



# **CHRIST FELLOWSHIP**

**L E E S V I L L E**

Church Constitution and By-Laws

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# ARTICLE I: NAME AND AFFILIATIONS

## SECTION 1.1 LEGAL NAME

The name of this corporation is Christ Fellowship Leesville. This corporation will be referred to in this constitution as the "church." The church will do business as Christ Fellowship Leesville.

## SECTION 1.2 AFFILIATIONS

The church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control or networks. The church recognizes the biblical precedent and benefits of churches cooperating together in the fulfillment of its purposes and God's mission. Therefore, the church may voluntarily affiliate with other churches and conventions by a 75% passing vote of the membership.

# ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

We exist to make disciples for the glory of Jesus Christ, through the proclamation of the gospel, the teaching of God's Word, cultivation of discipleship relationships, and love for one another that we may present all mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28-29).

# ARTICLE III: CONFESSION OF FAITH

## SECTION 3.1 STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEF

The following beliefs represent the core orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective.

While Covenant Members are not required to fully understand or articulate all aspects of these beliefs, rejection of any one of these disqualifies one from becoming a Covenant Member at the church or maintaining Covenant Membership at the church. An elder of the church will meet with any individual(s) seeking Covenant Membership who reject any of these core beliefs. The elders will follow the guidelines for church discipline as stated in Article V, Section 5.5 in regard to Covenant Members who reject any one of these core beliefs.

Revisions to align with the Scriptures more closely remains at the discretion of the elders, with the understanding that such changes will be communicated to the Covenant Members of the church.

## **SECTION 3.2 OF THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired. It is a unified story that leads to Jesus and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter, that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Timothy 3:15, Proverbs 30:5-6, Romans 2:12, Philippians 3:16, 1 John 4:1*

## **SECTION 3.3 OF THE TRUE GOD**

We believe that there is one, and only one living and true God, an infinite intelligent Spirit, whose name is Yahweh, the Maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious roles in the great work of redemption.

*John 4:24, Psalm 83:18, Hebrews 3:4, Romans 1:20, Jeremiah 10:10, Exodus 15:11, Psalm 147:5, Isaiah 6:3, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Revelation 4:6-8, Mark 12:30, Revelation 4:11, Matthew 10:37, Jeremiah 2:12-13, Matthew 28:19, John 15:26, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 John 5:7, John 10:30, John 5:17, John 14:23, John 17:5 & 10, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Philippians 2:5-6, Ephesians 2:18, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Revelation 1:4-5*

## **SECTION 3.4 OF THE FALL OF HUMANS**

We believe that humans were created in holiness, under the command, wisdom, and blessing of their Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all humans are now sinners, both by nature and by choice, empty of the holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

*Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1:31, Ecclesiastes 7:29, Acts 17:26-29, Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:6-24, Romans 5:12, Romans 5:15-19, Psalm 51:5, Romans 8:7,*

*Isaiah 53:6, Genesis 6:12, Romans 3:9-18, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 1:18,32, Romans 2:1-16, Galatians 3:10, Matthew 20:15, Ezekiel 18:19-20, Romans 1:20, Romans 3:19, Galatians 3:22*

### **SECTION 3.5 OF THE WAY OF SALVATION**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is completely by grace; through the mediating work of Jesus, the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

*Ephesians 2:3, Matthew 18:11, 1 John 4:10, 1 Corinthians 3:5-7, Acts 15:11, John 3:16, John 1:1-14, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 12:24, Philippians 2:9 & 14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 42:21, Philippians 2:8, Galatians 4:4-5, Romans 3:21, Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 20:28, Romans 4:25, Romans 3:21-26, 1 John 2:3, 1 Corinthians 15:1-3, Hebrews 9:13-15, Hebrews 1:8, Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 3:1-4, Hebrews 7:25, Colossians 2:18, Hebrews 7:26, Psalm 89:19, Psalm 34*

### **SECTION 3.6 OF JUSTIFICATION**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to those who believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is given not because of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

