

# **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

of

## **COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Lake Butler, Florida

### **CONSTITUTION**

#### **PREAMBLE:**

We, the members of Covenant Community Church, do adopt and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

#### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this church shall be: COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH

#### **ARTICLE II – FOUNDATION, PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES OF MINISTRY**

A. The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), and its infallible rule for guidance in all its affairs is the Word of God (Psalm 119:89). This church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (2 Timothy 3:16).

B. The purpose of this church shall be to glorify and enjoy the God of the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 4:4) according to the teaching of his Word.

C. The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the worth and beauty of Jesus Christ, who is the full expression of God's glory (Revelation 5:12; John 1:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6). We exist to exalt him in worship (John 4:23), increase our perception of his glory through the preaching and teaching of his Word (2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Peter 3:18), and spread the knowledge of him by evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (1 Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

## ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

### I. Of The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, 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 centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

### II. Of The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, 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 offices in the great work of redemption.

### III. Of The Fall Of Man

We believe that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

### IV. Of The Way Of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of 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.

### V. Of Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as 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 bestowed, not in consideration 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.

## VI. Of The Freeness Of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, 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; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

## VII. 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 its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

## VIII. Of Repentance And Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought 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 unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication 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.

## IX. 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 ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

## X. 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.

## XI. Of The Perseverance Of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto 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 they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

## XII. 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 unfeigned 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.

## XIII. 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 or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

## XIV. Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

## XV. Of The Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day; and it is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for the rest that remains for the people of God.

## XVI. Of Civil Government

We believe that Civil Government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

## XVII. Of The Righteous And The Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as 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 such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

#### XVIII. Of The World To Come

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 adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

#### XIX. Of The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

#### XX. Of Complementary Genders

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

#### XXI. Of Family & Marriage

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards and the means for procreation of the human race.

## ARTICLE IV – CHURCH COVENANT

Having been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we now, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, resolve to live by faith, and so establish this covenant with one another.

In all we do, we will aim to glorify and enjoy the God of our salvation, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things: to Him be all glory forever! (1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36)

We will eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by walking together in love and in the Spirit and by putting away all bitterness, anger, and injurious speech. (Eph. 4:3; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 4:29, 31)

We will be devoted to one another in brotherly love, with humility and gentleness we will patiently bear with each other, forgiving, encouraging and building one another up, exercising watchfulness over each other and admonishing one another when necessary. (Luke 17:3; Col. 3:13; 1 Thes. 5:11; 1 Pet. 1:22)

We will carry each other's burdens, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 12:15)

We will train our children in the instruction of the Lord, seeking to walk in a way that adorns the gospel of Christ before our family, friends, and neighbors. (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:1)

We will seek, by God's help, to live carefully in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly passions. We will strive to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:14)

We will not neglect to gather together, but will support and treasure the biblical preaching of the whole counsel of God, the faithful observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the loving exercise of church discipline. (Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13)

We will contribute cheerfully, generously and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel both to our neighbors and the nations. (Matt. 28:19; Luke 12:33; 2 Cor. 9:7)

We will, when we move from this place, unite as soon as possible with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

In all these things, we rely on our God who has made a new and everlasting covenant with us, saying:

“They shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. . . . I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good . . . with all my heart and all my soul.” (Jer. 32:38-41)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, amen. (2 Cor. 13:14).

## **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess faith in Jesus Christ, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the Statement of Faith, doctrine and practice of this church, and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this church.

## **ARTICLE VII – CHURCH PROPERTY**

1. In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.
2. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same doctrinal basis be advisable, the Elders shall be authorized by the church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this church is concerned.
3. At no time, whether due to dissolution of the church or for any other reason, shall an officer of the church profit financially from the sale of any church property or assets.

## **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended by a 75% vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP**

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a baptized believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

### **SECTION 2 – ADMISSION OF MEMBERS**

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by a majority vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members.

### **SECTION 3 – DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

As described in the Church Covenant, each member is expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Likewise, it is the responsibility of members to regularly attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. All members 18 years old and older shall have the right to vote in all matters that come before the congregation.

### **SECTION 4 – ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (Matt. 18:15–17; 2 Thes. 3:14–15; 1 Tim. 5:19–20; 1 Cor. 5:4–5). In some cases, discipline can involve explanation by the elders, to church members only, of the nature and seriousness of the sin deemed worthy of discipline.

The purpose of such discipline shall be:

- a. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. (Prov 15:5, 29:15; 1 Cor 4:14; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4–5; Heb 12:1–11; Ps 119:115, 141:5; Prov

17:10, 25:12, 27:5; Ecc 7:5; Matt 7:26–27, 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Cor 5:5; Gal 6:1–5; 2 Thess 3:6, 14–15; 1 Tim 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22)

b. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. (Prov 13:20; Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 5:11, 15:33; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Tim 5:20; Titus 1:11; Heb 10:24–25)

c. For the purity of the church as a whole.

