



Constitution & Bylaws 2007

Contents

Part I Constitution

Article I:	Definition and purpose of this Constitution.....	3
Article II:	Vision-Mission- Purpose Objectives.....	3-5
	A. Our Mission	
	B. Our Vision	
	C. Our Purpose	
	D. Our objectives & Principles of Ministry	
Article III:	Leadership.....	5-7
	A. Plurality of Leadership Statement	
	B. Initial Elders	

Part II Statement of Faith

Article IV:	Doctrine.....	8
Article V:	Doctrinal Statement.....	8-15
	A. The Scriptures	
	B. God	
	1. God the Father	
	2. God the Son	
	3. God the Holy Spirit	
	C. Man	
	D. Salvation	
	1. Regeneration	
	2. Justification	
	3. Sanctification	
	4. Glorification	
	E. God's Purpose of Grace	
	F. The Church	
	G. Baptism and Lords Supper	
	H. The Lord's Day	
	I. The Kingdom	
	J. Last Things	
	K. Evangelism and Missions	
	L. Education	
	M. Stewardship	
	N. Cooperation	
	O. The Christian and Social Order	
	P. Peace and War	
	Q. Religious Liberty	
	R. The Family	

Part III Bylaws

Preamble to the Bylaws.....	16	
Article VI: Statement of Affiliation.....	16	
Article VII: Identification.....	17	
	A. Name	
	B. Principle office	
Article VIII: Membership.....	17-19	
	A. Church Membership Defined	
	B. Requesting Church Membership	
	C. Acceptance	
	D. Responsibilities of Members	
	E. Privilege of Members	
	F. Discipline of Members	
	G. Termination of Membership	

Article IX: Meetings	19-20
A. Annual Meetings	
B. Special Meetings	
C. Notice	
D. Family Forums	
E. Presiding Official	
F. Voting	
G. Quorum	
H. Matters to be Considered by LSCC	
Article X: Elders	20-23
A. General Scope	
B. Responsibilities	
C. Qualifications	
D. Selection	
E. Reconstitution of Elders	
F. Term of Office	
G. Number of Elders	
H. Authority and Responsibilities	
I. Training and Education	
J. Discipline and Removal	
K. Meetings and Organization	
L. Trustees	
Article XI Ministry Teams	23
A. General	
B. Empowerment	
C. Ministry	
D. Dissolution	
Article XII: Deacons	23-25
A. General Scope	
B. Duties and Responsibilities	
C. Qualifications	
D. Selection	
E. Ordination	
F. Transition Period	
G. Term of Office	
H. Number of Deacons	
I. Training and Education	
J. Discipline and Removal	
K. Meetings and Organization	
Article XIII: The Teaching Pastor	25-26
A. Selection	
B. Term of Office	
C. Duties	
Article XIV: Staff	26
Article XV: Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds	26
A. Receipt of Money	
B. Management of Funds	
C. Review of Financial Matters	
Article XVI: Indemnification of Elders	27
Article XIX: Dissolution	27
Article XX: Amendments	27
A. Amendment Process	
B. Record of Amendments	

PART I

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This written document is a declaration of our beliefs and understanding of the Holy Scriptures, doctrinal beliefs, church government, organizational structure, and purpose as a body. **It is vitally important for a church, if it is to glorify God and accomplish His purposes, that its people be in unity with regard to doctrine, organizational structure and goals** (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3, 13).

This document is therefore written to be a statement of these things so that it might promote unity within the body, and that those interested in becoming part of **Living Stones Community Church** will have a clear understanding of our beliefs, purposes and objectives.

This document is not a higher authority than the Word of God. Neither is it a higher authority than the authority that God Himself has invested in those believers He has appointed to lead in this local church (Heb. 13:17). **It must be remembered that the local church itself is a living, growing, and flexible body subject ultimately to the authority of Jesus Christ alone as it is declared in the Word of God** (Eph. 1:22; 4:12-16). As we grow in the Word, this document is therefore subject to amendment according to the provisions of Article XX. This document is, however, to be followed in all its parts as a protection to all until part or all is amended according to its provisions.

ARTICLE II: MISSION, VISION, PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY

A. Our Mission

“Building authentic relationships with Christ, each other, and the world”

B. Our Vision

Acts 2 tells us that there once was a community of believers that offered unbelievers a vision of life so beautiful it took their breath away. It was so bold, so creative, and so dynamic that they could not resist it.

Living Stones Community Church desires to become a community of believers so totally devoted to God that our lives together are charged with the Spirit's power. As Christ-followers, we will love each other with a radical kind of love. We will take off our masks and share our lives with one another. We will laugh and cry, pray and sing, and serve together in authentic Christian fellowship. We will share freely with those who have less until all barriers melt away. We will relate together in ways that bridge gender and race, celebrating our differences as gifts from God to form one body. And, as in the days of Acts 2:47 ... the Lord will add to our number daily those who are being saved.

This is our heartbeat and our passion, and what we believe God desires for Living Stones Community Church. By the grace of God we will spend our lives pursuing this vision.