*John 1:16, Ephesians 3:8, Acts 13:39, Isaiah 53:11-12, Romans 5:1-2, Romans 5:9, Zechariah 13:1, Matthew 9:6, Acts 10:43, Romans 5:17, Titus 3:5-7, 1 Peter 3:7, 1 John 2:25, Romans 5:21, Romans 4:4-5, Romans 6:23, Philippians 3:7-9, Romans 5:19, Romans 3:24-26, Romans 4:23-25, 1 John 2:12, Romans 5:3, Romans 5:11, 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Matthew 6:33, 1 Timothy 4:8*

### **SECTION 3.7 OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION**

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel of Jesus; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by humble repentance and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity

and voluntary rejection of the gospel; such rejection leads to his rightful condemnation.

*Isaiah 55:1, Revelation 22:17, Romans 16:25-26, Mark 1:15, Romans 1:15-17, John 5:40, Matthew 23:37, Romans 9:32, Proverbs 1:24, Acts 13:46, John 3:19, Matthew 11:20, Luke 10:27, 2 Thessalonians 1:8*

### **SECTION 3.8 OF GRACE IN REGENERATION**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that it is properly revealed in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

*John 3:3, John 3:6-7, 1 Corinthians 3:14, Revelation 14:3, Revelation 21:27, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ezekiel 36:26, Deuteronomy 30:6, Romans 2:28-29, Romans 5:5, 1 John 4:7, John 3:8, John 1:13, James 1:16-18, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Philippians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:22-25, 1 John 5:1, Ephesians 4:20-24, Colossians 3:9-11, Ephesians 5:9, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:16-23, Ephesians 3:14-21, Matthew 3:8-10, Matthew 7:20, 1 John 5:4 & 18*

### **SECTION 3.9 OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces, worked in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with sincere contrition, confession, and pleas for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

*Mark 1:15, Acts 11:18, Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 5:1, John 16:8, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 16:30-31, Luke 18:13, Luke 15:18-21, James 4:7-10, 2 Corinthians 7:11, Romans 10:12-13, Psalm 51, Romans 10:9-11, Acts 3:22-23, Hebrews 4:14, Psalm 2:6, Hebrews 1:8, Hebrews 7:25, 2 Timothy 1:12*

### **SECTION 3.10 OF GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE**

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and

unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be confirmed by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel, that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to confirm it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

*2 Timothy 1:8-9, Ephesians 1:3-14, 1 Peter 1:1-2, Romans 11:5-6, John 15:16, 1 John 4:19, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Acts 13:48, John 10:16, Matthew 20:16, Acts 15:14, Exodus 33:18-19, Matthew 20:15, Ephesians 1:11, Romans 9:23-24, Jeremiah 31:3, Romans 11:28-29, James 1:17-18, 2 Timothy 1:9, Romans 11:32-36, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Romans 3:27, Romans 4:16, Colossians 3:12, 1 Corinthians 3:5-7, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 1 Peter 5:10, Acts 1:24, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 2:9, Luke 18:7, John 15:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Timothy 2:10, 1 Corinthians 9:22, Romans 8:28-30, John 6:37-40, 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10, Isaiah 42:16, Romans 11:29, 2 Peter 1:10-11, Philippians 3:12, Hebrews 6:11*

### **SECTION 3.11 OF SANCTIFICATION**

We believe that sanctification is the process by which according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means: especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

*1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 2 Corinthians 13:10, Philippians 3:12-16, 1 John 2:29, Romans 8:5, Ephesians 1:4, Proverbs 4:18, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Hebrews 6:1, 2 Peter 1:5-8, John 3:6, Philippians 1:9-11, Ephesians 1:13-14, Philippians 2:12-13, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Luke 11:35, Luke 9:23, Matthew 26:41, Ephesians 6:18, Ephesians 4:30*

### **SECTION 3.12 OF PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**

We believe that true believers are those who endure to the end: that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare, and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*John 8:31, 1 John 2:27-28, 1 John 3:9, 1 John 5:18, 1 John 2:19, John 13:18, Matthew 13:20-21, John 6:66-69, Job 17:9, Romans 8:28, Matthew 6:30-33,*

