

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

McLean Bible Church (referred to in this Constitution as the “Church”) is a Christian church family that lives under the authority of the Bible, including the Statement of Faith and Doctrine and other biblical teaching set forth in this Constitution.

The Church operates legally as an unincorporated association under Virginia law and is governed by this Constitution as it may be amended from time to time according to its terms for such amendments.

Article I - The Name, Purpose and Affiliation

Section 1. Name

The name of this church shall be McLean Bible Church.

Section 2. Affiliation

This church shall not, and cannot, be affiliated with any denomination, but shall remain independent for the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 3. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God by making disciples and multiplying churches among all nations, beginning in greater Washington, DC.

As a church, we are committed to biblical teaching and preaching (2 Timothy 3:16-4:5), biblical prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), biblical evangelism (Acts 1:8), biblical discipleship (Matthew 4:18-22; 28:18-20), biblical membership (1 Corinthians 12:12-31), biblical leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-13), biblical fellowship (Romans 12:1-21), biblical accountability and discipline (Matthew 18:15-20), biblical worship (Colossians 3:12-17), biblical ordinances (Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34), biblical giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-4), and biblical mission (Romans 15:8-24).

Article II - Statement of Faith and Doctrine

Section 1. The Scriptures

We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of God. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally to all parts of the writings as they appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that all Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ and that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read, or understood, until it leads to Him. We believe that all Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction (Matt. 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Section 2. The Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--and that these three are one God; co-equal and co-existent (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 5:3-4; Heb. 1:8).

Section 3. Man

We believe that man was originally created in innocence and that he fell through sin, and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and then he became subject to the power of the devil. We believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of the human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race; and hence that every child of Adam is born into this world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life but is essentially and unchangeably lost apart from divine grace. (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 3:6; Rom. 3:10-23; Eph 2:1-5).

Section 4. Christ's Advent

We believe that the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, received a human body and a sinless human nature (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1,17-18; Heb. 4:15).

We believe that He remained a perfect sinless man, yet retained His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man. We believe that He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin of the world, bearing the holy judgment against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was, therefore, substitutionary and by His death He became the Savior of the lost (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 10:5-17; 1 Peter 3:18).

We believe that, according to the Word of God, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which all believers shall inherit (John 20:20; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Phil. 3:20).

We believe that in then ascending He became the Head over all things to the Church which is His body, and in this ministry He ceases not to intercede and advocate for the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

Section 5. Salvation

We believe that, owing to death through sin, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of works can otherwise provide the sinner with the new life that makes him a son of God. This redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin, dying in our room and stead; and no repentance, no feeling, no faith, no ordinance of the Church, can add in the least degree to the value of the blood in the finished work wrought for us by Him who united us to Himself (John 3:5; Rom. 5:6-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 23).

We believe that the new birth of the believer is an act of God the Spirit and comes only through individual faith in Christ and no other act such as confession, baptism, prayer, or faithful service is to be added to believing as an added condition of salvation (John 1:12; Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:24).

We believe that one exercising this faith is immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new, having his place and portion as linked to Christ and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessing, as soon as he is saved he is in possession of every spiritual blessing and is complete in Christ (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3).

Section 6. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, indwells every believer since the day of Pentecost, and by His baptism unites all Christ's own into one body. He is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. (Rom. 8:9).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs immediately upon saving faith when we are placed into the body of Christ, the true Church; the filling of the Holy Spirit is as the occasion demands for service (1 Cor. 12:13).

The Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance and seals us until the day of redemption. We believe there are well-defined gifts of the Holy Spirit which are given out by His sovereign will and are not to be prayed for, nor sought after by any special prayer, but it is the believer's privilege to yield to the Spirit in order that He might use us in any capacity for His glory (Eph. 4:30).

Section 7. The Church

We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the true Church which is the Body and Bride of Christ; which began at Pentecost and is completely distinct from Israel. We are placed into the Church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and made one body, that is Christ's, whether Jews or Gentiles (Eph. 4:3-6).

We believe that God has ordained that through the local church the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be spread and that it is the duty of every born-again one to seek out a local fellowship for the furtherance of the Gospel and his own edification (Eph. 1:20-23).