C. Our Purpose

Experience the presence of God (*Holiness/Worship*)

Pursue authentic relationships with each other (*Fellowship/Community*)

Bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (*Salvation/Evangelism*)

Grow people in their relationship with Jesus Christ (*Discipleship*)

Meet the needs of people in our community and the world (*Service/Missions*)

D. Our Principles & Objectives of Ministry

1. Holiness/Worship

- I. The Bible is our authority. We see the Bible as the authority for determining our purpose and structure. (*Psalms 1:2; 119:11, 72, 105, 130, 140; Proverbs 16:9; 29:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*)
- II. Those who have a personal relationship with God need to worship God and be taught biblical truths. Those who are seeking a relationship with God need a trustworthy and safe place to investigate the claims of Christ. We are committed to strive for excellence in developing ministries that are sensitive to the needs of both. (*1 Corinthians 9:22-23; 14:22-25; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Thessalonians 2:6; Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; 5:19-20; Colossians 1:24; 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 4:6, 13, 16; 2 Timothy 2:2; 3:16; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 5:10*)
- III. To live holy lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation acting as salt and light in the world. (*Philippians 2:15; Matthew 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:11-15; Colossians 4:5*)
- IV. To provide the means for developing and expressing meaningful worship in prayer, songs of praise, adoration, admonishment, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. (*Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:42*)

2. Fellowship/Community

- I. Trusting Christ is a process that is most effectively facilitated through friendships with believers. Salvation is the result of repentance and receiving

Jesus Christ as Lord by faith. In a practical way, the Lord often uses believers to lead their friends to Christ. As a result, Living Stones is committed to “relational-process” driven evangelism, rather than focusing on “program-driven” evangelism. (*Matthew 5:29-30; John 1:40-48; 12:20-22; 16:23-31; Acts 1:8; 18:2-4; Romans 9:1-3; Colossians 4:4-6*)

- II. To develop meaningful relationships among believers and within our community through expressions of sharing, caring, loving one another, warning, inspiring, and encouraging each other to love and good deeds. (*Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:1-2; Acts 2:42-47*)

3. Salvation/Evangelism

- I. Changed lives are our "business." The truths of the Bible, ministered in grace within the fellowship of believers, produce changed lives. (*Romans 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Peter 1:16*)
- II. To present the truth of the gospel to those who have never trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and to encourage them to trust in Him. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10*)
- III. To reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, both at home and abroad. (*Romans 1:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; Acts 1:8*)

4. Discipleship

- I. To provide the means for developing and using spiritual gifts for the edification of the body and reaching the lost. Every believer is a minister, gifted by God for the benefit of the body of Christ. (*Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11*)
- II. To equip the saints to do the work of the ministry in all its aspects while building their spiritual maturity in the Lord. Ministry is a reflection of our love for God and therefore should be done with excellence. (*Ephesians 4:12-16; Colossians 1:28-29; Philippians 1:9-10*)

5. Service/Missions

- I. Methods are not to be confused with purpose. We recognize that our God-given purpose will never change. It is our understanding that methods must change as the needs of people change. (*Matt. 9:27-30; 20:28; Mark 8:22-23; Luke 19:10; John 6:38; 9:1-7*)
- II. To recognize and help meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of others according to Scripture. (*Galatians 5:13, 6:10; Luke 10:29-37; Hebrews 13:15-16*)
- III. To fulfill the Great Commission by providing opportunities for everyone at Living Stones Community Church to be involved. We will actively pursue mission work locally, throughout the United States and around the world. (*Matthew 28:19*)

ARTICLE III: LEADERSHIP

PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

We believe that Living Stones Community Church is called by God to be elder led as a form of church government. According to Scripture, elders are called and

appointed by God, confirmed by the church body, and ordained to the task of shepherding the flock of God.

To the elders are committed the responsibilities of living biblical lifestyles for all to see and emulate. Both Hebrews 13:7 and 17 emphasize that the elder's responsibility is to live as an example, manifesting virtue in his lifestyle, and the church's desire to follow this example.

Elders are to lead through love and in the power of the Holy Spirit, never forcing their will or authority over the flock. Elders lead, they do not rule. The church congregation will play an active role in ministry, leadership, and the decision making process for church business. The Elders will meet with all of the Ministry Leadership Teams several times throughout the year, for the purpose of communication, encouragement and prayer.

One of the highest priorities of the Elder Body is to be easily accessible to any church member who has a question, concern or need. To this end, any church member is encouraged to contact an Elder and share such question, concern or need. The Elder Body will then address that question, concern or need in a manner consistent with these Bylaws.

The New Testament clearly teaches that the church is to be led by a plurality of godly men. Their assignment falls into four categories.

First, these men are given both the responsibility and authority to skillfully and lovingly **lead** the flock.

Second, they are to **feed** the flock, offering accurate and insightful teaching of the Scripture.

Third, they are to **care** for the flock. This care is shown in the love, concern, prayers, ministry, and proficient management of church resources.