*Jeremiah 32:40, Psalm 121:3, Psalm 91:11-12, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:13, Jude 24:25, Hebrews 1:14, 2 Kings 6:16, Hebrews 13:5, 1 John 4:4*

### **SECTION 3.13 OF THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL**

We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to sincere obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

*Romans 3:31, Matthew 5:17, Luke 16:17, Romans 3:20, Romans 4:15, Romans 7:12, Romans 7:7, Romans 7:14-22, Galatians 3:21, Psalm 119, Romans 8:7-8, Joshua 24:19, Jeremiah 13:23, John 6:44, John 5:44, Romans 8:2-4, Romans 10:4, 1 Timothy 1:5, Hebrews 8:10, Jude 20 & 21*

### **SECTION 3.14 OF A GOSPEL CHURCH**

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only scriptural officers are elders and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus.

*1 Corinthians 1:1-3, Matthew 18:17, Acts 5:11, Acts 8:1, Acts 11:21-23, 1 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Corinthians 14:23, 3 John 9, 1 Timothy 3:5, Acts 2:41-42, 2 Corinthians 8:5, Acts 2:47, 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, 1 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, Romans 16:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-24, Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:6, 2 Corinthians 2:17, 1 Corinthians 4:17, Matthew 28:20, John 14:15, John 15:12, 1 John 14:21, 1 Thessalonians 4:2, 2 John 6, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:7, 1 Corinthians 14:12, Philippians 1:1, Acts 14:23, Acts 15:22, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1*

### **SECTION 3.15 OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that the Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is required in order to join in covenant fellowship with the church, and to the Lord's Supper; in which the members of the church by

the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

*Acts 8:36-39, Matthew 3:5-6, John 3:22-23, John 4:12, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:12, Acts 16:32-34, Acts 18:8, Acts 10:47-48, Galatians 3:26-28, Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Acts 22:16, Acts 2:41-42, 1 Corinthians 11:26, Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Corinthians 11:28, 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, 1 Corinthians 10:3-32, 1 Corinthians 11:17-32, John 6:26*

### **SECTION 3.16 OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED**

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all who continue in unrepentance and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among humans both in and after death.

*Malachi 3:18, Proverbs 12:26, Isaiah 5:20, Genesis 18:23, Jeremiah 15:19, Acts 10:34-35, Romans 6:16, Romans 1:17, Romans 7:6, 1 John 2:29, 1 John 3:7, Romans 6:18 & 22, 1 Corinthians 11:32, Proverbs 11:31, 1 Peter 4:17-18, 1 John 5:19, Galatians 3:10, John 3:36, Isaiah 57:21, Psalm 10:4, Isaiah 55:6-7, Proverbs 14:32, Luke 16:25, John 8:21-24, Proverbs 10:24, Luke 12:4-5, Luke 9:23-26, Ecclesiastes 3:17, Matthew 7:13-14*

### **SECTION 3.17 OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH**

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be judged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; that this judgment will fix forever the final state of humans, on principles of righteousness; and that Christ will redeem creation and make all things new as its King, with the righteous in Christ forever reigning with him in the new heavens and new earth.

*1 Peter 4:7, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Hebrews 1:10-12, Matthew 24:35, 1 John 2:17, Matthew 28:20, Matthew 13:39-40, 2 Peter 3:3-13, Acts 1:11, Revelation 1:7, Hebrews 9:28, Acts 3:21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Acts 24:15, 1 Corinthians 15:12-58, Luke 14:14, Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29, John 6:40, John 11:25-26, 2 Timothy 1:10, Acts 10:42, Matthew 13:49, Matthew 13:37-43, Matthew 24:30-31, Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 22:11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Mark 9:43-48, 2 Peter 2:9, Jude 7, Philippians 3:19, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, John 4:36, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Romans*

*3:5-6, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12, Hebrews 6:1-2, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Acts 17:31, Romans 2:2-16, Revelation 20:11-12, 1 John 2:28, 1 John 4:17, 1 Peter 3:11-12*

### **SECTION 3.18 STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY**

The Bible presents God's created order for marriage as the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. We, therefore, perform marriages of believing individuals according to this biblical truth.

