

# Constitution

## *The Chapel in Wadsworth*

### **Preamble**

We, the Members of this church, in order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to define our responsibilities, and to establish orderly governance for our church consistent with the teachings of the Word of God, voluntarily submit ourselves to this Constitution.

As used herein, the term “Constitution” shall include the same meaning as the term “Articles” as used in Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1702.

### **Article I – Name and Incorporation**

**NAME:** This church shall be known as The Chapel in Wadsworth. The word “church” as used in this Constitution shall refer to The Chapel in Wadsworth, whereas the same is an organized, connected body of believers in Jesus Christ.

**INCORPORATION:** This church was originally planted in Wadsworth, OH, as Valleyview Chapel by The Chapel in Akron, OH, on January 23, 1994 and known as The Wadsworth Campus of The Chapel between October 31, 2010 and August 31, 2023.

### **Article II – Purpose and Mission**

The Chapel in Wadsworth exists to glorify God by living out the First and Second Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-39) while accomplishing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). To this end, we seek to provide and maintain a place for corporate worship and ministry to and for the church Members and attenders. We may seek to own and maintain suitable real estate and buildings for this purpose, receiving, holding, and disbursing gifts, bequests, and funds arising from other sources, so as to accomplish those things necessary to fulfilling our purpose.

### **Article III – Doctrinal Statement**

We accept the Word of God (that is, the Scriptures) as our authority in matters of faith and practice and humbly adopt the following Doctrinal Statement as our interpretation of Bible doctrine.

1. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are fully inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three in one, co-equal, which is the Trinity.

3. We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, who has blessed His children with every spiritual blessing. He adopts as His own all those who come to Him through His Son; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man without division or confusion of the two natures.
5. We believe in the Holy Spirit, one of the three Persons of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the life of every believer, empowering the believer for godly living, service, and the preaching and teaching of the gospel.
6. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners in thought, word, and deed.
7. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into Heaven, and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for all believers.
9. We believe in the “blessed hope” – the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
10. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby they become children of God and heirs of eternal life. This is a relationship in which they are eternally secure.
11. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the unjust and the just, the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost, and the everlasting joy of the saved, which demand a heaven and hell.
12. We believe in the existence of a personal devil, who is working in the world to destroy the souls of mankind and that he and all his fallen angels, with all who do not receive Christ as their Savior will eternally suffer in the lake of fire. That is the second death.
13. We believe in the Church, the called-out Body and Bride of Christ, whose mission it is to preach the Gospel to all the world and edify the believers, glorifying God, with her

endeavors being supported by her own freewill gifts and offerings, as faithful stewardship requires.

14. We believe that the Ordinances of the Church, instituted by Jesus, are Baptism (by immersion following conversion) and Communion (the symbolic remembrance meal commemorating the Last Supper).

## **Article IV – Statements of Belief**

The Bible proclaims that all people, even Jesus' followers, continue to be impacted by and struggle with sin. Therefore, we all remain vulnerable to falling short of God's perfect will and thus fail to receive the full measure of His blessings for our lives. Even so, we believe that God offers full redemption, restoration, and life eternal to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23; Romans 10:9-10).

As human beings created in the image of God, we believe that every person must be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and honor (Genesis 1:27; Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31-38; James 2:1-9).

In light of various interpretations of the Word of God within the Christian community, we set forth the following affirmations to give clear definition to what we believe the Word of God teaches regarding these areas.

We affirm:

### **The Sanctity of Human Life**

All humans are made equally in the image of God, and as such, human life is of the highest intrinsic value to God. We believe that all human life is a gift from God to be cherished from the time of conception until natural death. Therefore, we believe that this life should not be taken by man through any form of abortion or euthanasia (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; Job 10:8-11; Psalm 139:13-16).

### **Marriage and Family**

God has ordained that the family is an institution established to accomplish His purpose in Christ, and the foundation of the family is marriage. Marriage according to the Scriptures is a covenant between one man and one woman, and the blessings and obligations of marriage are designed by God to be for all of this life on earth (Matthew 19:3-6; Mark 10:2-12).

Given God's design for marriage, Oversight Elders and/or Pastors, shall not conduct wedding ceremonies, blessings, unions, renewals of vows or the like contrary to the views contained herein. Nor shall any of the church's property be used for ceremonies or the like that violate this belief.

