

**REDEEMING GRACE CHURCH  
BYLAWS**

**Adopted February 16, 2014  
Revised April 18, 2021**

**Section 1  
GENERAL**

1.1 Name. The name of the corporation shall be **Redeeming Grace Church**, hereinafter referred to as "the Corporation," when referring to the legal entity recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, or "the Church," when referring to the ecclesiastical entity established by Jesus Christ as a local church.

1.2 Nonprofit Purposes. The Corporation is a local church organized and operated exclusively as a nonprofit, religious, educational, and charitable organization dedicated to the purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation.

**Section 2  
OFFICES**

2.1 Registered Office and Agent. The Corporation shall continuously maintain a registered office and registered agent within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

2.2 Principal Office. The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at 5200 Ox Road, Fairfax, Virginia, 22030, or such place as shall be determined by the elders (as defined in Section 4).

2.3 Additional Offices. The Corporation may also have offices at such other places as the elders may, from time to time, determine, and the business of the Corporation may require.

**Section 3  
STATEMENT OF FAITH, BYLAWS, AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT**

3.1 Statement of Faith. The Church's Statement of Faith summarizes the essential Christian beliefs around which we unite as a church. The Statement of Faith is incorporated by reference herein.

3.2 Bylaws. These Bylaws, established under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, provide a framework for this church's governance, the regulation of its affairs, and the guidelines for how it should function.

3.3 Membership Commitment. The Membership Commitment explains this Church’s understanding of how we are to live together as church members. Upon joining, members sign this document to indicate their commitment to Redeeming Grace Church. The Membership Commitment is incorporated by reference herein.

3.4 Church Leadership Affirmation. To promote unity and consistent leadership of the Church, based on a biblical foundation, elders, deacons, ministry directors, and certain other leaders on the Church’s staff will *affirm* and *agree* with the Statement of Faith and these Bylaws’ statements on “Church Member Discipline” and “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” (Sections 8.4 and 8.6). However, candidates for, or individuals in these positions may submit in writing any exceptions to their affirmations, requesting that they be allowed to hold the position, notwithstanding the exceptions. The elders will prayerfully consider and then either approve or disapprove the requested exceptions.

3.5 Religious Practices of the Corporation. To be consistent with its religious mission, the Corporation shall not establish any public or private policies or positions that conflict with the Statement of Faith, these Bylaws, or the Membership Commitment.

## **Section 4**

### **ELDERS**

4.1 Number and Term. The elders of the Church shall serve as the Corporation’s board of directors. The Church will maintain a minimum of two (2) elders and will work to maintain the number of elders at a level that best serves the Church. No upper limit will be placed on the number of elders serving at any one time. Elders will have equal authority.

4.1.1 Non-staff elders will serve three-year terms and there is no restriction on the number of terms an elder may serve. As the end of each non-staff elder’s term approaches, that elder, together with the other elders serving at the time (“other elders”), will reconsider that elder’s calling for an additional term. If the elder under reconsideration and the other elders cannot reach agreement as to whether he is still called to serve as an elder, after careful prayer and discussion, they may proceed in accordance with Section 4.5.3.

4.2 Qualification and Appointment. A list of the membership of the current elders shall be available at the Corporation’s principal office as defined in Section 2.2. The elders shall nominate to the membership of the Church (hereinafter “the congregation”), all subsequent elders. The congregation shall be given at least 60 days to get to know and prayerfully consider elder nominees, and then shall vote to elect subsequent elders through a supermajority, as described in Section 8.8.3. Elders will be male members of the Church who meet the qualifications of elders described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and elsewhere in the Bible.

4.3 Powers. The elders shall provide oversight in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church and will do so with the support of and input from the congregation. The members will vote on specific major decisions, as described in Section 8.8.3. Unless otherwise specified in Section 8.8.3 or elsewhere delegated by the elders, all decisions that are necessary for the governance of the Church shall be made by the elders. The elders shall exercise all such powers

of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws.

4.4 Committees and Commissions. The elders may establish special or standing committees, which shall have such powers and duties as prescribed by the elders. Each committee will include at least one elder and may include other members of the Church. The elders or the committee may enlist individuals outside the Church to participate in an advisory capacity in committee activities and meetings. All members of such committees shall serve at the pleasure of the elders. Unless otherwise specified by the elders, committees will conduct their assigned duties, resulting in presentations of findings and recommendations to the elders, and the elders will be responsible for making binding decisions. Committees that the elders authorize to make binding decisions on behalf of the elders shall be designated as “commissions.” Commissions address matters that don’t require the attention of all the elders and that are best handled relatively quickly, privately, and/or efficiently, such as some church discipline cases or reviewing plans for a near-term ministry event. Unless addressed specifically, committees and commissions shall be referred to herein as committees. Other rules governing procedures for meetings of any committee of the elders shall be established by the elders, or in the absence thereof, by the committee itself. The delegation of authority to any committee (including any commission) shall not operate to relieve the elders or any member of the elders from any responsibility imposed by law and/or to allow the committee to take actions that the Bylaws reserve for the elders.