Additionally, sexual intimacy is only appropriate as exercised within the bounds of the marriage relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any lustful intent toward another individual or sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly prohibited in the Scriptures.

*Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4*

## **ARTICLE IV: WORSHIP AND ORDINANCES**

Worship services will be held each Lord's day and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Baptism is the public profession of an individual's faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin and the restoration of relationship with God. Baptism will be by immersion in water, and an elder will oversee the administration of this ordinance (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:41).

The Lord's Supper is the celebration of Christ's atoning sacrifice to return sinners into a right relationship with God. It is also a proclamation of Christ's death until His return. The Church will observe the Lord's Supper regularly, and an elder will oversee the administration of this ordinance (1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

## **ARTICLE V: COVENANT MEMBERSHIP & MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 5.1 COVENANT MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS**

Individuals who desire Covenant Membership at the church must meet the following qualifications:

- A believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of new life in Jesus Christ
- Baptized in obedience to Jesus Christ
- Affirm the church's confession of faith
- Sustain the doctrines of our church and not hold any settled convictions contrary to them
- Affirm with signature and keep in practice the commitments of the Church Covenant

## **SECTION 5.2 COVENANT MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AND AFFIRMATION**

The process for becoming a Covenant Member of the church includes completing the Starting Point Class, completing a membership interview with two of the elders, and an affirmation of the church on the basis of the person's profession of faith by 75% of the voting Covenant Members present at the regular or special Covenant Members' meetings.

At the time of affirmation of Covenant Membership, the newly elected Covenant Members shall relinquish their Covenant Membership in other churches. Individuals will be eligible for the Covenant Membership process by transfer of letter of membership from a church of like faith and practice; by prior profession of faith and baptism by immersion; or making a profession of faith and following in baptism by immersion.

## **SECTION 5.3 COVENANT MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND PRIVILEGES**

In accordance with the Church Covenant, each Covenant Member shall be privileged with and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with the leading of God's Spirit and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Covenant Membership expectations include:

- Regular participation in a Life Group
- Active in Serving
- Regular in Sacrificial Giving
- Faithful in Worship Attendance
- Attendance and Participation in Member Meetings

Only those who are Covenant Members of the church are permitted to lead in the ministries of the church.

## SECTION 5.4 CHURCH COVENANT

Those who enter into Covenant Membership will affirm and sign the Church Covenant signifying a commitment to strive to live by its principles and hold other members accountable to the same.

*Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and 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.*

*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; 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.*

*We also engage to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior; to devote ourselves and our families to the Scriptures, submitting every part of our lives to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our families, friends, and acquaintances; to walk watchfully and uprightly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, exemplary in our demeanor, and encouraging in our conversation; to avoid all gossip and excessive anger; to abstain from all practices and habits which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.*

*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 sincere concern for one another's joys and sorrows; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the commands of our Savior to secure it without delay.*

*We moreover engage that when we leave this fellowship, we will, if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.*

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip us with everything good that we may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

## **SECTION 5.5 CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Covenant Members are expected to conduct their lives according to the biblical standards of holiness as they grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. When a covenant member knowingly, blatantly, and publicly ignores the direct commands, admonitions, and prohibitions of Scripture, principles of discipline will be applied in order that the name of Jesus Christ may not be dishonored further and the welfare of the church shall not be opposed. The principles are found in passages including: Matthew 7:1-5, 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. Corrective discipline will be handled by the elders who will determine whether a matter should be brought before the Covenant Members for action.

Church discipline should be for the purpose of:

- The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual(s) disciplined (Hebrews 12:1-11, Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 6:1);
- The instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians as an example to them (1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Timothy 5:20, Hebrews 10:24-25);
- The purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Ephesians 5:27, Revelation 21:2);
- The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13-16, John 13:35, 1 Peter 2:12);
- The glory of God by displaying the good news of His holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11, John 15:8, Ephesians 1:4, Matthew 5:16).

## **SECTION 5.6 TERMINATION OF COVENANT MEMBERSHIP**

Termination of Covenant Membership shall be recognized by the church in the event of a transfer of Covenant Membership, letter of resignation, death of a member, or the act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders. A vote of 75% of the voting Covenant Members present at any regular or special Covenant Members' meeting is needed to terminate the Covenant Membership of an individual for church discipline.