Fourth, they are to **protect** the flock from harmful influences and beliefs.

These leaders are known by three titles, each of which reveals a separate aspect of their function. All three titles are used in 1 Peter 5:1-3;

*“Therefore, I exhort the **elders** among you, as your fellow **elder** and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **shepherd** the flock of God among you, exercising **oversight** not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock”*

They are first called “**elders**.” An elder (Greek “presbuteros”) is a godly leader, whose wisdom and maturity are respected by God’s people. Next, these are men who give oversight. That is, they are “**overseers**” (Greek “episkapos”). An overseer is a person who is a good manager of resources and guardian of people. Finally, these leaders are called “**shepherds**,” which is also translated as “**pastors**” (Greek “poimain”). This word refers to the role of caring for and leading the flock. It is important to note that within the New Testament model of church organization, authority for leadership is not granted to just one individual pastor, nor is it given as democratic rule by the congregation.

Instead, the Scripture states that authority for leadership is conducted by a plurality of leaders who are appointed by the church and accountable to God. The Scripture further teaches that when the elders are supported by the church, both the church body and individual Christians will flourish. *(Hebrews. 13:17; 1Thessalonians. 5:12-13; 1 Peter. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28)*

These elders do not form a separated “clergy class” of Christians. Instead, the elders, some of whom fill church vocational roles, others non-vocational roles, are brothers with the people, always seeking God’s best for the members of the church. *(Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 2 Corinthians. 8:19)*

INITIAL ELDERS

The GateBuilders shall recommend to LSCC a six-member Elder Examination Team to be chosen from LSCC’s body that are in good standing, to seek the Lord’s leadership, regarding the first Elder Body. The GateBuilders shall make this recommendation to LSCC in a Special Meeting (Article IX, Section B) for LSCC’s determination of affirmation. The Teaching Pastor shall serve as one of the members of the Elder Examination Team. This team will review scriptural teachings pertaining to church elders and prayerfully recommend men to serve as elders to form the initial Elder Body. The Teaching Pastor will assume the role of an Elder. When at least three additional men have been affirmed by LSCC, the Elder Examination Team’s function will be assumed by the Elder Body. The Elder Examination Team and the GateBuilders shall then be dissolved.

When the Elder Examination Team reaches a consensus agreement, they will seek the affirmation of LSCC in a Special Meeting. A three-fourths (75%) affirmative vote of the Qualified Church Members attending the Special Meeting is required to affirm a person to be an elder. These shall constitute the initial Elder Body and shall begin the process prescribed in Article X, Section D, seeking to appoint additional elders as God directs.

PART II

STATEMENT OF FAITH

ARTICLE IV: DOCTRINE

This local church shall function as an independent, evangelical church, committed to the fundamental, historic truths recorded in God's inerrant revelation—the Holy Scriptures. In essential beliefs, we have unity. In non-essential beliefs we have liberty. In all of our beliefs, both essential and non-essential, we show love. The following is an outline of our **essential** beliefs about God, about salvation, about eternity and other subjects. To hold positions within **Living Stones Community Church**, all elders, ministerial staff, deacons and teachers must wholeheartedly agree with the Doctrinal Statement, Article V, of this church.

ARTICLE V: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

A. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. *Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

B. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who

become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men. *Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10;17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6;Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

2. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29;11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35;:41;22:70;24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5,21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21;8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

3. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. *Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19;11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31;5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27;1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18;1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

C. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the

goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. *Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19;6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

1. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

2. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

3. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

4. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. *Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.;5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20;15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

E. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies,

sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. *Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

F. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. *Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

G. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead..

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. *Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

H. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

I. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age. *Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52;25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9;5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

J. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. *Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

K. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness under girded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ. *Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

L. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is

necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2;7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

M. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others.

According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth. *Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

N. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament. *Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

O. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by

the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. *Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

P. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

Q. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power. *Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1, 13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

F. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is

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

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth.

Children are to honor and obey their parents. *Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

PART III

BYLAWS Of LIVING STONES COMMUNITY CHURCH

PREAMBLE TO THE BYLAWS

Living Stones Community Church (LSCC) endeavors to be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as described, established, and mandated by the New Testament. These Bylaws are to provide general guidance to LSCC on governance and operation, based upon biblical references. However, the ultimate authority for LSCC governance and operation is the Bible. When a conflict or ambiguity exists with regard to these Bylaws, deference is to be given to the biblical reference to resolve the conflict or ambiguity.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE VI

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION

The Bible teaches that local churches should seek voluntary fellowship with other doctrinally sound churches. This association is to provide help and encouragement while working together as the Lord directs. This is a voluntary association that in no way involves the surrender of the individual church's freedom or dependence upon God.

Living Stones Community Church has chosen to affiliate itself with the **Southern Baptist Convention**. We continue this association, believing that it is God's will to do so. Fundamental to this affiliation is the understanding that the Southern Baptist Convention is a fellowship of autonomous, biblically sound churches that choose to work together to further God's Kingdom. This affiliation is maintained by voluntary contributions to local, state, national and foreign mission projects. Support may also be provided by sending messengers to the annual convention for voting on doctrinal, ethical, and procedural positions.