(1 Cor 5:6–7; 2 Cor 13:10; Eph 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2)

d. For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians.

(Prov 28:7; Matt 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Eph 5:11; 1 Tim 3:7; 2 Pet 2:2; I John 3:10)

e. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting his holy character.

(Deut 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chron 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Neh 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matt 5:16; John 15:8, 18:17, 25; Rom 2:24, 15:5–6; 2 Cor 6:14–7:1; Eph 1:4, 5:27; 1 Pet 2:12)

## **SECTION 5 – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Members not undergoing discipline who wish to transfer their membership to another congregation will be recommended by the elders for termination of membership to be accepted by a majority vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of 75% of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. In the case of a potential excommunication for reasons of church discipline, the elders shall give adequate time for the process of discipline (Article I, Section 4) to take place. The hope and goal of all discipline is restoration. Consequently, if a member is undergoing discipline, he or she may not rescind membership. In the event that the discipline is unsuccessful, the elders shall give notice of any recommendation of excommunication at least one member meeting in advance of any action.

## **ARTICLE II – MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1 – WORSHIP MEETINGS**

Worship services shall be held each Lord’s Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

### **SECTION 2 – MEMBERS’ MEETINGS**

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate with the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service as agreed upon by the membership. In particular, the affirmation of elders and deacons, membership, and an annual budget are voted on by the membership at member meetings.

## **ARTICLE III – CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

### **SECTION 1 – GENERAL STATEMENT**

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the church (Col. 1:18). He governs his church through office-bearers whom he appoints and who are gifted by his Spirit with the graces needed to accomplish their work. Covenant Community Church is led by a plurality of elders, served by deacons, with the vote of the membership being the final earthly authority on matters of election of officers, membership and budget.

### **SECTION 2 – ELDERS**

#### A. Composition and Calling

The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both lay elders and vocational elders. The total number of elders at any time on the Council shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church.

The man who holds the office of lead pastor will also hold the office of elder. Other candidates will be carefully examined by the Council of Elders as to their qualifications and support of both the doctrine and the practice of the church. A potential elder must have proven himself as a man of elder character and ability within the context of Covenant Community Church.

The following steps constitute the process by which an individual will be screened and evaluated to discern God's hand upon that person's life in qualifying him for eldership.

(1) Initiation: The individual responds to God's working in his life by expressing a desire to serve.

(2) Consultation: The Council of Elders and the individual meet together to discuss the biblical qualifications for service, agreement with the statement of faith and ministry philosophy of Covenant Community Church, expectations of the ministry, and other areas that may be deemed pertinent and beneficial by either the elders or the individual.

(3) Confirmation: The Council of Elders meets to determine if the elders unanimously agree that the individual has the potential for leadership. If unanimously agreed, the elders assume responsibility to train the individual toward leadership.

(4) Presentation: If the individual's life and service is deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders, he is presented to the membership at a members' meeting for congregational

consideration. The membership is given a 30-day period in which to personally express any concerns or needed input to the Council of Elders.

(5) Affirmation: After the Council of Elders has considered the input of the congregation, and if the elders unanimously agree that the individual has indeed been called by an act of God's grace for leadership within the church, then the candidate is presented to the membership at a member meeting for affirmation or denial. A minimum 75% vote of the members present at the member meeting is needed for affirmation.

### B. Qualifications and Responsibilities

Elders and candidates for elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include: 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

The fundamental responsibility of the elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word of God. The elders are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word of God, and prayerfully tending the flock of God in this local church.

Moreover, the responsibilities of the elders shall include: (1) examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Statement of Faith and membership course material; (2) overseeing the process of church discipline; (3) examining prospective candidates for office; (4) overseeing the work of the deacons, appointed church agents, Ministry Teams, and ministry positions; (5) conducting worship services; (6) overseeing the ordinances of the Gospel; (7) equipping the membership of the church for the work of the ministry; (8) teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally; (9) correcting error; (10) overseeing, coordinating, and promoting the ministries of the church; (11) mobilizing the church for both local and world evangelism and missions; and (12) helping establish policies, positions, and practices for Covenant Community Church that are consistent with the express purposes of the church.

### C. Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of the church. The elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function. The Council shall meet at least once every month.

