

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF BELIEVERS CHURCH

MISSION

Believers Church exists to help broken people become devoted followers of Jesus.

PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTION

These Constitution and Bylaws are created with the intention to describe a church government, which is faithful to the values of the Holy Scriptures while at the same time able to function effectively within the principles of law empowering modern corporate governance. In deference to the Holy Scriptures, voting is not favored as it is in corporate governance. The community of faith called the Church, as embodied in its various units of governance within this described structure, is expected to make decisions through consensus and affirmation as the Spirit enables. Nonetheless, for the sake of clarity, certain provisions requiring a vote are maintained. However, when a consensus or affirmation is called for, the intention of these Constitution and Bylaws is not to describe a formal process of voting, but rather a different method of decision making. Once reached, a consensus decision shall become final when entered into the official minutes of the meeting. This standard shall provide for clarity in finality as to determining when a consensus has been reached following any discussion. Additionally, opportunities for affirmation are provided for so that the Vowed Community might join in the decisions made by Church Leadership. May the Spirit direct his church as to how the processes of affirmation and consensus, operating in the sphere of Christian love, may guide the local Church in determining the will of the Lord.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1

NAME

The name of this Church shall be as follows: Believers Church.

ARTICLE 2

PURPOSES AND PREROGATIVES

SECTION 1. GOVERNMENT

This Church shall have the right to govern itself and to conduct its own affairs according to the standard of the New Testament Scriptures. This right shall specifically include such matters as the appointment of a Lead Pastor, the appointment of Elders the appointment of

the Board of Directors, the appointment of the Senior Leadership Team, the discipline of its Vowed Community, and the conducting of its own services and Church programs.

SECTION 2. PROPERTY

This Church shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, rent, convey, mortgage or otherwise dispose of any real estate or assets as may be deemed necessary for the furtherance of its purposes, in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws. All property of the Church shall be deeded to the Church and held in its name.

SECTION 3. PURPOSES

The purposes of the Church shall be to establish and maintain a community of worship, to provide for Christian fellowship and discipleship, and to assume our share of the responsibility and privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit by all available means, both in our region and throughout the world.

ARTICLE 3 *AFFILIATION*

SECTION 1. FELLOWSHIP

This Church shall have perpetual existence and is a sovereign assembly. As such, this Church maintains the right to govern its own affairs. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other like-minded congregations, this Church voluntarily affiliates with other faith communities in its national and district expressions. This Church also reserves the right to network with other organizations, as it deems beneficial. All matters of affiliation shall be decided as prescribed in these Constitution and Bylaws.

SECTION 2. CONFORMATION

This Church shall maintain its standards of the Vowed Community, qualifications for Elders, the Board of Directors, the Senior Leadership Team, and requirements for Pastoral Staff as set by the Holy Scriptures.

SECTION 3. RECOGNITION

Officers of Believers Church shall be recognized and respected by the Lead Pastor and the Vowed Community of Believers Church.

ARTICLE 4 *TENETS OF FAITH*

This section of beliefs is a reflection of several denominations within the Wesleyan Tradition as well as the Lausanne Covenant. The following beliefs were not originally

written by Believers Church and this church does not belong to any single denomination or movement. The goal of Believers Church is ecumenical union with Followers of Jesus around the region, country, and globe.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

We affirm the belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name.

(Isaiah 40:28; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6,18; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:7)

THE AUTHORITY & POWER OF THE BIBLE

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all men and women for God's revelation in Christ and Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. The Holy Spirit illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

(2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; John 10:35; Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 1:16, Matthew 5:17,18; Jude 3; Ephesians 1:17,18; 3:10,18)

THE UNIQUENESS & UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth by their unrighteousness.

There is no other name by which we must be saved. All men and women are perishing because of sin, but God loves everyone, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as 'the Savior of the world' is not to affirm that all people are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite everyone to respond to him as Savior and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue shall confess him Lord.

(Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Acts 4:12; John 3:16-19; 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; John 4:42; Matthew 11:28; Ephesians 1:20,21; Philippians 2:9-11)

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness, ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth and

Christian growth are all his work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit; thus, evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church.

(1 Corinthians 2:4; John 15:26;27; 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3; John 3:6-8; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 7:37-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Acts 1:8; Psalm 85:4-7; 67:1-3; Galatians 5:22,23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; Romans 12:3-8)

THE CHURCH

We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word. God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ, holy living, and mutual accountability. The mission of the Church in the world is to share in the redemptive and reconciling ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit. The Church fulfills its mission by making disciples through evangelism, education, showing compassion, working for justice, and bearing witness to the kingdom of God. The Church is a historical reality that organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms, exists both as local congregations and as a universal body, and also, sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Exodus 19:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 8:11; 10:7; 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 17:14-26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 6:1-2; 13:1; 14:23; Romans 2:28-29; 4:16; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:3, 12-31; 14:26-40; 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15; Ephesians 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:1-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9-10)

SIN (ORIGINAL & PERSONAL)

We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which every human is void of original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that, continually. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God—a product of that inclination to evil and rebellion against God to which we are all inclined. God offers forgiveness of personal sin through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and calls us to confession and repentance—a choice on our part that moves us away from the practice of known sin against God. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ, sin may be defined as unbelief.

Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-21; 7:1-8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:5-8 Matthew 22:36-40 {with 1 John 3:4}; John 8:34-36; 16:7-9; Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; 8:18-24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9-2:6; 3:7-10)

SALVATION

We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of those incapable of moral responsibility and for the children in innocency but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe. Justification through Christ occurs only through faith and repentance.

Isaiah 53:5-6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46-48; John 1:29; 3:14-17; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 3:21-26; 4:17-25; 5:6-21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 1:3-4; 3:13-14; Colossians 1:19-23; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11-14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:19-25; 1 John 2:1-2

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and Man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

(Acts 17:26,31; Genesis 18:25; Isaiah 1:17; Psalm 45:7; Genesis 1:26,27; James 3:9; Leviticus 19:18; Luke 6:27,35; James 2:14-26; John 3:3,5; Matthew 5:20; 6:33; 2 Corinthians 3:18; James 2:20)

GENDER EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP & MINISTRY

We recognize that such a position on women in ministry is sometimes challenged on the basis of certain Scripture passages (1 Tim 2:12, 1 Corinthians 13). However, We believe that all pertinent Scriptures need to be interpreted in the light of their immediate contexts, as well as in the context of Scripture as a whole. We believe that God has progressively revealed in the Scriptures his purpose to call, equip and empower women for full opportunity of ministry in the church. Galatians 3:28 states that in the Christian era "There is neither . . . male, nor female." This is a general principle of Scripture. Any Scriptures that at first appear to contradict this general statement must be understood in light of the general principle of Galatians 3:28. Clearly the spiritual and heavenly identity proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 has precedence over the earthly, administrative identity. We also look to all the Old and New Testament examples of women pastoring and/or leading on every level.

Just to name a few:

Miriam: Prophetess (Exodus 15:20) and leader (Micah 6:4)

Deborah: Prophetess, Judge. National Leader (Judges)

Huldah: Prophetess (2 Kings 22:14ff.; 2 Chron. 34:22ff.)

Female Disciples (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3)

Mary Magdalene: Brought message of Jesus after resurrection (Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24, John 20)

Phoebe: Deaconess in charge of spreading the letter of Romans to house churches (Romans 16)

Priscilla: Lead a house church along with her husband, Aquila. (Romans 16:3-4, Acts 18:26)

MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY

All humans were made in the image of God and are worthy of love, respect, dignity, and compassion. But we believe marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God and in keeping with Christian teaching through the ages and throughout the Church universal, We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union. We believe that God intends faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness.

(Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9)

THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM & THE EUCHARIST

We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness. Baptism does not save a person, but does demonstrate salvation.

(Matthew 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22)

The Communion Supper, instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, which proclaims His life, His sufferings, His sacrificial death, and resurrection, and the hope of His coming again. It shows forth the Lord's death until His return. The Supper is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. It is to be received in reverent appreciation and gratefulness for the work of Christ. All those who are truly repentant, forsaking their sins, and believing in Christ for salvation are invited to participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. We come to the table that we may be renewed in life and salvation and be made one by the Spirit.

(Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:28-58; 1 Corinthians 10:14- 21; 11:23-32)

ARTICLE 5 VOWED COMMUNITY

The Members of this Church as referenced in its Articles of Incorporation shall be called the VOWED COMMUNITY. In deference to the Holy Scriptures the term Vowed Community shall be used solely to reflect the spiritual responsibilities that the Church Members share with the Church Leadership. In no way is the term Vowed Community intended to create or

imply a legal relationship of partnership, joint venture or any other legal relationship other than that of Member as defined by the Articles of Incorporation of this Church, the Business Corporation Law of Tennessee, as now enacted, and the Nonprofit Corporation Law of Tennessee, as now enacted. The Vowed Community of this Church shall consist of those who have met the requirements as stated in these Constitution and Bylaws, have been received, and who voluntarily agree to be governed by these Constitution and Bylaws. All Vowed Community of this Church agree to abide by the Vowed Community Covenant, i.e. *Communal Rule of Life*. Becoming part of the Vowed Community does not simply imply joining the organization, but partnering in accomplishing its mission. As such, every person should have a vested interest in ensuring that this Church succeeds in its mission.

ARTICLE 6 GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH MANAGEMENT

SECTION 1. LEAD PASTOR

The Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the mission of the Church, shall make decisions regarding the direction of the Church, and shall be accountable for those decisions to the Elders and an independent Accountability Board existing outside of Believers Church that is approved by the Board of Directors. The Lead Pastor works collaboratively with other leaders so that spiritual gifting receives equal representation.

SECTION 1A. INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

The Independent Accountability Board consists of three spiritually mature individuals outside of Believers Church. This Board must be (a) Of the same sex as the Lead Pastor, (b) Not related to the Lead Pastor, (c) approved by the Board of Directors, and (d) easily accessible to the Board of Directors.

SECTION 2. ELDERS

The Elders will consist of entrusted individuals ultimately responsible for the welfare and spiritual direction of Believers Church. The Elder Board will be direct overseers, devote themselves to keeping Believers Church theologically pure and culturally relevant, handle matters of church discipline, provide visitation of the sick when appropriate, teach when appropriate, make any and all decisions regarding candidates for ordination, and be upholders of the Church in prayer. The term Elder and Pastor are synonymous. Among the Elders, there are defined roles which allow for clarity, efficiency and structure within the Elder Team and for wisdom in the care of Believers Church, but do not make one Elder more important than the other. Elders at Believers Church must be within the Vowed Community. Elders can also serve on the Board of Directors or Senior Leadership Team, but cannot serve on both simultaneously.

SECTION 3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall be responsible for financial oversight, property, ensuring legal compliance, managing compensation, maintaining documentation, and all other business related matters of Believers Church. No more than two Members shall be related to each other.

The Board of Directors shall approve the decisions of the Lead Pastor to borrow money in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the previous year's total revenue or in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), whichever is lesser, approve staff hiring decisions and salaries of the Pastors and Staff of the Church, determine the salary of the Lead Pastor, make disciplinary decisions regarding other Board Members, approve the annual budget, appoint a new Lead Pastor when the position becomes vacant in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and amend these Constitution and Bylaws when it is deemed necessary to fulfill the mission of the Church. Members of the Board of Directors must be within the Vowed Community and can serve as an Elder but cannot simultaneously serve on the Senior Leadership Team.