#### 4.5 Sabbatical and Leave of Absence, Resignation, Charges, Removal.

4.5.1 An elder may request a sabbatical or leave of absence for a defined period of time. The remaining elders will either approve the sabbatical or leave of absence, or recommend a different course of action. While an elder is on a sabbatical or leave of absence, he shall not participate in votes of the elders and he shall not be counted for the purposes of voting, including for the purposes of constituting a quorum, majority, or supermajority, as described in Section 5.3. He will be allowed to participate in all aspects of church membership, as described in Section 8.

4.5.2 An individual elder may, at any time, deliver to the elders a written notice of intent to resign, which shall be effective when it has been agreed to by the remaining elders. The elders will deliberate and may discuss the notice of resignation with the requesting elder as they consider whether to agree to or reject the notice. An elder may not resign his church membership without the elders first agreeing to his resignation as an elder. If the elder that submits a notice of resignation is not under church discipline, and if the other elders do not encourage him to reconsider, such that he reverses his decision to resign, he will be allowed to resign. The elders will complete their consideration of an elder’s notice and will provide a written response to the elder within a few weeks, if possible.

4.5.3 When the elders conclude through a supermajority vote of a quorum of the remaining elders that an elder should be removed, they will recommend the same to the Church. The Elder will have the opportunity to appeal the elders’ recommendation. The final decision to remove the elder will require a supermajority vote by the congregation, as described in Section 8.8.3.

4.5.4 Resolving charges against an elder. (1 Timothy 5:19-20) If a credible charge, verified by at least two witnesses, against an elder is brought to the other elders' (i.e., not including the elder being accused) attention, a process to resolve these charges shall be initiated and shall follow the steps outlined below. The goal is to administer this process in a God-glorifying, redemptive manner, and throughout each step in this process the elders shall endeavor to seek resolution, unity, and peace with the accused and others involved. This process is independent of any decision to involve civil authorities.

4.5.4.1. Receiving the charge. When a charge, verified by at least two witnesses, which cannot be resolved among the parties involved or is serious in nature, is brought orally or in written form to any elder, the elders will schedule a meeting to hear the charge. The person(s) bringing the charge (accuser) will be provided a copy of this resolution process and will be asked to provide the charge in written form prior to the meeting to hear the charge.

Every effort will be made to get firsthand facts, rather than hearsay, anonymous or secondhand reports (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19). Where possible, the charge should include facts regarding the conduct, words, and motives for both accuser and accused. The Church recognizes that in the case of certain charges, such as sexual misconduct, it is likely that no other witnesses exist; in these cases, the elders shall normally allow the formal resolution process to proceed without the verification of two witnesses. The other elders will ensure the accuser has an opportunity to bring the charges and the other elders shall decide by supermajority vote whether to proceed with the formal process below.

4.5.4.2 Hearing the charge. A quorum of the other elders, the accuser, and witnesses, shall be present at the meeting, and meeting minutes will be taken. The accuser may bring up to two people to the meeting to provide personal support. Participation of the accused elder in the meeting will ultimately be determined by the other elders with input from the accuser. All parties in the meeting will have uninterrupted time to explain their concerns and ask questions.

The other elders and the accuser will determine whether a) resolution is possible at that time, b) further discussion is required, or c) the formal investigation process should move forward. If the elders, accuser, and accused can resolve the charge at the meeting the matter will be promptly closed.

If the other elders vote, as provided in Section 4.5.4.1, to not proceed with a formal investigation but find that the accused elder had done something wrong, the other elders will lovingly encourage him to confess, take responsibility for his actions, and make necessary changes (Galatians 6:1-2). If deemed necessary by the other elders, prior to the formal investigation phase, the elder in question shall be put on paid (if on staff) temporary leave of absence. If the elders participating in this meeting, not including the accused, deem further discussion is necessary before closing the matter or moving forward with a formal investigation, they may reconvene the participants. If these elders decide by supermajority vote that a formal investigation is warranted, then the process proceeds as outlined in Section 4.5.4.3.

If at any time in this process the other elders find the accused elder "not guilty," the elder will be fully restored to ministry. If he has been put on temporary leave of absence, that leave will be terminated. The elders will determine how best to communicate to the Church members the

decision and any subsequent actions to be taken regarding the restored elder, including efforts to reconcile the relationship between the elder and the accuser.

