipline in the church, like the discipline in a good family, is intended to be primarily positive, instructive and encouraging. This process, which is sometimes referred to as "formative discipline," involves preaching, teaching, prayer, personal Bible study, small group fellowship and countless other enjoyable activities that challenge and encourage us to love and serve God more wholeheartedly.

On rare occasions God's discipline, like the discipline in a family with growing children, also may have a corrective purpose. When we forget or disobey what God has taught us, He corrects us. One way He does this is to call the church to seek after us and lead us back onto the right track. This process, which is sometimes called "corrective" or "restorative" discipline, is likened in Scripture to a shepherd seeking after a lost sheep.

If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off (Matt. 18:12-13).

Thus, restorative or corrective discipline is never to be done in a harsh, vengeful or self-righteous manner. It is always to be carried out in humility and love, with the goals of restoring someone to a close walk with Christ (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1), protecting others from harm (1 Cor. 5:6), and showing respect for the honor and glory of God's name (1 Pet. 2:12).

Biblical discipline is similar to the discipline we value in other aspects of life. We admire parents who consistently teach their children how to behave properly and lovingly discipline them when they disobey. We

value music teachers who bring out the best in their students by teaching them proper technique and consistently pointing out their errors so they can play a piece properly. And we applaud athletic coaches who diligently teach their players to do what is right and correct them when they fumble, so that the team works well together and can compete for the championship.

The same principles apply to the family of God. We, too, need to be taught what is right and to be lovingly corrected when we do something contrary to what God teaches us in His Word. Therefore, we as a church are committed to help one another obey God's command to be "self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined" (Titus 1:8).

The leaders of our church recognize that God has called them to an even higher level of accountability regarding their faith and conduct (James 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:19-20). Therefore, they are committed to listening humbly to loving correction from each other or from any member in our church, and, if necessary, to submitting themselves to the corrective discipline of our body.

Section 30.02 B. Most Corrective Discipline Is Private, Personal and Informal

God gives every believer grace to be self-disciplined. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7). Thus discipline always begins as a personal matter and usually remains that way, as each of us studies God's Word, seeks him in prayer, and draws on His grace to identify and change sinful habits and grow in godliness.

But sometimes we are blind to our sins or so tangled in them that we cannot get free on our own. This is why the Bible says, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently" (Gal. 6:1). In obedience to this command, we are committed to giving and receiving loving correction within our church whenever a sin (whether in word, behavior or doctrine) seems too serious to overlook (Prov. 19:11).

If repeated private conversations do not lead another person to repentance, Jesus commands that we ask other brothers or sisters to get involved. "If he will not listen, take one or two others along" (Matt. 18:16). If informal conversations with these people fail to resolve the matter, then we may seek the involvement of more influential people, such as a small group leader, Sunday school teacher or church leader. If even these efforts fail to bring a brother or sister to repentance, and if the issue is too serious to overlook, we will move into what may be called "formal discipline."

Section 30.03 C. Formal Discipline May Involve the Entire Church

If an individual persistently refuses to listen to personal and informal correction to turn from speech or behavior that the Bible defines as sin, Jesus commands us to "tell it to the church" (Matt. 18:17a). This first involves informing one or more church leaders about the situation. If the offense is not likely to cause imminent harm to others, our leaders may approach the individual privately to personally establish the facts and encourage repentance of any sin they discover. The individual will be given every reasonable opportunity to explain and defend his or her actions. If the individual recognizes his sin and repents, the matter usually ends there, unless a confession to additional people is needed.

If an offense is likely to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division or disruption, our leaders may accelerate the entire disciplinary process and move promptly to protect the church (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11).

As the disciplinary process progresses, our leaders may impose a variety of sanctions to encourage repentance, including but not limited to private and public admonition, withholding of the Lord's Supper, removal from office, withdrawal of normal fellowship, and, as a last resort, removal from membership (Matt. 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Matt. 18:17).

If the straying individual does not repent in response to private appeals from our leaders, they may inform others in the church who may be able to influence that individual or be willing to pray for him or her, or people who might be harmed or affected by that person's behavior.⁵ This step may include close friends, a small group, a Sunday school class, or the entire congregation if our leaders deem it to be appropriate (Matt. 18:17, 1 Tim. 5:20).⁶

If, after a reasonable period of time, the individual still refuses to change, then our leaders may formally remove him or her from membership and normal fellowship. They also may inform the church body of their decision and instruct the congregation to treat the individual as an unbeliever. This means that we will no longer treat him as a fellow Christian. Instead of having casual, relaxed fellowship with the individual, we will look for opportunities to lovingly bring the gospel to him, remind him of God's holiness and mercy, and call him to repent and put his faith in Christ (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20)

We realize that our natural human response to correction often is to hide or run away from accountability (Gen. 3:8-10). To avoid falling into this age-old trap and to strengthen our church's ability to rescue us if we are caught in sin, we agree not to run away from this church to avoid corrective discipline. Therefore, we waive our right to withdraw from membership or accountability if discipline is pending against us. Although we are free to stop attending the church at any time, we agree that a withdrawal while discipline is pending will not be given effect until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibilities to encourage our repentance and restoration, and to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, as described in these Commitments (Matt. 18:12-14; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:17).

If an individual leaves the church while discipline is in effect or is being considered, and our leaders learn that he or she is attending another church, they may inform that church of the situation and ask its leaders to encourage the individual to repent and be reconciled to the Lord and to any people he or she has offended. This action is intended both to help the individual find freedom from his sin and to warn the other church

⁵ For example, it is not uncommon for a person to attend a church, develop relationships of trust, persuade people to give him money to invest, and then fail to return the money as promised. Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable to these schemes, and many people have lost much of what they had saved for retirement. When such sinful men are discovered, they usually leave a church, but continue to prey on members who have not heard about their schemes. If our leaders found such a man in our church, they would call him to repent and confess his wrongs. If he refused, they would bring him under formal discipline, and also warn the congregation not to trust him with their money.