SECTION 3A. BENEVOLANCE

The Lead Pastor can meet needs of up to \$200, but must seek approval from the Board of Directors if funds greater than \$200 are to be allocated for food, shelter, clothing, help with utilities, or other needs.

SECTION 4. SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Lead Pastor shall appoint leaders to the Senior Leadership Team of Believers Church who shall help to fulfill the mission of the Church by leading the ministries of the Church in vision, mission, and strategic planning. Members of the Senior Leadership must be within the Vowed Community and can serve as an Elder but cannot simultaneously serve on the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5. VOWED COMMUNITY

The Vowed Community shall fulfill the mission of the Church by learning to follow Jesus, being involved in ministry, giving regularly, helping fulfill missional decisions of the Lead Pastor, and affirming the decisions previously made by the Lead Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team when such decisions result in the need to borrow money in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the previous year's total revenue or purchase or lease real property.

ARTICLE 7 MEETINGS

SECTION 1. ELDERS MEETINGS

The Elders shall meet at least two (2) times per year at the call of the Lead Pastor. These meetings are for the primary purpose of evaluating the current health of the Church and

evaluating the job performance of the Lead Pastor. Special meetings for the Elders may be held as the occasion requires.

SECTION 2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The Board of Directors shall meet at least four (4) times per year at the call of the Lead Pastor. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be held as the occasion requires.

SECTION 3. SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETINGS

The Senior Leadership Team shall meet at least six (6) times per year at the call of the Lead Pastor. Special meetings of the Senior Leadership Team may be held as the occasion requires.

SECTION 4. NOTICE OF VOWED COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Notice of Vowed Community Meetings shall be announced from the pulpit and included in any weekly church announcements that are regularly distributed at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

SECTION 5. QUORUM

All Elders must be present at any and all Elder meetings. A quorum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the Board of Directors and Senior Leader Team Members constitutes a quorum at all meetings.

SECTION 6. VOTING

Whenever a vote is required to be taken by the Elders, Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team, or Vowed Community, each person shall have one vote. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. Major church decisions such as staffing and property must be solidified by a two-thirds vote by the Vowed Community.

ARTICLE 8 *FINANCE*

SECTION 1. SOURCES

Funds for the maintenance of the vision and mission of the Church shall be provided by the voluntary contributions of its Vowed Community, friends, and guests without pressure or coercion.

SECTION 2. ADMINISTRATION

Offerings shall be received by the Church at times and in ways agreed upon by the Lead Pastor. Funds received shall be administered by the Board of Directors, under the direction

of the Lead Pastor. All funds shall be deposited in a bank or financial institution selected by the Board Treasurer and affirmed by the Board of Directors. Records shall be kept of all receipts and disbursements (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

SECTION 3. SOLICITATION

No individual, association, or corporation shall be permitted to solicit funds from the people of the Church for any reason without the consent of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 4. BORROWING

The Lead Pastor shall have the authority to borrow such sums as may be needed from time to time to advance the mission of the Church provided the transaction does not involve the purchase or lease of real property and is not in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the previous year's total revenue or twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), whichever is lesser. Such transactions must have two signatures, the Lead Pastor and a Member of the Board of Directors. Any transaction which involves the borrowing of monies in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the previous year's total revenue or in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), whichever is lesser, shall be approved by a consensus decision during any official meeting of the Board of Directors. Any transaction involving the purchase or lease of real property shall be approved by a consensus decision during any official meeting of the Board of Directors, and affirmed by a vote of the Senior Leadership Team and/or Vowed Community.

SECTION 5. FINANCIAL COMMITTEE EXAMINATION

On a biennial basis, the Board of Directors shall be responsible for obtaining a financial committee examination of the finances of the Church from an authorized independent source, the results of which shall be presented at a Church-Wide Vision Meeting. The scope of the financial committee examination shall be determined by the Board and provided to the committee selected by the Board to perform the examination. The Examination committee shall be appointed by the Board and composed of three members, one of which should have a finance background. Procedures may be suggested by the Board but the Committee should be able to modify as needed in the course of the examination.