4.5.4.3. Formal investigation. If the charge is not resolved as provided in Section 4.5.4.2, then an elder-appointed committee shall investigate the charge and report their findings of the accused elder's guilt or innocence. The committee shall be made up of a minimum of five church members, including elders and other members, as needed, all with no conflicts of interest towards the accused or accuser, and will not include the accuser, witnesses, or the accused elder. During the investigation, the accused elder shall be placed on a paid (if a staff elder) temporary leave of absence and will not carry out elder duties and responsibilities.

Soon after the committee provides its findings, the elders will meet to discuss the committee findings and recommend a course of action. The elders will document their determination and justification, which will be grounded in Scripture. In addition, if any remedial steps are included, progress will be evaluated at milestones determined by the elders. Members will be informed of the elders' determination, to the extent appropriate, but a member vote on the determination by the entire congregation will not be required unless the recommendation is for elder removal.

4.5.4.4. Delivering the elders' determination. The other elders shall meet with the accused and the accuser, and meeting minutes will be taken. The accuser and the accused elder may each bring up to two people to provide personal support. The elders shall present their determination, provide an explanation of their determination, and answer questions. At that point, any parties that need to ask for forgiveness of another party will be lovingly encouraged to do so. If the elders conclude through a supermajority vote of the other elders that the accused elder should be removed, he may appeal in accordance with Section 4.5.4.5 or the elders will proceed in accordance with Section 4.5.3.

4.5.4.5. Appeal and resolution. Either the accused elder or the accuser may appeal the elders' determination. A Christian conciliatory organization formally affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention shall be selected once mutually agreed upon by all parties involved. This organization will review the case and will present its recommendations of how to resolve the appeal to the other elders, to the accused elder, and to any other parties with unresolved concerns related to the charge. After receiving the organization's recommendations, the other elders will meet and decide through a supermajority vote whether to uphold or overturn their original determination. Regardless of the outcome, the deciding elders will meet with the accused elder and up to two other people who provide personal support, to inform him of the final decision. If appropriate, the elders will also meet with the accuser and up to two other people who provide personal support, to inform the accuser of the final decision. The church will be informed of the outcome, as appropriate, depending upon the circumstances.

4.6 Transactions with Interested Parties. A contract or other transaction between the Corporation and one or more of its elders, officers, or family members thereof (hereinafter "interested party"), or between the Corporation and any other entity, of which entity one or more elders or officers are also interested parties, or in which entity an interested party has a material financial interest shall be voidable at the sole election of the Corporation unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

4.6.1 The Corporation entered into the transaction for its own benefit;

4.6.2 The transaction was fair and reasonable as to the Corporation, or was in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the Corporation entered into the transaction;

4.6.3 Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the elders authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the elders then in office, without counting the vote of the interested elder or elders, and with full knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the interested parties' interest in the transaction; and

4.6.4 Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the disinterested elders, in good faith and with ordinary care, determined, after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the Corporation could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes.

Interested elders will not be counted in the calculation of the required number to constitute or to form a quorum at a meeting of the elders (or a commission thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction.

Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the Corporation to any of its elders.

4.7 Licensing of Elders to Perform Weddings. The Corporation will complete and submit the application for each elder to be licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to perform weddings on behalf of the Church.

4.8 Conflicts of Interest Policy. It is the policy of the Corporation to avoid conflicts of interest and to provide full disclosure of any and all material conflicting interests by elders, officers, members, and employees; and permit the elders to gather all relevant facts and circumstances to determine, in accordance with the guidelines of Section 4.6 above, whether or not any disclosed potential conflict is benign and not in any way jeopardizing the religious mission, exempt function, or reputation of Christ's Church, so that the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the Corporation.

4.9 Compensation of elders. Elders may serve on either a paid or unpaid basis. Whenever possible, the non-staff (unpaid) elders will lead the elders in their discussions regarding elder compensation. The elders will recommend and the congregation shall vote on an elder candidate's status as compensated or uncompensated when they vote on his election to office. If an elder transitions from being non-staff to being on-staff, the congregation will vote on his compensation status under the provisions for a "Major Financial Commitment Decision," whether or not his annual compensation reaches the threshold described in Section 8.8.3.1. These processes will be further described in policies to be established by the elders. Every elder shall be entitled to reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of his service, as determined in policies to be established by the elders.

## **Section 5**

### **MEETINGS OF THE ELDERS**

5.1 Notice. Regular and special meetings of the elders may be held within or outside the Commonwealth of Virginia without formal notice at such time and place as shall, from time to time, be determined by the elders.