We believe that the local church has two ordinances only: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41; 1 Cor. 11:26).

Section 8. The Rapture

We believe that according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself into Heaven both His own who are living and those who died in Him. We believe that the translation of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week--during which time the Church, the Body of Christ, will be in Heaven. This period is known as the tribulation (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 3:10).

We believe that the period of great tribulation in the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He went, and with power and great glory to introduce the millennial age, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, restore Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of God's covenant promises (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 19:11ff).

Section 9. Satan

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels; that one, the highest ranking, sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

We believe that Satan is the originator of sin, and that, under the permission of God, he through subtlety led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjected them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God (Gen 3:1ff; Heb. 2:14).

We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, though not then executed, and that he now rules as the "god of this world"; and that, at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years, and after the thousand years he will be loosed for a little season and then cast into the lake of fire (John 12:31; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 20:2).

Section 10. The Eternal State

We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in Glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 20:11-15).

Article III - Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1. Permanent Sections

Article I, Section 2; Article II; and Article III, Section 1, cannot be changed or amended in any way in this church.

Section 2. Process for Amendments

This Constitution may be only amended by action of the Church members at a Church Family Meeting upon a recommendation by the Board of Elders, all in accordance with this section. Any Church member may submit either to the Chair or the Secretary of the Board of Elders a proposed amendment (or amendments) to this Constitution. The Board of Elders may, by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the elders in office, recommend any such proposed amendment (or amendments) for a vote by the Church membership and may call a Church Family Meeting for the purpose of voting upon such proposed and recommended amendment (or amendments). The proposed and recommended amendment (or amendments) shall be provided to the Church membership in connection with the notice of such Church Family Meeting. Such a meeting may include other agenda items.

Article IV - Application of Biblical Beliefs within the Church Family

Section 1. Biblical Role of the Church Membership

The Church is comprised of members who are committed to being all that a church is and doing all that a church does according to God's Word (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Members are responsible for loving one another with the attitude of Jesus Christ (John 13:35; Philippians 2:1-11), electing elders in accord with God's Word (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), joyfully obeying and honoring Church leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-18; Hebrews 13:17), submitting to and carrying out Church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8), and making disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:18-20) under the leadership of elders and pastors who keep watch over their souls (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17).

Section 2. Biblical Role of the Board of Elders

The Church is ruled by Jesus and led by a Board of Elders which is accountable to Jesus and the Church membership in accordance with biblical teaching and this Constitution. The Board of Elders is responsible for leading under the authority of Christ, shepherding with the care of Christ, teaching the Word of Christ, and modeling the character and mission of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-4). In addition, the Board of Elders shall be the Church's sole authoritative interpreter of the Scripture and the final authority on its application to practices, policies, and discipline within the Church. Accordingly, the Board of Elders may interpret or clarify provisions set forth in the Statement of Faith and Doctrine, and may adopt additional biblical beliefs, as well as practices, policies and standards through which the Church exercises and expresses its beliefs.

Section 3. Ordinances

The Church recognizes two ordinances to be administered as follows:

Baptism. Baptism shall be administered to those who have been found by examination by elders and/or pastors to be true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have expressed desire to obey the Lord in baptism. The mode shall normally be by immersion. Water baptism shall be encouraged for all believers (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41).

The Lord's Table. The Lord's Table is a remembrance by believers of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It shall be administered at such times as elders and/or pastors shall determine. Parental or guardian guidance shall be given to children under age for Church membership who desire to participate in the Lord's Table (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor.11:23-29).

Section 4. Serving with other Christian organizations

According to the teaching of the Bible and in the spirit of Christian cooperation for the Great Commission and the glory of God, we actively and joyfully partner with other Christians, churches, ministries, organizations, and denominations to the extent that the Board of Elders determines that any such partnership furthers the purpose of the Church (including the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; see Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8) and displays the unity of the body of Christ around the world (John 17:20-23; Romans 15:22-33; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

At the same time, also in accord with biblical teaching, we exist as an independent local church (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1) with sole authority to appoint our elders, pastors and members (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), and we fulfill our purpose as a local church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 13:1-3; Ephesians 1:20-23) under the governing authority of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17) independent from the governing authority of any other church or entity (including any denomination).