SECTION 6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In the event that any Elder, Board of Director Member, or Senior Leadership Team Member has a conflict of interest that might properly limit such Member's fair and impartial participation in the Council deliberations or decisions, such Member shall inform the Council as to the circumstances of such conflict. If those circumstances require the nonparticipation of the affected Member, the Council may nonetheless request from the Member any appropriate non-confidential information which might inform its decisions.

"Conflict of interest," as referred to herein, shall include but shall not be limited to, any transaction by or with the Church in which an Elder, Board of Directors Member, or Senior Leadership Team Member has a direct or indirect personal interest, or any transaction in which such Member is unable to exercise impartial judgment or otherwise act in the best interests of the Church.

No Elder, Board of Directors Member, or Senior Leadership Member shall take part in the final deliberation in any matter in which he or she, members of his or her immediate family, or any organization to which such director has allegiance, has a personal interest that may be seen as competing with the interest of the Church. Any Elder, Board of Directors Member, or Senior Leadership Member who believes he or she may have such a conflict of interest shall so notify his or her respective Council prior to deliberation on the matter in question, and the respective Council shall make the final determination as to whether any Council Member has a conflict of interest in any matter. The minutes of the respective Council Meeting shall reflect disclosure of any conflict of interest and the recusal of the interested Council Member.

ARTICLE 9 PROPERTY

SECTION 1. PURCHASE AND LEASE

All property of the Church shall be deeded to the Church and held in its name. The purchase or lease of real property must be approved by a consensus decision during any official meeting of the Board of Directors, and affirmed by a two-thirds vote from the Vowed Community.

SECTION 2. SALE AND LEASE

Real property of the Church may be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of only if approved by a consensus decision of the Board of Directors during any official meeting of the Board of Directors, and affirmed by a two-thirds vote from the Vowed Community.

SECTION 3. DOCUMENTATION AND AUTHORITY FOR PURCHASE, SALE, AND BORROWING

The Lead Pastor and the Board of Directors Treasurer shall certify all documents relating to the purchase, sale, lease, or mortgage that the same has been duly authorized in accordance with these Constitution and Bylaws. Such certification shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

SECTION 4. DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the Church Corporation or the winding up of its affairs, the Board of Directors shall, after making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all the assets of the Church exclusively for the purposes of the Church Corporation in such manner to set forth in these Constitution and Bylaws to the Believers

Church Network or, in the event that Believers Church Network is not in existence, to such other organizations which are described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding provisions of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law, as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located to such organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or in accordance with the corresponding provisions of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law, as such court shall determine.

ARTICLE 10 AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors then in office.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 VOWED COMMUNITY

SECTION 1. COMMITMENTS OF THE VOWED COMMUNITY

There are seven core commitments for someone joining the Vowed Community. The heart behind these concrete commitments is love, joy, freedom, and grace. Whereas membership for many organizations, clubs and institutions involve consuming and receiving, joining the Vowed Community of Believers Church functions like a family and is marked by participation and service. The Vowed Community is a spiritual family that has received God's grace and endeavors to share that grace with others inside and outside of the church.

These commitments will be referred to as the Vowed Community Covenant or Communal Rule of Life.

- (1) **I have or will publicly affirm my faith in Christ** - A prerequisite to being part of the Vowed Community is being a follower of Jesus who has been baptized. If you have not been baptized, then one of our pastors would love to discuss this with you!
- (2) **I will faithfully commit my whole life to being formed in Jesus and his way** - The first call of every disciple of Christ is to Christ himself - to know him, love him, and be formed by him. Vowed Community members commit to pursue whole-life formation in Christlikeness individually and alongside others. Practically this includes regular

participation in Public Worship, attending all classes for new people, being part of a Community Group and Venture Team.