5.2 Waiver of Notice. Whenever any notice is required to be given by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to the notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent thereto. Attendance at a meeting by a person entitled to notice shall constitute a waiver of proper notice of such meeting, except where attendance is for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

5.3 Voting and Quorum. In general, a majority of the elders shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The act of a majority, or supermajority (at least sixty-six (66) percent) in certain decisions as described in Sections 4.5.3, 4.5.4.1, 4.5.4.2, 4.5.4.4, 4.5.4.5, 6.1, 7.2, 7.6.3, 8.4.2 and 12, of the elders at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the elders. If the number of elders in the Church or the number of elders serving on a Commission is small, the table shown below specifies the numbers of elders required to constitute a quorum, a majority, and a supermajority. Further exceptions may be otherwise specifically provided by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or in rules that the elders subsequently adopt for situations not otherwise addressed herein.

**The Number of Elders Required to Form a Quorum, Majority, and Supermajority**

Number of elders in the Church or in a Commission	Number Required to Form a <u>Quorum</u>	Number Required to Form a <u>Majority</u>	Number Required to Form a <u>Supermajority</u>
2	2	2	2
3	2	2	2
4	2	2 (If 2-3 are voting) 3 (If 4 are voting)	2 (If 2-3 are voting) 3 (If 4 are voting)
5	3	2 (If 3 are voting) 3 (If 4-5 are voting)	2 (If 3 are voting) 3 (If 4 are voting) 4 (If 5 are voting)
6	3	2 (If 3 are voting) 3 (If 4-5 are voting) 4 (If 6 are voting)	2 (If 3 are voting) 3 (If 4 are voting) 4 (If 5-6 are voting)
Greater than 6	Greater than 50% of the elders	Greater than 50% of the assembled quorum	At least 66% of the assembled quorum

5.4 Action Without a Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the elders, or by a committee thereof, may be taken without a meeting, provided a written consent setting forth the action so taken is agreed upon by all of the elders, or of the committee, as the case may be, and is filed with the minutes of proceedings of the elders or the committee.

5.5 Participation by Other Means. Elders may participate in a meeting of the elders, or any committee thereof, through the use of any means of communication by which all elders participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. An elder participating in a meeting by such means is deemed to be present in-person at the meeting. When a meeting is attended by elders through such alternate means of communication, the minutes recording any

action taken at such meeting shall note who participated in-person and who participated by alternative communication.

## **Section 6**

### **PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, AND TREASURER**

6.1 The elders shall appoint individuals to the positions of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer in order to perform duties that enable the proper conduct of business by the elders, as a Corporation. The positions of president and vice-president will be filled by elders. The preference will be to fill the positions of secretary and treasurer with elders, but when the elders deem it to be more appropriate, the elders may appoint other members of the Church to fill these two positions. The elders may also appoint alternates or designees to these positions if they are unable to attend, who will fulfill the duties of these positions in the absence of the primary position-holder(s).

The elders shall appoint by majority vote individual elders, or other members as described above, to these duties annually. The appointees may serve for an indefinite number of annual terms, at the discretion of the elders. Any of these appointed corporate officers may be removed at any time by a supermajority vote of the elders at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, whenever, in their judgment, the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. The Elder who is the subject of this vote will not participate in this vote, nor will he be counted in the calculation of the required number to constitute a quorum or supermajority.

6.1.1 The president and/or vice-president shall prepare an agenda for each elder meeting and shall preside at meetings of the elders.

6.1.2 The secretary shall attend elders meetings and record all votes and the minutes of the proceedings.

6.1.3 The treasurer or his designee will render to the elders reports on financial matters of the Corporation, whenever they may require it to support the elders in their collective oversight of the financial matters of the Church.

## **Section 7**

### **DEACONS**

7.1 Deacons lead the Church in service, mercy, and administration. Deacons are one of two continuing offices found in New Testament churches. Under the direction of the elders, the deacons provide service-oriented leadership in meeting the practical needs of the Redeeming Grace Church community.

7.2 Deacons of Redeeming Grace Church must be members of this church. Deacons also must be Spirit-filled people of growing maturity in Christ who meet the character requirements addressed in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and demonstrate gifts needed to be deacons. Both men and women may serve as deacons. The elders will collaborate with the congregation to identify candidates to become deacons. After training and evaluation, the elders will inform the



congregation of the names of candidates they believe are qualified to serve as deacons and will invite Church members to offer input concerning these candidates within sixty (60) days. Considering the congregation's input, the elders shall select deacon candidates by a supermajority vote and recommend these candidates to the congregation. The congregation shall vote whether to affirm this recommendation in accordance with Section 8.8.3. Once recommended and affirmed, the new deacons shall be installed at a public meeting of the Church.