Living Stones Community Church may also associate with other Christian ministries. All of our affiliations are to be with churches and organizations that are biblically sound in doctrine and practice.

ARTICLE VII IDENTIFICATION

A. NAME. The name of the corporation is Living Stones Community Church (hereinafter “LSCC”).

B. PRINCIPAL OFFICE. LSCC’s principal office shall be located in Jackson County, Missouri.

ARTICLE VIII MEMBERSHIP

A. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DEFINED. Church membership is a commitment to actively function as an extension of this local body of Christ, rather than merely affiliating with an organization. *(Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 12)*

B. REQUESTING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. Membership in LSCC shall be open to any person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and is in harmony with its doctrines and practices. Membership may be requested by an individual in public at a LSCC meeting or by visiting with an elder or those that the Elder Body designates.

1. Every person requesting membership will be asked to give testimony of his or her personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Each person who is a current member of another church associated with the Southern Baptist Convention, or like-minded church, may request that his/her membership be transferred.

C. ACCEPTANCE. The Elder Body (see Article X, Section A), or their designees, will interview all persons making application for church membership. Membership will be granted to anyone who offers a biblical testimony of salvation has been scripturally baptized and agrees to accept the responsibilities of membership. Once accepted, the name of the new member shall be added to the LSCC roll and publicized to the membership of LSCC. If no clear evidence of salvation is found, the applicant cannot be accepted into the membership. However, LSCC will diligently offer Christian love, prayer, and Scripture, making every attempt to lead the individual to Christ and then church membership. *(John 3:16; Romans 1:16-17; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:14-26)*

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS.

1. Personal Holiness: To bring to LSCC a submitted and Spirit-filled life. Our relationship with the Lord is the source of everything we have to offer one another. It is impossible to help others improve their relationship with God, or others, apart from God working in us. *(John 15:5)*

2. Christian Relationships: To pursue godly relationships within LSCC. The Bible teaches that the Church is the Body of Christ in the world. We are appendages, members, of that Body. It is imperative that each part of the Body pursue healthy relationships, respecting and caring for the other parts of the Body. *(Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 1:12)*

3. The Investment of Life: To seek to serve more than be served. We live in a society that encourages self-centeredness. As the people of God, we are called to give our time, talents, spiritual gifts and financial resources in service to others. *(Mark 10:35-45; John 13:12-15; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-21; 2 Corinthians 4:5)*

4. Church Unity: To protect the unity of the church, by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and following the spiritual leaders of the church. *(Romans 14:19, 1 Peter 1:22, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:17)*

5. Enlarging the Kingdom: To share the responsibility of the church by praying for its growth, by inviting the un-churched to attend and warmly welcoming those who visit. *(1 Thessalonians 1:1-2, Luke 14:23, Romans 15:7)*

E. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS.

1. Decision Making. LSCC decisions and affirmations are made by the members. To participate in such decisions, a member must be at least 18 years old and be in attendance at such meeting.

2. Office Holding. Every member is eligible for consideration as a candidate for offices in LSCC, subject to scriptural qualifications. *(Acts 6:1-7; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3)*

3. Interest in LSCC Property. Members of LSCC have no property rights in the property of LSCC, and upon termination of membership, shall not be entitled to any interest in LSCC's assets.

F. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS.

1. Purpose. The purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by:

- a) maintaining Purity in the church *(1 Corinthians 5:6)*,
- b) Protecting believers by deterring sin *(1 Timothy 5:20)*, and
- c) Promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to biblical standards of doctrine and conduct. *(Galatians 6:1)*

2. Process. Members and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship at LSCC who err in biblical doctrine or conduct shall be subject to discipline according to Matthew 18:15-18. (Such person hereafter will be referred to as an "Erring Person.") Before such discipline reaches its final conclusion: 1) It shall be the duty of any LSCC member who has knowledge of the Erring Person's unbiblical beliefs or misconduct to warn and to correct such Erring Person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the Erring Person does not heed this warning, then, 2) the warning member shall again go to the Erring Person accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct such Erring Person, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If said Erring Person still refuses to heed this warning, then, 3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Elder Body. (It is understood that this process will continue to conclusion, whether the Erring Person leaves LSCC or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership to avoid the discipline process.) The Elder Body will appropriately investigate any allegation brought by one church member against another. If these allegations are warranted, two or more of the Elders will contact the Erring Person and seek his or her repentance and restoration. If the Erring Person refuses to be restored, the matter will be presented to the Elder Body,

who will act to protect the church by removing the Erring Person's membership and notifying the church in accordance with Matthew 18. However, even at this point, LSCC will pray for the restoration of the Erring Person.

3. **Reinstatement.** If such dismissed member heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance and requests reinstatement, he or she shall be publicly restored to membership through the affirmation of the Elder Body and notification of LSCC.

G. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. LSCC membership shall be terminated and the member's name removed from the membership roll at the death of the member, transfer of membership to another church, at the written request of a member or as a result of discipline (Article VIII, Section F).