- (3) **I will intentionally join God in his mission of making disciples in the Tri-Cities Region** - The second call of every disciple of Christ is to make more disciples - to participate in Christ's mission in the world. Believers Church's primary strategy for forming and growing disciples of Jesus in the Tri-Cities is starting and multiplying Missional Churches (MC). Vowed Community members commit to making disciples through active participation in a MC or some other concrete way.
- (4) **I will sacrificially serve our church with my time, energy, heart, and presence** - Servanthood is one of the primary characteristics of a disciple of Jesus. We want this to not just be a "duty" that we perform but a posture that we take towards people and our community. Vowed Community members commit to practically serve Believers Church internally in some way (e.g. First Impressions, Kids, Worship Team, Guest Services, etc.). This could take a variety of forms and change in different seasons, but joyful servanthood is significant.
- (5) **I will diligently protect the unity of Believers Church** - One of the final prayers of Jesus recorded in the Bible is of him praying for his followers to be unified (John 17). The unity of God's people is beautiful when experienced, it must be guarded with prayer and humility, and is a key form of witness to the world. Vowed Community members commit to prioritize the unity and peace of Christ at Believers Church and the wider Church in Johnson City through prayer, words, and actions.
- (6) **I will generously give my financial resources to empower the ministry and mission of Believers Church** - Financial generosity is an important discipleship issue - it is an act of worship and thanks to God, surrender and trust to Jesus, and commitment to the mission of making disciples. Vowed Community members commit to steward their financial resources so they can give ten percent or more to the ministry and mission of Believers Church.
- (7) **I will consistently pray for people at Believers Church and for God's kingdom to break in** - Prayer and intercession are the fuel behind any kingdom movement and breakthrough. Believers Church is committed to a missional expression of the church, so we depend on the resources of God. Vowed Community members commit to lead our church towards greater intimacy with God, fervor in prayer, and spiritual power for the mission.

SECTION 2. VOWED COMMUNITY REMOVAL AND REINSTATEMENT

The Elders shall have the right to remove from the Vowed Community any person who willfully and without good cause absents himself or herself from the regular services of the Church for a period of two (2) consecutive months except for physical disability, or who no longer abides by the standards of the Vowed Community outlined in Article I, Section 1 of these Bylaws. If the former member shall desire reinstatement, he or she shall request in writing from the Elders to have his or her name returned to the Vowed Community list. Upon receiving the request, the Elders shall render a consensus decision at any official meeting.

SECTION 3. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

A member of the Vowed Community may terminate his or her status by informing the Elders, in writing, of his or her desire to do so. Such termination requires no action by the Elders.

SECTION 4. DISCIPLINE

All discipline shall be prayerfully administered according to the Scriptures (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15; Romans 16:17). 1. If a party of the Vowed Community falls below the standard of commitments in faith or in practice, in such a way that the person's life hinders the influence of the Church in the community, or if his or her spirit be contentious and discordant to the well-being of Church life, then by consensus decision of the Elders at any official meeting, his or her name may be removed from the Vowed Community list. 1. The disciplined party shall be notified, in writing, regarding the reason for the discipline. Such notice shall be sent by certified mail to the address of record listed in the Church database. 2. A disciplined person may request reinstatement in writing to the Elders, and the Elders shall consider such requests at any official meeting and reach a decision on all such requests by consensus.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS – LEAD PASTOR, ELDERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

SECTION 1. LEAD PASTOR

The Lead Pastor shall:

1. Be a credentialed minister.
2. Be the spiritual overseer of the Church and shall direct its activities.
3. Be the President of the Corporation and act as Chairman of all meetings of the Elders, Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team and the Vowed Community.
4. Be the general supervisor of all activities of the Church and shall be an ex officio member of all departments and ministry teams.
5. Plan and direct all activities of the Church, including all special meetings and guest speakers.
6. Select the ministerial, professional, and administrative staff and determine their job portfolios.
7. Be responsible for hiring all employees at the Church. No one shall be employed or discharged without the Lead Pastor's expressed approval. He or she shall have the prerogative, with the approval of the Board of

Directors, to add paid staff as the ministries of the Church require. 8. Appoint individuals to the role of Elder. 9. Appoint individuals to the Board of Directors. 10. Appoint individuals to the Senior Leadership Team. 11. Be responsible for reports to the Senior Leadership Team that includes the following: number of decisions to follow Christ, service attendance, discipleship progress, equipping for ministry progress, and a summary of financial stewardship.