7.2.1 Number and Term. The Church will work to maintain a plurality of deacons sufficient to best serve the Church. No upper limit will be placed on the number of deacons serving at any one time. Deacons will commit to serve a two-year term. As the end of each deacon's term approaches, the deacon and the elders will reconsider that deacon's calling. If they agree that the Lord is calling the deacon to continue, the elders will announce to the congregation that the deacon has agreed to continue, and his or her installation will be continued for another two-year term. If either the deacon or the elders do not believe the Lord is calling the deacon to continue as a deacon, his or her installation will end with the current term. There is no restriction on the number of terms a deacon may serve.

7.3 Leadership and Authority. Deacons are under the authority of the elders and report to them, and are not a separate governing or ruling body of leaders.

7.4 Structure and Operations. The elders will determine the best operating practices needed for the deacons to effectively serve the Redeeming Grace Church community, will promote their spiritual welfare, and will provide training and activities to equip and encourage them.

7.5 Ministry of Voluntary Service. The office of deacon is a position of voluntary ministry. Redeeming Grace Church's deacons and its paid administrative staff members all serve the Church to help the Church fulfill its mission and achieve its vision. The administrative staff generally consists of paid employees, while the deacons serve on a voluntary, unpaid basis. However, an individual may serve as both a deacon and in a position on staff, as long as the types of duties performed in the two roles remains distinct.

#### 7.6 Sabbatical, Resignation, Removal.

7.6.1 A deacon may request a sabbatical for a defined period of time. The elders will either approve the sabbatical or recommend a different course of action.

7.6.2 A deacon may at any time deliver to the elders a written notice of intent to resign, which shall be effective when it has been agreed to by the elders. The elders will deliberate and may discuss the notice of resignation with the requesting deacon as they consider whether to agree to or reject the notice. A deacon may not resign his or her church membership without the elders first agreeing to his or her resignation as a deacon. If the deacon who submits a notice of resignation as a deacon is not under church discipline, and if the elders do not encourage him or her to reconsider such that he or she reverses his or her decision to resign, then the deacon will be allowed to resign. The elders will complete their consideration of a deacon's notice and will provide a written response to the deacon within a few weeks, if possible.

7.6.3 When the elders conclude through a supermajority vote that a deacon should be removed, they will discuss this decision with the deacon and provide an opportunity for the deacon to appeal the decision to the elders. If the deacon appeals, the elders will prayerfully consider the information the deacon presents and will then vote again. If a subsequent supermajority vote supports removal, the elders shall inform the deacon and the elders shall recommend to the congregation that the deacon be removed. The members shall vote whether to affirm the elders' recommendation, in accordance with Section 8.8.3.

7.7 Policies Related to Deacon Ministries. The deacons shall work with the elders to develop policies and updates to these policies, as needed, regarding how the deacons will operate and minister at Redeeming Grace Church, and they will submit these policies to the elders for approval.

## **Section 8**

### **CHURCH MEMBERS**

8.1 Membership. Members of the Church enjoy the privileges and blessings of commitment to and close fellowship with this local body of Christians; the elders' commitment of spiritual oversight and nurturing; greater opportunity to be involved in the official ministries of the Church; and active participation in the governance of the Church. The members of the Church are also members of the Corporation and have the powers, privileges, and duties described in Section 8.8.

8.2 Qualifications for Church Membership. To become a member of the Church, each prospective church member shall complete a membership class, be interviewed by one or more elders on behalf of all the elders, and sign the Membership Commitment. During the interview, the elders will determine that the prospective member has met the following standards for initial and continued membership:

8.2.1 Evidence that an individual has repented from sin, has believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Head of the Church, has trusted in His atoning work on the cross and His resurrection, and has been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; John 1:12-13, 3:16-18, 36; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 10:9-13; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Matthew 28:19-20).

8.2.2 Evidence of a life consistent with the Membership Commitment or a willingness to live consistently with the Membership Commitment (Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:34-35; Romans 6:4, 8:1-4, 12:4-5, 13:13-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:6-7).

8.2.3 A willingness to receive the grace provided by the elders and submit to their leadership, as described in the Membership Commitment (Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

8.2.4 Being at least 17 years of age, because of the responsibilities and accountability involved with church membership.

8.3. Reception of Members. The elders will recommend to the congregation church-member candidates to be added as members, allowing time for a 30-day evaluation period. The

current church members shall then vote whether to affirm the elders' recommendation, in accordance with Section 8.8.3.