(1 Corinthians 5:12)

ARTICLE IX MEETINGS

A. ANNUAL MEETINGS. There shall be an annual meeting of LSCC within forty-five (45) days of the end of its fiscal year at its principal place of worship in Grain Valley, MO at which time the Elder Body shall provide detailed presentations of the activities of LSCC during the previous year. They will discuss issues, events, and activities that are anticipated for the coming year. LSCC members shall have the opportunity to discuss such issues as they may consider important at this meeting. The Elder Body will moderate this "family meeting," in order to provide explanations, answers, insights, and comments as appropriate. The Elder Body shall seek counsel, insights and guidance from the members of LSCC, carefully considering their opinions and desires. (See Article IX, Section G for decisions and affirmations reserved to LSCC membership.) The minutes of this meeting will be published to LSCC by the Elder Body.

B. SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings of LSCC membership shall be held at its principal place of worship or alternate sites designated. The Elder Body may call a special meeting. Also, the Teaching Pastor, one third of the Elder Body, or fifty (50) members of LSCC can cause a special meeting to be called by the Elder Body within thirty (30) days of such request.

C. NOTICE. Notice of the time of these meetings (Annual and Special) shall be published in writing, in a church-wide publication, to allow each member an opportunity to reasonably know of the meeting. This official notice must be published at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting and not more than thirty (30) days before the date of such meeting. If the place of the meeting is to be at a location other than the principal worship center of LSCC, such location must be provided in the notice. The notice shall state the time and date of the meeting. Notice of a Special Meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting.

D. FAMILY FORUMS. In addition to Annual and Special Meetings, the heart of this Church is to hold regular "family forums" to allow the body the opportunity to share in the ongoing vision of LSCC.

E. PRESIDING OFFICIAL. The Elder Body shall provide the moderation of all such meetings.

F. VOTING. The Elder Body will present issues calling for a decision of the LSCC body. These decisions shall be voted upon by the “Qualified Church Members.” A Qualified Church Member is any person at least 18 years of age who has been received into church membership and is not under the process of church discipline (Article II, Section 6). Each Qualified Church Member shall be entitled to cast one vote. The method of seeking affirmation shall be determined by the moderator of the meeting.

G. QUORUM. A quorum for decision-making at a LSCC meeting shall consist of 50 “Qualified Church Members” attending such meetings or a number of Qualified Church Members equal to 20% of the people in LSCC’s worship services on the Sunday morning just prior to the meeting, whichever is the greater number.

H. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY LSCC. The Elder Body will secure the vote of affirmation of the LSCC body regarding the following issues:

(A three-fourths vote of the Qualified Church Members in attendance is required for affirmation of the recommendation)

1. Selection, rebuke, or dismissal of the Teaching Pastor;
2. Selection, rebuke, or dismissal of deacons and elders;
3. Selection of pastoral staff members;
4. Building and facilities--major decisions relating to LSCC properties;
5. Financial budgets of LSCC;
6. Amending the Bylaws (Article XX, Section A); and,
7. Other matters in which the Elder Body feel led to seek the members’ advice and counsel.

ARTICLE X ELDERS

A. GENERAL SCOPE. LSCC seeks to be a New Testament church committed to the teachings of the Bible. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ’s Church. The administrative and pastoral structure for a New Testament church is to utilize a plurality of leadership. LSCC will follow this scriptural example. To achieve this New Testament model, LSCC requires qualified men to serve as elders. These men must meet specific moral and spiritual qualifications before they serve *(1 Tim. 3:1-7)*.

- They must be publicly installed into office.
(1 Timothy 5:22; Acts 14:23)
- They must be motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do their work. *(Acts 20:28)*

After review, examination and appointment, as noted in Section D hereof, men affirmed by LSCC to serve as elders shall constitute the “Elder Body of the Church.” To effectively perform their duties, the Elder Body need the prayers, support (*1 Timothy 5:17-18*) and assent of members of LSCC (*Hebrews 13:17*). LSCC is called upon to honor their Elder Body and to protect them against false accusations (*1 Timothy 5:19*). Finally, if an elder falls into sin, and continues in sin, he must be publicly rebuked (*1 Tim. 5:20*).

B. RESPONSIBILITIES. The Elder Body shall:

- 1. Feed the flock** (*1 Timothy. 3:2; 5:17; 1 Thessalonians. 5:12; Titus 1:9*),
- 2. Provide leadership to the flock** (*Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Heb. 13:17*), in practical matters (*Acts 6:1-6; 11:29-30*), in matters of doctrine (*Acts 15; 16:4*), and in matters of discipline and character (*Heb. 13:17*);
- 3. Lovingly care for the flock** (*James 5:14-15; Acts 20:35; Heb. 13:17*); and,
- 4. Protect the flock** (*1 Pet. 5:2-3; Acts 20:28*).