SECTION 2. ELDERS

There will be no less than two and no more than five Elders for Believers Church at any given time.

Elders shall: 1. Meet the requirements of an elder as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. 2. Be general overseers of the Church. 3. Be the primary source of accountability for the Lead Pastor within the Church. 4. Evaluate and monitor the spiritual health of the Church. 5. Be spiritual role models for the Church. 6. Help maintain Church discipline when called upon. 7. Pray over the Church. 8. Be willing to assist with pastoral care. 9. Work to protect the reputation and integrity of the Church. 10. Work with candidates and oversee the process of Ordination. 11. Be members of the Vowed Community.

SECTION 2B. LEADERSHIP ADVISOR

The Leadership Elder shall: a. Be appointed by the Lead Pastor. b. Present an annual evaluation of the leadership effectiveness of the Lead Pastor to the Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team. The specific criteria for the evaluation shall be established by the Senior Leadership Team and shall include, but not be limited to the following: commitments to Christ, service attendance, discipleship progress, equipping for ministry progress, financial stewardship, and overall leadership effectiveness.

SECTION 3. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There will be no less than five and no more than eight individuals who serve on the Board of Directors at any given time.

The Lead Pastor shall chair the Board of Directors meetings except during times when the Board of Directors is assessing his or her effectiveness as a leader or his or her remuneration. The Lead Pastor serves as President of the Board of Directors.

Members of the Board of Directors shall have the authority to request an evaluation of other members of the Board of Directors at any time.

SECTION 3A. OTHER OFFICES

The Vice President of the Board of Directors will chair any evaluations that the Board of Directors deems necessary. The Vice President of the Board of Directors works alongside the Lead Pastor to ask for agenda items and lead each meeting.

The Treasurer of the Board of Directors acts as the Financial Director of the Church. The Treasurer manages the church's finances (bill pay and budget management) and attends to general bookkeeping, fundraising, and tax responsibilities. In addition, the Treasurer records the tithes after each Sunday service (this can be done with the help of others), keeps donation receipts and records for tax purposes, pays employees from the Church's account, prepares all tax forms, participates in financial committee examinations, prepares quarterly and yearly statements for donors, and maintains the overall financial integrity of Believers Church.

The Secretary of the Board of Directors is responsible for taking minutes at meetings, reading these minutes at subsequent Board of Director meetings and making sure that Members of the Board of Directors get copies of the minutes from each meeting. The Secretary must make sure minutes are filed away with the Church's Administrative Assistant for record keeping.

There will also be at least one but no more than three additional Board of Directors Members that do not hold a specific office.

SECTION 3B. TERMS OF OFFICE

After the first Board of Directors has served for five years, new members shall be appointed for staggered three-year terms as former Board of Directors Members step down. New appointments occur every January and June. At the time of his or her appointment, each Board of Directors Member will serve for three years. Members of the Board of Directors must be voted in by the Vowed Community.

A member must serve for one year before being eligible for the office of Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary. After one year, a Board of Directors Member can be voted on for the office of Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary. The vote by the Board of Directors for an office must be unanimous. In the event that a Board Officer becomes incompetent or fails morally, the Board of Directors can then vote with a two thirds majority to remove this member from office and/or the Board of Directors altogether.

After a Board of Directors Member's term expires, he or she is eligible to be selected again if unanimously agreed upon by the current Board of Directors Members after a one-year absence.