8.4. Church Member Discipline. All members are expected to endeavor to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture, including moral purity, personal honesty, promotion of church unity, and biblical fidelity, seeking to emulate Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. When a member is involved in egregious sin (Mark 7:21-22; Romans 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:16-21; 2 Timothy 3:2-5; Revelation 21:8) that is beyond what should be graciously overlooked as part of the normal process of sanctification (Romans 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-13), the church is commanded to lovingly and redemptively confront sin or false doctrine in the church member through church discipline. Each church discipline case is unique and requires prayerful study and application of the Scriptures, prudential wisdom, and loving engagement with all individuals involved. (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 15:7, 17:3-4; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11, 7:8-13; Galatians 2:11-14, 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20, 5:19-20; Hebrews 12:5-6; Deuteronomy 19:15)

8.4.1 Purposes. The purposes of church member discipline include the glory of God; repentance, reconciliation, and restoration of the church member; and advancing the purity and mission of the Church.

8.4.2 Process of discipline. Ordinarily the process of discipline outlined in the Scriptures (per below) shall be followed as necessary to accomplish the redemptive purposes stated above. At any step, this process will end if repentance, reconciliation, and restoration of the church member are accomplished.

- Private inquiry and appealing to the member.
- Establishing the matter with witnesses.
- Involving a segment of the Church.
- Ending the person's church membership and the Church treating the person as an unbeliever.

The final step above requires a supermajority vote of the elders and the members affirming the elders' recommendation that the member be removed from the rolls, in accordance with Sections 8.5.1.3 and 8.8.3. In cases where a Church member facing discipline feels that not all elders are well-informed, the member is welcome to present his/her case at a meeting of the elders. Also, it may be prudent for the elders to consult with professionals trained in areas such as counseling, social services, and the law when circumstances are complex.

However, the elders may decide to abbreviate the above process if the sin is especially conspicuous or serious, or if the member proves to be divisive, disruptive or is seen as a threat to lead others into sin (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5; Titus 3:10-11).

8.4.3 Disciplinary actions. As the disciplinary process progresses through the above stages, the actions that may be taken include, but are not limited to, private and public admonition, withholding of the Lord's Supper, withdrawal of fellowship and removal from membership. (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

8.4.4 Informed consent of members to submit to the process of church discipline. Every person who makes application for membership or maintains membership in this church consents to the process of church discipline outlined above.

8.5. Resignation or Other End of Membership. Members shall be removed from the rolls for one of the following reasons:

8.5.1 The congregation shall vote, in accordance with Section 8.8.3, to affirm the elders' recommendation to remove a member from the rolls.

8.5.1.1 The elders may recommend a member be removed upon the member's submission of a written communication to one or more elders indicating the member's request to resign from their membership. However, if such resignation is an attempt to avoid the process of church discipline, the elders will not accept the resignation until that process is completed, as outlined in Section 8.4.

8.5.1.2 As stated in Section 8.2, continuing membership requires faithfulness to the stated qualifications. If a member does not continue to meet these qualifications, including continuing to stay involved in this church, the member may be considered to have effectively resigned and the elders may recommend that a member be removed from the rolls after due consideration, prayer, and appropriate attempts to restore the individual to fellowship.

8.5.1.3 The elders may recommend a member be removed from the rolls as a result of church discipline, as outlined in Section 8.4.2.

8.5.2 The member dies, passing from this life to the next.

8.6. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage.

8.6.1 Marriage.

8.6.1.1 Marriage is a gift from God, instituted in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world. Marriage is a God-defined covenant for life between one man and one woman (as determined by each of their biological sexes at birth), entered into for companionship, sexual unity, procreation, and to display the love Christ has for His church. The marriage covenant is enacted through the exchange of vows between a bride and a groom. These vows are a solemn pledge before God and witnesses to lovingly live together for life. (Genesis 2:18-25; Numbers 30:2; Leviticus 20:10-15; Proverbs 2:16-17, 5:15-23; Jeremiah 29:6; Ezekiel 16:8; Song of Solomon; Malachi 2:14; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 7:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 19:6-9, 21:9; Ephesians 5:3, 22-33)

8.6.1.2 Marriage and singleness are each precious gifts from God. Married believers and unmarried believers have equal access to God through Jesus Christ. A believer who chooses to marry is called by God to marry only another believer. (Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:6-7, 38; 2 Corinthians 6:14)

8.6.2 Divorce.

8.6.2.1 Scripture addresses the topic of divorce, making God's perspective clear: that He loves marriage and generally opposes divorce. (Ezekiel 23; Hosea 1-3; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12)

8.6.2.2 The practice of divorce is regulated and permitted in certain circumstances under both the old and new covenants. The situations in which God allows for a divorce typically are the result of one spouse breaking the marriage covenant by sinning in a way that incurs the weight of guilt and responsibility for the divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:16). In Scripture, God explicitly permits a believer to seek a divorce when his or her spouse has broken the marriage covenant through sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery (Matthew 19:9), or through abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:1-16). Divorce is also permissible if the marriage covenant is broken by some other means. However, because each marriage in distress presents a unique and complex situation, contemplation of divorce requires prayerful application of the Scriptures, prudential wisdom, counsel, and loving engagement with all individuals involved, seeking to respond in a manner pleasing to God. Also, it may be prudent for the elders to consult with professionals trained in areas such as counseling, social services, and the law when circumstances are complex.