## **SECTION 5.7 RESTORATION OF COVENANT MEMBERSHIP**

Church discipline is intended to be restorative in nature. To that end, restoration of church membership and reversal of disciplinary measures may be recommended by the elders to the congregation upon the demonstration of genuine biblical repentance. Covenant Membership will be restored based on the recommendation of the elders along with a 75% vote of the congregation. (Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5)

The following process will be implemented in hope of bringing about restoration:

1. Upon confession of sin, the elders will appoint a spiritual mentor to disciple the repentant individual.
2. The ultimate objective of spiritual restoration is two-fold:
  - a. Ensure reconciliation with hurt and offended member(s), their families, and other members within the church, and with God – Luke 19:1-10; Philemon 18, 19.
  - b. Promote genuine Christ-likeness – Romans 8:29.
3. When a Christian repents of sin, spiritual evidence will be visible:
  - a. Acknowledgement and admission of sin – 1 John 1:5-2:2.
  - b. Sorrow over sin and its consequences – 2 Corinthians 7:8-11.
  - c. Demonstration of spiritual fruit – Matthew 3:7, 8; Luke 3:8-14.

## **SECTION 5.8 COVENANT MEMBERS MEETINGS**

Member Meetings will be held once every quarter for the purpose of corporate prayer, review of budget and finances, and reports and announcements from Ministry Teams.

While the elders will typically schedule and call regular members meetings, special members meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of 10% of the voting membership.

An elder will lead all Covenant Membership meetings. Proper communication of meetings will be disseminated to Covenant Members to allow at least two weeks for preparation, questions, and prayer.

The church shall hold an annual meeting for the purpose of discussing and affirming the proposed annual financial ministry plan. The elders shall develop and present the annual financial ministry that follows the fiscal calendar year of January to December.

Covenant Members of 18 years of age and older can vote during Covenant Membership meetings on any matter. The Covenant Membership must vote to affirm any item, unless otherwise noted in the bylaws, by a two-thirds vote. Covenant Members will be asked to affirm the recommendations of elders on the following:

- Annual financial ministry plan
- Capital purchases, building, or activities where the value exceeds 5% of the annual financial ministry plan
- Sell of any physical property or real estate
- Acquiring debt
- Calling or dismissing elders
- Affirming or dismissing deacons
- Election or removal of both clerk and treasurer
- Changes to the Constitution
- Approval and termination of Covenant Members
- Other items the elders believe to be of significance to the life and ministry of the church

Covenant Member meeting minutes shall be maintained indefinitely by the church clerk (see Article VI, Section 6.4).

## **ARTICLE VI: GOVERNANCE, ELDERS, DEACONS, OFFICERS, STAFF, AND MINISTRY TEAMS**

### **SECTION 6.1 GOVERNANCE**

The elders shall be entrusted by the congregation to oversee the ministry and resources of the church.

Two of the elders, along with the Clerk and Treasurer, are designated as the directors of this corporation as the term is defined and used in the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act. Subject to the provisions and limitations in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and the church's bylaws, all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the directors.

### **SECTION 6.2 ELDER RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The Scriptures use the term elder synonymously with the terms pastor and overseer (1 Peter 5:1-2). The elders will be responsible for the oversight of the church and its ministries. They will meet regularly for

prayer, personal accountability, and the fulfillment of their ministry responsibilities. The elders are responsible for the leading of the church to fulfill its New Testament mission.

The elders shall be Covenant Members of the church. The elders of the church will also be referred to as the Elder Team, and that team will be composed of “vocational elders” and “lay elders,” where vocational elders refers to those whose primary vocational work is with the church and lay elders refers to those whose primary vocation is not with the church. Additionally, vocational elders are primarily compensated through the financial resources of the church. Vocational and lay elders have equal authority but differing responsibilities as determined by the Elder Team. The Elder Team shall normally consist of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications of the office. The Elder Team will aim to have a proportionate number of vocational and lay elders.