C. QUALIFICATIONS. Each elder must have a calling from God to this office. The qualifications of an elder are described in *1 Timothy 3:1-7* and *Titus 1:6-9*. He must be:

- 1. Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach;** (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7*)
- 2. Husband of one wife; a one-woman man;** (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6*)
- 3. Temperate, sober, vigilant;** (*1 Timothy 3:2*)
- 4. Sober-minded, prudent;** (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8*)
- 5. Of good behavior; orderly, respectable;** (*1 Timothy 3:2*)
- 6. Given to hospitality;** (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8*)
- 7. Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching;** (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9*)
- 8. Not given to much wine;** (*1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7*)
- 9. Not violent; not pugnacious;** (*1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7*)
- 10. Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle;** (*1 Timothy. 3:3*)
- 11. Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered;** (*1 Timothy. 3:3; Titus 1:7*)
- 12. Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain;** (*1 Timothy. 3:3; Titus 1:7*)
- 13. Manages his own house well. His children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God;** (*1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7*)
- 14. Not a novice; not a new convert;** (*1 Tim. 3:6*)
- 15. Has a good report or reputation with people outside the church ;**(*1 Timothy 3:7*)
- 16. Not self-willed;** (*Titus 1:7*)
- 17. Lover of what is good;** (*Titus 1:8*)
- 18. Just, fair;** (*Titus 1:8*)
- 19. Holy, devout** (*Titus 1:8*); and,
- 20. Self-controlled.** (*Titus 1:8*)

(Further guidance for an expanded understanding of the qualifications may be found in the Elders Qualifications Statement.)

D. SELECTION.

- 1. The Elder Body shall seek the Lord’s leadership regarding the number of additional elders needed to minister at LSCC. While the Bible does not give instruction as to the number of elders a church should have, it is recognized that there must be a plurality. A determination of the need for additional elders**

should be based upon the work of God in the LSCC family and the availability of those with a God-given desire to serve as an elder.

2. Men who aspire to be elders, due to the calling of God, should express that desire to an elder or the Teaching Pastor of LSCC. (1 Tim. 3:1)

3. A potential elder will be examined by the Elder Body in order to discover his calling and qualifications. If the Elder Body and the man, in search of God's will for his life in this matter, are of like mind as to his calling, the Elder Body shall recommend him to the LSCC body to be affirmed as an elder. The appointment of a man to serve as an elder is a solemn and serious matter (1 Timothy 5:21-22). Therefore, the Elder Body shall earnestly, without any haste, bias or partiality, seek God's will with regard to the potential elder's appointment to the Elder Body.

4. In a Special Meeting of LSCC (Article IX, Section B), the Elder Body shall recommend the potential elder to LSCC. A three-fourths (75%) vote of the Qualified Church Members in attendance is required for affirmation of the recommendation. (1 Timothy 5:21, 22, 24, 25)

E. RECONSTITUTION OF ELDER BODY.

1. Reconstitution of Elders. In the event that it is necessary to reconstitute the Elder Body, an Elder Examination Team shall be recommended to LSCC by the Deacon leadership in a Special Meeting (Article IX, Section B) for LSCC's determination whether to affirm the recommended individuals. Five individuals who are LSCC members in good standing shall be recommended. They are to be qualified to research and review the scriptural teachings on church elders and prayerfully recommend elders to LSCC. Once LSCC has affirmed three elders to the reconstituted Elder Body, the Elder Examination Team shall be dissolved.

F. TERM OF OFFICE. An elder, called by God, shall serve until such time as God calls him to other service and away from the office of Elder. Additionally, by the improper actions of an elder, he can be removed from office (Article IV, Section 10).

G. NUMBER OF ELDERS. As God calls men to serve in this office of Elder, they shall be considered, examined, and utilized in service. The number of elders is not determined; it is a matter of the revealed will of God. The Bible indicates a plurality of leadership, which implies more than one leader.

H. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The Elder Body shall have the authority and responsibility to oversee the spiritual and administrative activities of LSCC unless otherwise reserved to the LSCC body elsewhere in these Bylaws. This authority is able to be delegated by the Elder Body. In summary, the Elder Body is to shepherd the "flock" of God (1 Pet. 5:1-5). It is recognized by LSCC and Elder Body that there is only one Lord and Master in God's Church: the Lord Jesus Christ. All others are His servants. (Philippians 2:5-11)

I. TRAINING AND EDUCATION. There are no specific requirements for formal training or education to be an elder. Becoming an elder is a matter of God's preparation of the man and His call to the place of service.

J. DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL. Any elder may be removed from office if he becomes incapacitated, spiritually unqualified or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Elder Body. LSCC has the right to rebuke an elder due to a continuing sin in his life, based upon the procedure established in 1 Tim. 5:19-20. LSCC also has the right to remove the Elder Body in a Special Meeting (Article III, Section 2), A three-fourths vote of the Qualified Church Members in attendance is required for affirmation of the recommendation. The Teaching Pastor is not automatically removed with the removal of the Elder Body.

K. MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATION. The Elder Body shall establish written policies and procedures for the conducting of their activities. All meetings shall have written or otherwise recorded minutes of the matters considered. These minutes shall become a part of the permanent records of the Elder Body.