In marriage, husbands and wives have joint responsibility for the physical and spiritual well-being of one another and their children. God has also appointed husbands to exercise headship within their homes, loving their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. God has also appointed wives to submit to and respect their own husbands as the Church submits to Christ (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Ephesians 5:22-31, 6:4; Colossians 3:21).

### **Biblical Sexuality and Sexual Identity**

All humans are created by God as either biologically male or female; as such, He has determined our gender and sexual identity for His glory. (We acknowledge that there are rare, yet real pathologies related to ambiguous genitalia and sexual differentiation; this is not speaking to such conditions.) Sexual relations between husband (male) and wife (female) are commended by God, solely to be given and enjoyed within the covenant of marriage. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including, but not limited to adultery, bisexual conduct, fornication, homosexual behavior, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Genesis 1:27, 2:18- 24; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:20-23; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; Hebrews 13:4).

### **The Holy Spirit in The Life of The Believer**

Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, beginning with salvation (life in Christ) and continuing forever; and it is God's intent for those who are born again to be filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14; Romans 8:9-15; Ephesians 5:18-21).

The Holy Spirit is sovereign in bestowing gifts of Himself to the Church for the purpose of building-up the Church, not to manifestly glorify any individual or the gifts themselves (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 14; Ephesians 4:7-16).

### **Leadership in The Church**

Both men and women should utilize their spiritual gifts of leadership within the parameters outlined in God's Word, affirming that spiritual gifts are not gender dependent. We believe and practice that God has created men and women with equal worth, dignity, value, and personhood and that He has given them distinct and complementary roles in the Church. According to Scripture, the role of Elder/Pastor/Overseer/Shepherd within the local church is limited by God's Word to men who meet the biblical qualifications and character. Women who are gifted in leadership and teaching can and will fill vital roles within The Chapel in Wadsworth as prescribed by Scripture (Titus 1:5-9, 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 3:1-12, 5:9-16; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; Acts 18:24-26).

## **Article V – Membership Covenant**

The Members of The Chapel in Wadsworth enter into a covenant with one another as one local body in Christ. Each Member agrees to follow and support the Constitution, Bylaws,

Membership Covenant, Doctrinal Statement and Statements of Belief prior to becoming a Member.

1. I believe Jesus Christ is the only way to God, trusting in His death and resurrection to accomplish my redemption and bring me into the Church, His Body and Bride. I fully embrace these foundational beliefs:
  - The Bible is the fully inspired, inerrant Word of God in the original writings, the final authority for all faith, practice, and discipline.
  - There is one God, eternally existing as the Trinity in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
  - Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sins of the world, and was bodily resurrected the third day. He is now interceding for all believers at the right hand of God the Father and will someday return in power and glory.
  - People are created in God's image and made to live in relationship with Him. But through the original disobedience of Adam, all mankind is captive to sin and in need of forgiveness and restoration to relationship with God.
  - Salvation, which is life in Christ, comes by faith alone in the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ on the cross. This salvation includes the forgiveness of sin, the free gift of Christ's righteousness, and the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, who indwells all true believers.
2. I will support the *Doctrinal Statement* and the *Statements of Belief*.
3. I agree not to teach, formally or informally, anything contrary to the teachings of the church.
4. I will prioritize unity and peace in areas where I might hold views contrary to the teachings of the church.
5. I will embrace the Purpose of The Chapel in Wadsworth as stated in Matthew 22:37-39 and Matthew 28:19-20:

“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” – Matthew 22:37-39

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matthew 28:19-20
6. I will treat others at The Chapel in Wadsworth as brothers and sisters in Christ, prioritizing unity and peace by honoring them in Christian love.

7. I will participate frequently in the worship services and meetings of the church.
8. I will pray for the church and serve in a ministry of the church in a meaningful way.
9. I will contribute to the financial support of the church in a planned and consistent manner.
10. I will nurture my own relationship with Christ in obedience to Scripture so that as I grow, I will be able to encourage others to similarly pursue the way of Christ.
11. I understand that The Chapel in Wadsworth aspires to obey the Bible in all matters including church discipline and restoration when necessary. I will therefore support the established policy governing church disciplinary and restorative procedures as prescribed by the Scriptures.

## **Article VI – Authority and Government**

### **Section 1 - General**

As an independent, evangelical Protestant Church, we are under the supreme authority and guidance of Jesus Christ and His Word.