8.6.2.3 For the Church to support a divorce by a church member, the member will need to submit the facts of the marital situation to the elders to determine before God and from Scripture whether divorce is biblically allowable in his/her situation.

### 8.6.3 Remarriage.

8.6.3.1 Scripture is clear about remarriage under some circumstances. A believer whose spouse is deceased and a believer who is divorced for biblically acceptable reasons are free to remarry. (Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:8-16, 39; 1 Timothy 5:14)

8.6.3.2 Getting a divorce for the wrong reasons is a serious but forgivable sin. Guilt for such a divorce can be washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ. A believer who sought and was granted a divorce for biblically unacceptable reasons should seek forgiveness from God and reconciliation with the ex-spouse, including, if possible, restoration of the marriage.

8.6.3.3 A divorced church member seeking remarriage will be supported by the Church when the circumstances prior to the divorce, or following the divorce, are reviewed by the elders and determined to have a Scriptural basis. If the circumstances of the divorce do not conform to Scripture, the divorced person should consider, before God and in the counsel of the Church, whether to seek reconciliation with the former spouse. If reconciliation is not possible, the person is free to marry.

8.6.4 Informed Consent Regarding Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage. Every person who makes application for membership or maintains membership in this church understands that Section 8.6 of these Bylaws summarizes the Church's position on marriage, divorce and remarriage, as set forth in Scripture, and consents to support this position.

8.7. Confidentiality. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context. However, there will be times when, to properly fulfill their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, the elders may, as

they deem necessary or appropriate, share confidential information with one another, with church members, with legal authorities, or with others they deem may be part of the solution or problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel; for the purpose of protecting others from the effects of a member’s sin; or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the members, their family members, and other individuals involved with the Church.

**8.8. Powers.** As members of the Corporation, all church members share in the governance of the Church.

**8.8.1 Communications.** The elders will communicate with members and invite feedback concerning the status of ongoing issues, major upcoming decisions, the biblical basis and rationale to explain changes being considered, and other issues that the elders deem sufficiently important to share with the members. As a continual means of influencing the direction of the Church, members are expected to provide to the elders loving, honest, and constructive input and feedback regarding issues, pending decisions, the direction of the Church, ministries, and other facets of the Church, in order to help the elders fulfill their responsibility to lead the congregation.

**8.8.2 Church Member Meetings.** A minimum of two (2) member meetings will be held each year. The meetings will be held at a time and place designated by the elders. Those regularly attending the Church or exploring membership and children of members will typically be welcome at member meetings as non-voting guests. If special circumstances make it necessary, the elders will make it clear that a specific meeting or a portion of a meeting will be closed to non-members. A public announcement of all member meetings will be made. When the members will be asked to vote, the meeting notice will be made at least thirty (30) days in advance.

**8.8.3 Voting.** The members will be asked to vote on the following specific major decisions, which the elders will present as recommendations. Twenty (20) percent of the Church’s members constitute a quorum for a member vote. Also shown below are the requirements for either a majority vote, or a supermajority (at least sixty-six (66) percent) vote for a measure to be approved.

**Summary of the Subjects that Members Vote On and Requirements for Passage**

Subject of Membership Vote	Percent of Members Voting Required for Passage*
Appointment of elders	Supermajority of 66%
Removal of elders	Supermajority of 66%
Appointment of deacons	Supermajority of 66%
Removal of deacons	Supermajority of 66%
Receiving new members	Supermajority of 66%
Removal of church members	Supermajority of 66%
Organizational affiliation (or disaffiliation)	Supermajority of 66%

Changing the Church name	Supermajority of 66%
Changes to Statement of Faith, Membership Commitment, Articles of Incorporation, and Bylaws	Supermajority of 66%
Major financial decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual budget and related budget decisions</li> <li>• Major financial commitment decisions</li> <li>• Authorize the transfer, gift, or encumbrance of all or substantially all the assets of this Corporation in a single or related transaction</li> </ul>	Majority Supermajority of 66% Supermajority of 66%
Authorize the dissolution, merger, or consolidation of this Corporation	Supermajority of 66%
Any other matter that the elders deem necessary for a congregational vote	Majority