⁶ If our leaders inform our entire congregation about a disciplinary situation, they have discretion whether to divulge the individual's name. This decision usually will depend on a variety of factors, such as: how widely known the situation already is; whether there might be people in the congregation who could persuade the individual to repent; or whether the congregation needs to be on guard against potential harm he might cause (see previous footnote). Even if our leaders decide it is not necessary to identify an individual specifically, they may still inform the congregation of the general situation and the disciplinary steps they have followed. This general information can help to enlist wide prayer support, let the congregation know that our leaders are obeying the Lord's command to seek after those who stray, and warn people who may be flirting with secret sin that they, too, may face discipline if they do not turn back to God.

about the harm that he or she might do to their members⁷ (see Matt. 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 3 John 1:9-10).

Loving restoration always stands at the heart of the disciplinary process. If an individual repents, and our leaders confirm his or her sincerity, we will rejoice together and gladly imitate God's forgiveness by restoring the person to fellowship within the body (see Matt. 18:13; Luke 15:3-7, 11-32; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Col. 3:12-14).

People who have been excluded from another church will not be allowed to partake of the sacraments in our church, to become members, or to participate in the regular fellowship of our church until they have repented of their sins and made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, or our leaders have determined that the discipline of the former church was not biblically appropriate.

If an individual disagrees with the way discipline has been carried out, he or she may appeal the church's decisions according to the established disciplinary procedures of our denomination.

As we pursue the blessings of accountability and church discipline, we will hold fast to the promise of Scripture: "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:10-11).

Article XXXI. We Invite You to Become a Member of Our Church

We believe that God wants every Christian to become a member of a local church. To learn why, please read Joshua Harris's book, *Stop Dating the Church*, and the third chapter of Donald Whitney's book, *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church: Participating Fully in the Body of Christ*. Both books are available in our church library.

Becoming a member of a church can be a life-changing decision. The preaching, teaching, fellowship, opportunities to use your gifts, and mutual accountability that you experience in a church can dramatically change your relationship with the Lord and with the people He places in your life. Therefore, we want you to take time to get to know our church, learn how we are fulfilling God's command to build His kingdom, and see how we love and relate to one another in daily life.

If you like what you see in our church, we invite you to attend our membership class. During that class you can learn more about our church's doctrines and vision for ministry, and about the privileges and responsibilities of formal membership. Attending the class will not obligate you to become a member.

If attending the membership class convinces you that joining our church will help to you grow in your ability to love and serve God, we would be delighted to have you become a member of our body. By joining our church, you will demonstrate in a concrete way your desire to unite with us to advance Christ's kingdom. Membership also will allow you to enjoy ministry opportunities and privileges that are not available to people who only attend our church, including the following:

⁷ For example, if we confronted a man in our church for seducing young women, or for acting inappropriately around little children, or for sowing gossip and division, and he left and started attending another church, we would consider it our duty to urge the leaders of that church to counsel with him and to protect their people from his harmful behavior.

- You may *participate and vote in congregational meetings*, where we seek to discern and plan how to follow God's vision for our church.
- You will be eligible to *minister to the children and youth* in our church (after completing our standard screening process).
- You can seek *more opportunities to use your spiritual gifts*, including those of teaching, serving and leading within the body.
- If you need counseling or support from our leaders when their time is limited, *your request for assistance will take precedence* over requests from people who have not joined the church.

If you would like to learn more about the importance of church membership, please read the books mentioned above. You also may meet with our leaders, who would be happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about membership.

Article XXXII. Church Covenant (Sample A)

By the Members of Church of the Resurrection

Our Commitments to One Another in the Sight of God

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

1. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
2. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting and excessive anger; and to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink and practices that bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.
3. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; and to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.
4. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the spirit of this covenant.
5. We acknowledge that we have read the Relational Commitments of this church and agree to live by them.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Leader's Signature

Date

Article XXXIII. Church Covenant (Sample B)

**By the Members of Church of the Resurrection
Our Commitments to One Another in the Sight of God**

Office only

Having been chosen by God and drawn by the Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, I now, with a view to my baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, do joyfully enter into this covenant with the members of this church as one body in Christ, according to the following affirmations and commitments.

1. I believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation.⁸
2. I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope except in God's sovereign love and mercy to save me.⁹
3. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the only Savior of sinners, and receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as He is offered to me in the Gospel.¹⁰
4. I resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I will endeavor to put to death the misdeeds of my sinful nature and to live my life as is fitting a true follower of Jesus Christ.¹¹
5. I promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of my ability.¹²
6. I submit myself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to pursue its purity and peace.¹³
7. I acknowledge that I have read the Relational Commitments of this church and agree to live by them.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Leader's Signature

Date

⁸ 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Matt. 4:4

⁹ Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 6:23; Eph. 1:3-14; 2:1-10; Tit. 3:3-7; 1 Pet. 1:2-9; Rom. 8:29-30

¹⁰ John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:9-26; 10:9; Phil. 2:5-11; 3:5-9; Tit. 3:3-5; 1 Tim. 1:15

¹¹ Eph. 4:17-6:4; Col. 3:1-4:6; 1 Pet. 1:13-15; 2:18-5:11; 2 Pet. 1:3-9; Rom. 8:29; 12:1-15:14

¹² Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-15; Eph. 4:1-16; Heb. 10:24-25; 12:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:7-11

¹³ Matt. 16:18; 18:15-20; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:15; 5:17-20; Heb. 13:17; Col. 3:15; Rom. 12:18-21

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