SECTION 3. SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Senior Leadership Team shall: 1. Be appointed by the Lead Pastor. 2. Be members of the Vowed Community. Have the following responsibilities: 1. Support the vision and leadership of the Lead Pastor. 2. Assist the Lead Pastor in leading and directing the ministries of the Church. 3. Assist the Lead Pastor in equipping the Church for ministry.

ARTICLE 3

VACANCIES

SECTION 1. LEAD PASTOR

In the event of a vacancy of the Lead Pastor office, the following actions shall take place: a. The Elders, Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team shall provide oversight of the Church until the Lead Pastor office is filled. b. The Board of Directors shall appoint an interim leader of the Church until the Lead Pastor office is filled. c. The Board of Directors shall appoint a search committee of at least five persons of which must be part of the Vowed Community of the Church. The search committee shall seek input from the Elders, The Board of Directors, and the Senior Leadership Team before presenting a prioritized list of the best candidates to the Board of Directors for consideration. d. The Elder Leadership Advisor shall serve as the chair of the search committee. e. The Board of Directors shall consult with the Senior Leadership Team regarding the appointment of the new Lead Pastor. A two-thirds vote from the Vowed Community shall result in the appointment of a new Lead Pastor.

SECTION 2: ELDERS

If an Elder is unable to fulfill his or her term, the Lead Pastor shall appoint someone approved by the Board of Directors and a two-thirds vote by the Vowed Community to fulfill the vacancy.

SECTION 3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If a member of the Board of Directors is unable to fulfill his or her term, the Lead Pastor shall appoint someone approved by the other members of the Board of Directors and a two-thirds vote by the Vowed Community to fulfill the vacancy.

SECTION 4. SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

If a member of the Senior Leadership Team is unable to fulfill his or her term, the Lead Pastor shall appoint someone approved by the Board of Directors and a two-thirds vote by the Vowed Community to fulfill the vacancy.

ARTICLE 4 SALARIES

SECTION 1. REMUNERATIONS

a. The Board of Directors shall determine the salary of the Lead Pastor. b. The Lead Pastor shall recommend the amount of remuneration for employees of the Church to the Board of Directors who shall make the final decisions based on comparative norms and budget considerations.

ARTICLE 5 INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 1. INDEMNIFICATION

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the Corporation shall indemnify any Elder, member of the Board of Directors or Senior Leadership Team and may by resolution of the Board of Directors indemnify any employee, against any and all expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her in connection with any claim, action, suit, or proceeding to which he or she is made a party by reason of being an Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member or employee. However, there shall be no indemnification in relation to matters as to which he or she shall be adjudged to be guilty of a criminal offense or liable to the Corporation for damages arising out of his or her own gross negligence in the performance of a duty to the Corporation. Amounts paid in indemnification of expenses and liabilities may include, but shall not be limited to, counsel fees and other fees; costs and disbursements; and judgments, fines, and penalties against, and amounts paid in settlement by, such Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member, or employee. The Corporation may advance expenses or, where appropriate, may itself undertake the defense of any Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member, or employee. However, such Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member, or employee shall repay such expenses if it should be ultimately determined that he or she is not entitled to indemnification under this Article. The Board of Directors may also authorize the purchase of insurance on behalf of any Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member, or employee, or other agent against any liability incurred by him or her, which arises out of such person's status as an Elder, Board of Directors Member, Senior Leadership Team Member, employee, or agent, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify the person against that liability under law.

ARTICLE 7 *DISRUPTIONS*

Any person deemed by The Lead Pastor, an Elder, Board of Directors Member or Senior Leadership Team Member to pose a physical or psychological threat to any person or to the Church, or to be causing, about to cause, or capable of causing disruption to the religious services and activities of the Church, shall be considered a trespasser on Church property and may be ejected summarily. No Church employee or Elder shall incur any liability for acting in good faith in the interests of the Church pursuant to this section.

ARTICLE 7 *AMENDMENTS*

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by the two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors Members then in office.