L. TRUSTEES. The Elder Body shall function as the trustees of LSCC. They manage LSCC property, both real and personal, as fiduciaries. They shall represent LSCC in all of its legal matters. Other LSCC members may be appointed by the Elder Body to be Trustees as necessary.

ARTICLE XI MINISTRY TEAMS

A. GENERAL . LSCC is committed to accomplishing its stated goals through the ministry of its members. To accomplish these goals, LSCC is determined to organize into “Teams” to be more effective. Teams are focused upon accomplishing a stated or determined goal, or set of goals, to fulfill the ministry that God has called those participating to do.

B. EMPOWERMENT. Teams organize and function under policies and procedures established by the Elder Body.

C. MINISTRY. Teams perform the ministry best when it is performed by a plurality. Teams are the basic organizing units of LSCC to accomplish its goals within the guidelines of our Purpose Statement. Teams are not policy-setting entities. Rather, they are the “hands and feet” of the body of Christ. These teams devise and carry out the actions to further determine LSCC ministries. LSCC policies and procedures provide a framework within which teams successfully operate.

D. DISSOLUTION. Teams may be dissolved upon a determination of the Elder Body.

ARTICLE XII DEACONS

A. GENERAL SCOPE. Deacons are the servant-ministers of the church. Their purpose is to relieve the elders of the multitude of practical duties of caring for the flock. Deacons are to give their primary attention toward caring for the congregation’s physical

welfare. Deacons have the honor of modeling, for the local church and the lost world, God's compassion, kindness, mercy, and love. As the church compassionately cares for people's needs, the world sees a visible display of Christ's love, which will draw some people to the Savior. Deacons are to be an example of commitment, unity, and harmony in their service.

B. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The deacons are to effectively and carefully administer the church's charitable activities. They are the collectors of funds, the distributors of relief and agents of mercy. They help the poor, the jobless, the sick, the widowed, the elderly, the homeless, the shut-in, and the disabled. They comfort, protect, encourage people, and help to meet their needs. Although they do in many ways meet spiritual needs of those whom they serve, their primary service is related to physical needs. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Service to the physical needs of the membership exhibiting the love and compassion of Christ. Specific attention is to be given to widows and widowers, the needy, and the aged. Collection and administration of the benevolent fund is included.
2. Assisting the Elder Body in the preparation and serving of the Lord's Supper to the membership.
3. Other such duties and responsibilities as determined by the deacons and/or the Elder Body.

C. QUALIFICATIONS. Deacons must be members in good standing of LSCC and possess the qualifications stated in I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13. These qualifications are listed below:

1. A man of dignity. *(1 Timothy 3:8)*
2. Not double-tongued. *(1 Timothy 3:8)*
3. Not addicted to much wine. *(1 Timothy 3:8)*
4. Not fond of sordid gain. *(1 Timothy 3:8)*
5. Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. *(1 Timothy 3:9)*
6. Tested *(1 Timothy 3:10)*
7. Beyond reproach. *(1 Timothy 3:10)*
8. Husbands of only one wife. *(1 Timothy 3:12)*
9. Good managers of their children and their own households. *(1 Timothy 3:12)*

D. SELECTION. Nominations will be made by the membership, annually, from those members in good standing, who are perceived to meet the qualification of deacon and have proved themselves to have a heart to serve others. These nominees will be reviewed by the Deacon Officers. They will recommend to the Elder Body those whom they have examined and find to be qualified and who confirm that they sense the Lord's calling to serve as a deacon. A Special Meeting (Article IX, Section B) will be called by the Elder Body, for the purpose of affirming the deacon candidates. Individual deacon candidates will be affirmed to serve by a three-fourths majority (75%) vote of all Qualified Church Members voting.

E. ORDINATION. Deacon candidates, who have been affirmed, but have not previously been ordained in a Southern Baptist Church, shall be ordained (set apart for service), by

the Elder Body in the presence of the membership. Affirmed deacon candidates will not serve as an active deacon until they have been ordained.

F. TERM OF OFFICE. The initial term of office of deacon shall be one year. Consecutive terms are acceptable and encouraged, for those who are serving well as deacons. At the completion of their one-year term of service, with the recommendation of the Deacon Officers and the deacon's affirmation that God's leading is for them to continue serving as an active deacon, the Deacon Officers will present the names of those deacons, whom they recommend to continue to serve, to the Elder Body for concurrence. Deacons recommended and approved for continuance of active service will not require reaffirmation by a vote of the membership. Following any lapse of service by a deacon, the procedures stated in Section D will be followed for return to active service.

G. NUMBER OF DEACONS. The number of active deacons will be as determined by the Deacon Officers with the concurrence of the Elder Body.

H. TRAINING AND EDUCATION. No special education or training is required to serve as a deacon. The deacon must have a heart to serve others and be committed to work together with the other deacons in fulfilling the deacon ministry.

I. DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL. A deacon may be removed from active service upon failure to meet the qualifications stated in Section C or for reasons as stated in Article X, Section J, Discipline and Removal. Removal of a deacon from active service other than by completion of a term of service or resignation shall be by action of the Elder Body at the recommendation of the Deacon Officers.

J. MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATION. Deacons shall meet regularly for prayer, Bible study and discussion of the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of deacons. Frequency of meetings shall be as determined by the Deacon Officers. The Deacon Officers shall prepare written policies and procedures for submission to the Elder Body for concurrence. These shall be submitted to the Elder Body within one year from the adoption of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XIII THE TEACHING PASTOR

A. SELECTION. In the event that LSCC is without its Teaching Pastor, the Elder Body and its designees will act as a search group to seek the Lord's will regarding the appointment of a new Teaching Pastor. When they are unanimous in their recognition of God's leadership toward a candidate, they will seek the affirmation of the members of LSCC in a Special Meeting (Article IX, Section B). A vote of at least three fourths (75%) majority of all Qualified Church Members voting is required to call a Teaching Pastor.
(Ephesians 4:11)

B. TERM OF OFFICE. He shall remain in office an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservation: If the Elder Body are unanimous agreement (excluding the Teaching Pastor) with the decision to remove the Teaching Pastor from his position,

they have the authority to dismiss the Teaching Pastor, through the affirmation of a vote of at least three fourths (75%) majority of all Qualified Church Members in Special Meeting (Article IX, Section B). Severance compensation shall be determined by the Elder Body.

If the Teaching Pastor desires to resign he shall give notice of his resignation to LSCC, after having informed the Elder Body.

C. DUTIES. In addition to his shepherding role, the Teaching Pastor's primary responsibility is the ministry of the Word and prayer, in order to provide strategic leadership and vision to the body. He is called to help believers, maturing their faith through insightful and accurate presentation of biblical truths, equipping them to be the true "ministers" of the body. Because of these primary roles, the ministry of the Word and his leadership, the Teaching Pastor will need to prioritize his time, focusing upon these duties first. To that end, as shepherds of the flock, the elders are responsible to appoint other leaders, with complimentary spiritual gifts, to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot be filled by the Teaching Pastor.

(Ephesians 4:11-12)

ARTICLE XIV STAFF

The Elder Body, or their appointees, will select, supervise, and evaluate all staff members in accordance with the LSCC's personnel manual.

ARTICLE XV RECEIPT, INVESTMENT, AND DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

A. RECEIPT OF MONEY. LSCC shall receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes that are consistent with God's Word. The Elder Body shall determine whether to accept such money or property.

B. MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS. The Elder Body, or their appointees, shall manage and distribute any funds or property only for the benefit of LSCC consistent with the expressed purposes of LSCC.

C. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL MATTERS. The Elder Body shall require a periodic review (not to exceed two years) of LSCC's financial records be conducted by an independent accounting firm.

ARTICLE XVI COMPENSATION

Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from LSCC shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of such compensation or remuneration.

ARTICLE XVII RECORDS AND REPORTS

A. RECORDS. LSCC shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books and records of its business and properties. All such books, records and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business in Jackson County Missouri. The adequacy and accuracy of the books and records shall be overseen by the Elder Body. The location of the principal place of business of LSCC may be changed from time to time as determined by the Elder Body.

B. INSPECTION OF BOOKS AND RECORDS. Every member shall have the absolute right, at any reasonable time, to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind (with the exception of personnel and contribution records) and the physical properties of LSCC. The Elder Body if necessary to maintain good order, may restrict and limit the number of inspections or establish an orderly manner for such to be conducted. But in no event shall a reasonable inspection of the books and records be denied to a member.

ARTICLE XVIII INDEMNIFICATION OF ELDERS

The Elder Body acting together shall be indemnified and held harmless for actions consistent with the purpose and vision of LSCC. LSCC shall be primarily responsible for liability arising from such actions or inaction of the Elder Body. Reasonable expenses to litigate or otherwise resolve issues arising from the Elder Body's performance of its duties and responsibilities shall be paid by LSCC. At the election of the Elder Body, this same indemnification shall extend to all individuals performing within the scope of their duties and responsibilities for the benefit of LSCC.

ARTICLE XIX DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of LSCC, the Elder Body shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to another Southern Baptist church within Jackson County, Missouri.

ARTICLE XX AMENDMENTS

A. AMENDMENT PROCESS. These Bylaws may be amended and new and additional Bylaws may be made at any time by the Elder Body, with affirmation of such change, as reflected by a (75%) majority vote of the Qualified Church Members voting.

B. RECORD OF AMENDMENTS. Whenever an amendment or new Bylaw is adopted, it shall be copied into the books and records of LSCC, with the original Bylaws. If any Bylaw is repealed or amended, the fact of repeal or amendment, with the date of the meeting at which the repeal or amendment was confirmed, by LSCC, shall be stated in LSCC's books and records with the Bylaws and the repealed or amended provision, clearly marked as repealed or amended, in the original Bylaws.