Elders will be men of prayer and the Word of God. Only men may serve as elders. The qualifications are defined specifically in the Scripture passages of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4. If at any time an elder is not fulfilling his role, fails to meet the biblical qualifications, or no longer desires to serve, the elders will address the situation in partnership with the Covenant Members. The elders will recommend any steps to be taken and ask the Covenant Membership for affirmation. Covenant Members may provide input into an elder’s lifestyle and practice according to biblical qualifications at any time in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

The Elder Team will have the responsibility to identify and examine any man as meeting the qualifications to serve on the Elder Team. After prayer and examination, the new elder will be placed before the Covenant Members for affirmation and prayer commissioning.

Two of the elders will serve as directors of the Corporation, along with the Clerk and Treasurer. When signatures of the Directors/Officers are needed to transact business, the signatures of at least two active elders reflecting the unity of the Elder Team shall represent the Corporation. Prior affirmation of the Covenant Membership will be obtained where necessary in accordance with Article V, Section 5.7. The elders must have a two-thirds affirmation among themselves before submitting matters to the Covenant Members for vote, unless specified otherwise.

## **SECTION 6.3 DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The term deacon in Scripture means minister or servant. As the deacons of the New Testament served under the direction and leadership of the apostles and elders, deacons at the church will serve under the leadership of the elders in areas where ministering to the needs of the church is of primary importance and allows the elders to give themselves more wholly to their responsibilities of oversight, prayer, and ministry of the Word.

Deacons will be followers of Jesus Christ who possess spiritual maturity and wisdom, demonstrate a servant spirit, and meet the qualifications of Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Men and women may both serve as deacons. The Scriptures provide that only men may serve in the office of elder. However, the Scriptures indicate that both men and women are able to serve in the office of deacon. In 1 Timothy 3, the term translated wives in verse 11 can actually be translated either as women or wives depending on the context. In Romans 16:1, Phoebe is identified as the deaconess or servant (as some translations choose to translate rather than transliterate the word deacon in this verse) of the church at Cenchreae. This likely indicates her role in a more official office of deacon/servant within the church.

The scriptural responsibilities for deacons are not explicit. Deacons at the church will serve the needs of the church and assist the elders in their service and equipping functions. If at any time a deacon is not fulfilling his or her role, fails to meet the biblical qualifications, or no longer desires to serve, the elders will evaluate the situation. If necessary, the elders will recommend steps to be taken and ask the Covenant Membership for affirmation.

In the event that a deacon for a particular role is no longer needed, that individual may be recommended by the elders for another deacon role and be presented to the congregation for approval. If there are no other deacon roles that need to be served by that individual or they don't seem to be a good fit for an available role, then they will not be considered a deacon until there is a role for which they may be selected and reaffirmed by the recommendation of the elders and vote of the congregation. The elders will make the determination concerning whether or not a need continues to exist to be served by a deacon.

When the need arises for deacons, there will be an active search initiated by the elders for men and women who meet the biblical qualifications. Individuals must have been faithful and active Covenant

Members for a minimum of one year. Covenant Members may also recommend potential candidates. The elders will examine each candidate to determine if they meet the biblical qualifications and present them to the Covenant Membership for affirmation. There is no preset number of deacons or preset term of service.

## **SECTION 6.4 CLERK**

The Clerk shall be elected annually upon the recommendation of the elders. The clerk must be a Covenant Member. It shall be the clerk's responsibility to attend or be represented at all church business meetings and record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings. The church clerk will submit minutes from the previous members' meeting at the next scheduled members' meeting for approval.

## **SECTION 6.5 TREASURER**

The Treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer will be elected upon the recommendation of the elders. The treasurer must be a Covenant Member. The treasurer will have the authority to sign checks and disburse funds in the manner prescribed by elders and in accordance with the church budget. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. As required by the church, the treasurer may be bonded.

## **SECTION 6.6 CHURCH STAFF**

The church staff will be composed of three categories, as needed, to fulfill the mission of the church. Details concerning employment policies will be managed by the elders.