\* Number voting must constitute a quorum

8.8.3.1. Voting on Major Financial Commitment Decisions. The Members will vote on the Church’s annual budget, as presented by the elders. All such votes will be for or against the entire budget or proposal, not budget-line-by-budget-line, or by individual elements of proposals. In the event that the congregation does not approve the proposed budget, the elders will continue the previous year’s budget at the same spending levels for each major budget category. However, if the Church’s revenue has declined such that there are insufficient funds to continue at the previous year’s budget levels, there will be spending cuts to some budget categories, to be determined by a majority vote of the elders, in order to balance the interim budget. The elders will communicate to members that the Church will be operating on the interim budget until such time as the budget is revised and approved. The elders are authorized to re-allocate funds within the member-approved budget, as church operations require, as long as the total budget amount does not change. Furthermore, if actual annual expenses will exceed the approved budget amount by more than ten percent, the elders will present, and the members will vote on, a modified budget.

The Members will also vote on individual financial decisions that commit more than 10% of the annual church budget and on incurring debt that will last for more than sixty (60) days, such as the church building mortgage.

8.8.3.2. Voting May Occur at Member Meetings or Electronically. The elders will notify members of each voting opportunity and the topics to be voted on at least thirty (30) days prior to each vote. There will be no provision for proxy voting.

## Section 9

### ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION

Members shall vote on the elders’ recommendations regarding any organizational affiliation with other churches or other organizations, in accordance with Section 8.8.3. Organizational affiliation is defined as entering into a binding agreement with an organization that requires a financial commitment and/or acceptance of a Statement of Faith. The elders will

not affiliate in a manner that creates bodies outside of the Church that have spiritual and legal governing authority over the Church.

## **Section 10**

### **FISCAL MATTERS**

10.1 Deposits. The elders shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Corporation.

10.2 Checks. All checks or demands for money and notes of the Corporation shall be signed by such members as the elders may, from time to time, designate.

10.3 Fiscal Years. The elders shall have the power to fix and, from time to time, to change, the fiscal year of the Corporation. Unless otherwise fixed by the elders, the fiscal year shall commence on September 1 and shall terminate on the following August 31.

10.4 Designated Contributions. The Corporation may accept any designated contribution, grant, bequest, or devise, provided it is consistent with the Corporation's (1) mission and spiritual priorities as determined, from time to time, by the elders, (2) budget process and fiscal restrictions, (3) full ownership and control of the funds or assets, and (4) tax-exempt purposes. As so limited, donor-designated contributions will be accepted for special funds, purposes or uses, and such designations generally will be honored. The Corporation shall reserve all right, title, and interest in and to, and control of such contributions, as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any special fund, purpose, or use.

10.5 Books and Records. The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account, the complete copies of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the activities and transactions of the Corporation, minutes of the proceedings of the elders, a summary of the actions and recommendations of any committee of the elders, and a current list of the elders of the Corporation and their residence addresses. Any of the books, minutes, and records of the Corporation may be in written form or in any other form capable of conversion into written form within a reasonable time.

10.6 Benevolence and Other Funds. The Corporation may establish a benevolence fund to meet material and financial needs of members and others, and other similar funds to meet other specific church and ministry needs.

10.7 Accounting and Fiduciary Guidelines. The elders and officers of the Corporation shall conduct their affairs with integrity in the sight of God and men, and shall, to that end, maintain prudent and responsible control and accountability over all funds they receive and ensure that all funds are dedicated to the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes. Toward that end, the elders, church employees, and other members shall implement practices, procedures, and / or policies that position the Corporation to be a model of faithful stewardship and quality internal accounting controls and procedures.



10.8 Seal. The Corporation shall have a seal consisting of two concentric circles, between which shall be inscribed the name of the Corporation and, in the center of which, shall be inscribed the year of its organization and the words "Corporate Seal, State of Virginia." Said seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or otherwise reproduced, or by writing the word "SEAL" beside the signature of an authorized officer of the Corporation. Affixing a corporate seal to a document communicates that it has the official approval of the Corporation.

## **Section 11**

### **INDEMNIFICATION**

Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, by reason of the fact that he is or was an elder, may be indemnified by the Corporation, and the Corporation may advance his related expenses to the full extent permitted by law.

The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify: (1) itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification of elders and officers in the manner provided by law; and (2) elders and officers. Such insurance must satisfy the requirements imposed by law.

## **Section 12**

### **AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws or the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation may be amended by (1) the affirmative vote of a supermajority of at least 66% of the elders then in office at any meeting of the Board of Directors, provided that written notice of such meeting and the intention to change the Bylaws thereat is delivered to each director at least five (5) days prior to the date of such meeting, or by the unanimous written consent of all elders without a meeting; and (2) ratification of a supermajority of at least 66% of the members at a member meeting in which there is a quorum in accordance with Section 8.8.2 and 8.8.3 of these Bylaws.