The priorities of discussion and action at Council meetings shall be the following:

- (1) Prayer/Worship: Prayer, discussions, and decisions pertaining to the shepherding and accountability roles of the elders over the flock (see Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3);
- (2) Management: Decisions regarding finances, administration, and policies affecting the direction of the ministry (see 1 Timothy 3:5);
- (3) Church Discipline: Discussion and initiation of church discipline where necessary (see Hebrews 13:17);

(4) Church Policy and Ministry Methodology: Periodic discussions regarding doctrine, the ministry, and how to be biblical and effective in the task to which God has called the church and its leadership.

## **SECTION 3 – PASTORS**

### A. Lead Pastor

The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall be recognized by the church as particularly called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. Additionally, he is responsible for providing the primary leadership to the other pastors and administrative staff.

In the event of a vacancy of the office of lead pastor, the Council of elders shall act as search committee for a lead pastor (Current elders are eligible to be nominated to lead pastor). They may form advisory teams from the membership to assist them in the search as they deem necessary. The membership of the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential lead pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his character and to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of a man to be elected as lead pastor must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting. A minimum 75% majority vote of the membership present at the meeting is required to elect a man to the office of lead pastor.

## **SECTION 4 – DEACONS**

### A. Composition and Calling

The office of deacon is open to both men and women. Deaconesses will serve in a manner consistent with the complementarian stance of the constitution. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry. The call and affirmation of deacon candidates shall follow the same procedure as that of elder candidates as stated in the Bylaws, Article 3, Section 2.A.

### B. Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:8–12).

### C. Responsibilities

The deacons shall inform and be ready to assist the elders regarding any service that supports and promotes the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and care for members of the congregation. The deacons' responsibilities may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- (1) Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy;
- (2) Providing aid and care in times of crisis, distress, illness or need;

- (3) Assisting the administration of the ordinances of the Gospel;
- (4) Caring for and maintaining the church properties;
- (5) Administering the business affairs of the church that pertain to its material assets;
  
- (6) Assisting and overseeing various aspects of the ministry of the church.

#### **D. Organization**

The elders shall organize the deacons however the elders determine best to achieve the mission of the church. The elders may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function.

### **SECTION 5 – ORDINATION AND LICENSING**

Covenant Community Church shall recognize all elders and pastors of the church as ordained to Gospel ministry and confer upon them the responsibilities normally associated with ordination. The church also may license, endorse or commission members to various aspects of Gospel ministry.

### **SECTION 6 – ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

In addition to vocational pastors and ministers, the church may employ additional personnel. The elders shall be responsible for determining the duties and hiring of such personnel.

### **SECTION 7 – REMOVAL**

An officer or staff member may resign his office or position at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office. Where a grievance exists against an officer or staff member of the church, either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in Constitution, or due to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder, deacon or staff member, such grievance may be brought before the elders by any two members in good standing. If the elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believe the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office. Removal of any elder requires a 75% vote of the members present at the member meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV – FINANCES**

### **SECTION 1 – FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The financial planning of Covenant Community Church shall be carried out through the annual budgets related to the various ministries of the church. Annual budgets shall be approved and adopted by the church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders via the Finance Team. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the Finance Team in conjunction with the elders.

### **SECTION 2 – DEBT**

Though borrowing and lending are not necessarily viewed as sin in the Scriptures (Matthew 5:42; Psalm 37:21; 112:5), debt is recognized as something to be avoided when possible (Proverbs 22:7). This church has and does affirm its belief that God is our ready provider for all that he has determined for us to undertake (Philippians 4:19; James 1:17; Psalm 81:10). This church is not to take any debt upon itself (other than that which is paid in full on a monthly basis), except after diligent seeking of the Lord through corporate prayer.

### **SECTION 3 – AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH**

The elders are the only officers of the church who have the authority, in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

### **ARTICLE V: Church Records**

1. The church shall keep the following records:

- 1) Minutes of Elders' and Deacons' meetings
- 2) Minutes of special called meetings of the congregation
- 3) Rolls of the members in the congregation with the dates of their reception
- 4) Resolutions adopted by the Board of Elders
- 5) Appropriate accounting records
- 6) The Constitution and all amendments to it currently in effect
- 7) The Bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect

2. Members entitlement

A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy any of the church records described above, with the exception of the Elder's meeting minutes, and provided the Elders find that the member has a legitimate purpose. This shall be done at a reasonable time and location, specified by the Elders, and upon reasonable notice. The Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

### **ARTICLE VI: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day in December in each year.

## **ARTICLE VII – INDEMNIFICATION**

### **SECTION 1 – MANDATORY 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 shall 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.

### **SECTION 2 – PERMISSIVE INDEMNIFICATION**

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.

### **SECTION 3 – PROCEDURE**

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended by a three-quarters (75%) vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members.