### **Section 6.6.1 Ministry Staff**

Ministry staff will be composed of godly individuals elected by the church to assist the elders in carrying out the mission of the church. They must be people of high character, pertaining to personal integrity, family relationships, and doctrinal fidelity.

Through prayerful consideration and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the elders shall examine and nominate, and the church shall elect qualified ministry staff as needed. The elders may call upon qualified church members to assist them in this process. After sufficient examination, the candidate will be presented to the church and voted upon after two (2) weeks' notice by a 75% majority vote during a members' meeting.

A ministry staff may resign at any time with the majority approval of the elders. The dismissal of a ministry staff can be recommended to the church by a majority vote of the elders and must be approved by a 75% majority vote of those voting at a members' meeting, for which at least two (2) weeks' notice must be given.

### **Section 6.6.2 Administrative Staff**

The elders will identify and hire additional staff as necessary to properly handle the administrative tasks related to the mission of the church. The Lead Pastor will oversee the hiring process.

Anyone serving as an administrative staff will be required to be a Covenant Member. The funding for administrative staff positions will be included in the annual church budget.

### **Section 6.6.3 Support Staff**

The elders will identify and hire additional staff as necessary to support the mission of the church. The Lead Pastor will oversee the hiring process. Usually, those serving in this role will be members in good standing. The funding for support staff positions will be included in the annual church budget.

## **SECTION 6.7 MINISTRY TEAMS**

Select ministries of the church will be carried out by ministry teams for the purpose of accomplishing the church's mission, creating a healthy church, and allowing individuals to exercise their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12). The ministry teams will be coordinated by the elders and/or deacons and supported by the church to fulfill their mission.

Ministry team leaders will be selected by the elders. The team leader will bring recommendations for team members to the elders for approval. There will be no preset term for team members, but the team leader and/or elders can recommend a rotation or sabbatical years for team

members. Ministry teams can then enlist Covenant Members to help assist carrying out their mission. Elders can at any point remove a team leader or ministry team from their area of responsibility. Budget and cost expenditures for each ministry shall be determined by the elders with the assistance of the ministry team leader.

## **ARTICLE VII: INDEMNIFICATION**

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church may provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church shall purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities.

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

If at least two elders are not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the Covenant Membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the Covenant Membership.

## **ARTICLE VIII: DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Believing the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall urge its Covenant Members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of lawsuits to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian, individuals or corporate entities. The elders shall direct the church in carrying out these aspirations.

## **ARTICLE IX: DESIGNATED FUNDS**

The elders have discretion to establish various designated funds to accomplish specific purposes. The congregation may also approve the creation of a designated fund by a two-thirds vote. Contributions to these established funds will be used for the intended purposes. Contributions marked with any other designation will not create a financial obligation to use the contribution for a particular purpose but will be deemed as advisory in nature.

## **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution or any provision contained herein may be altered, amended, repealed, or restated, and a new constitution may be adopted by a 75% passing vote, as defined in the church's by-laws, at any special or regular members meeting duly noticed. Duly noticed is defined as two weeks pre-notification via email or other communication means.

## **ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION AND MERGERS**

In the event of a voluntary dissolution of the church, the net assets of the church shall be distributed to one or more like-minded non-profit organizations that advance the mission, faith, and theology of this church. The distribution will be in accordance with a passing vote of the elders as defined in the church's bylaws. In the event of a merger of the church with another church, then the net assets of the church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.

## **ARTICLE XII: BURIAL RIGHTS**

Burial privileges, if space available, shall be granted free of charge as follows:

1. Covenant members of Christ Fellowship Leesville and members of their immediate family (spouses or children), or
2. A former Leesville Baptist Church member or former Christ Fellowship Leesville member having one or more members of their immediate family interred in the cemetery (parents, spouses, or children).

Those meeting one of the qualifications as listed above may reserve open lots through a written or online application approved by the elders. If a covenant member is removed from membership, per [SECTION 5.6 TERMINATION OF COVENANT MEMBERSHIP](#), any reservation of lots will be terminated, and the lot will once again be made available. This does not apply to qualification #2 above.

The elders shall have authority to deal with the unforeseen situation as to burial privilege, location, etc., not specifically covered in this article.