The Biblical norm for Church leadership is a plurality of God-ordained elders from among and for local churches. The two primary formal responsibilities of elders are governing and teaching. Elders whose primary formal responsibility is governing shall be called Oversight Elders and elders whose primary formal responsibility is teaching shall be called Pastors (1 Tim 3:5, 5:17).

The governing authority of The Chapel in Wadsworth is exercised by the Oversight Elders, whose appointment is approved by the Members according to this Constitution and Bylaws.

### **Section 2 - Biblical Interpretation and Final Authority on Faith Matters**

With respect to the various elements of the *Doctrinal Statement*, the *Statements of Belief*, and all other matters of Church theology, we seek divine truth, faith, and morality in the life of this church. The Oversight Elder Board, in consultation with the Pastors, will make the final determination of interpreting and understanding God's Word. Notwithstanding, the Oversight Elder Board will seek to maintain a posture of humility and wisdom, consulting with like-minded Christian leaders as needed.

### **Section 3 - Oversight Elders: Responsibilities, Qualification, Board Composition and Term**

The Oversight Elder Board (hereafter, OEB) shall be charged with the responsibility to oversee the governance of this church body and conduct the affairs of the church in all aspects in accordance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC) §1702.30. The Oversight Elders and the OEB as referenced herein and in the Bylaws shall have the positions, authority, rights, duties, and responsibilities as "directors" referred to in ORC § 1702. The OEB shall act ultimately in obedience to Scripture and then this Constitution and Bylaws.

1. The OEB shall consist of men who have consistently served the church, been devoted to her wellbeing in Christ, and demonstrated the godly qualities prescribed in the Scriptures for those aspiring to such a role. As those who seek to be filled with the Spirit, they represent the leadership of Jesus to the church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
2. The OEB shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) to a maximum of eleven (11) men. With the exception of the Lead Pastor, the OEB shall be composed of non-staff members of the church. The Lead Pastor will serve ex-officio as a voting member of the OEB without serving as Chairman. Each member of the OEB shall have an equal vote.
3. After the initial formation, non-staff members of the OEB shall serve three-year terms, staggered to promote continuity. Non-staff OEB members shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. An OEB member who serves less than two (2) full years is eligible for two (2) additional terms. Terms begin in January.
4. Members of the church are welcomed and encouraged to commend qualified candidates to the OEB, who are then responsible for vetting, preparing, and formally recommending the OEB candidates to the church Members for formal approval at an annual Members Meeting.
5. The OEB is open to seeking assistance with some of its duties that require expertise outside of the OEB members. Such assistance and/or delegation to other individuals or organizations is permitted, provided that such delegation does not breach the OEB's spiritual and fiduciary duties to the church.
6. Unless otherwise stated, all issues needing formal approval shall require a 2/3 (two-thirds) affirmative vote of the OEB.

## **Article VII – Property**

All assets and debts of The Chapel in Wadsworth shall be held in the name of the Corporation. The Officers or Members of this Corporation shall not be liable for the acts and/or debts of the Corporation. The personal and private property of the Officers or Members of this Corporation shall not be used in the payment of the Corporate debt, nor used to procure Corporate debt.

## **Article VIII – Dissolution of the Entity**

With a two thirds (2/3) vote of the OEB, and a majority approval of the Members at a Members Meeting of 50 Members or 30% of Members (whichever is less), the OEB shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes that are consistent with the church's Purpose, Doctrinal Statement, and Statements of Belief. The designated organization(s) shall qualify as an exempt organization(s) under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the

corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). No profit shall ever accrue to the personal benefit of any member from the assets, holdings or other transactions because of dissolution.

## **Article IX – Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**

The Constitution and Bylaws of The Chapel in Wadsworth may be amended by submitting any proposed amendment(s) in writing to the OEB or by recommendation of the OEB. Upon approval by the OEB, the amendment(s) shall be presented publicly and in writing to the membership at least three (3) weeks prior to any vote. In that timeframe prior to the vote, the OEB shall call a meeting in accordance with the Bylaws to review the proposed amendment(s) with the Members. A two thirds (2/3) majority approval of the Members at a Members Meeting of 50 Members or 30% of Members (whichever is less), is needed for any amendment(s) to be adopted.