Accordingly, Article I, Section 2 shall not preclude the Church from entering into a collaborative arrangement, project, or relationship with another church, ministry, organization or denomination if, in connection with such arrangement, project, or relationship, (1) the Church is not required to agree with any theological position inconsistent with the Church's beliefs set forth in this Constitution (as determined by the Board of Elders), and (2) such church, ministry, organization or denomination does not obtain any governing authority or rights with respect to the nomination, election or removal of any elders, pastors or members of the Church, or with respect to any amendments to the Constitution.

Section 5. Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning as revealed in Scripture and that marriage is an institution created by and sanctioned by God - preceding the state - which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. God, the creator and designer of sexual intimacy, commands that this sacred activity must, without exception, only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other, and that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We further believe that gender is grounded in the teachings of the Bible and that a person's biological sex at birth determines their identity as a male or female. (See Genesis 1:26-31; 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.)

Article V - Membership

Section 1. Membership Status

An individual shall qualify as a Church member only if such individual (i) follows Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of his or her life, (ii) agrees to participate faithfully in the Church family and to abide by this Constitution in connection with his or her membership, (iii) has been examined and nominated for membership by the Board of Elders (or other church leaders designated by the Board of Elders), and then elected to membership by the Church membership at a Church Family Meeting, and (iv) has subsequently neither resigned his or her membership nor been removed from membership by the Board of Elders based on the Board's determination that the individual no longer satisfies constitutional membership requirements.

Section 2. Membership Voting Rights

Each member sixteen years of age or older shall be entitled to one vote on matters requiring membership approval. Without limitation, the following actions require approval of Church membership:

1. Electing Church members.
2. Electing and removing elders, including the Lead Pastor(s).
3. Approving the annual Church budget.
4. Approving real property transactions as set forth in this Constitution.
5. Amending this Constitution.

Section 3. Church Family Meetings

Meetings of Church members shall be called Church Family Meetings and shall be held no less than annually at a time and place as determined by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may determine that any Church Family meeting shall be held solely or additionally by means of remote communication in compliance with subsection b. below. A Church Family Meeting may be called by the Board of Elders for any purpose or purposes. The agenda for each Church Family Meeting, including items to be discussed, the manner for their discussion, and any matters or actions to be voted upon, shall be set by the Board of Elders.

- a. Notice of Meetings. Except as may otherwise be required by law or this Constitution, notice of a Church Family Meeting stating the date, time, place and/or means of remote communication for the meeting, and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be given no less than fourteen days prior to the meeting by public announcement in each regularly scheduled worship gathering held during such period and by written communication on the Church's website or through any channel by which the Church regularly communicates with Church members.
- b. Quorum and Voting. Unless otherwise required for a particular action in this Constitution, a quorum for a Church Family Meeting shall consist of ten percent (10%) of the Church membership entitled to vote. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, the Church membership may approve or adopt a proposed action or matter by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting during a Church Family Meeting in which the applicable quorum for such action or matter is present. Any or all members may participate in a Church Family Meeting through the use of any means of remote communication authorized by the Board of Elders for the meeting, and all such participation at any time during the meeting shall qualify as being present for purposes of establishing a quorum and voting with respect to all actions and matters proposed during the meeting.

Article VI - Leadership

Section 1. Board of Elders

- a. Authority. In connection with the biblical role and authority of the Board of Elders set forth in this Constitution, and except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, all legal powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of, and the business and affairs of the Church shall be managed under the direction of, the Board of Elders.
- b. Composition. The Board of Elders shall consist of the elders currently in office, including the Lead Pastor(s). The number of elders in office, not including any Lead Pastor, shall be not less than six. If for any reason the number of elders in office, not including any Lead Pastor, falls below six, the Board of Elders shall retain its authority under this Constitution. A majority of the elders in office (including any Lead Pastor(s)) immediately following any Church Family Meeting must not be employees of the Church. In the event this condition is not satisfied, each successive elder in office who is an employee of the Church (other than any Lead Pastor(s)) and who has served in office the longest shall be deemed to have resigned as an elder until the condition is satisfied.
- c. Terms. The term in office of an elder (other than any Lead Pastor) shall generally be three years, commencing immediately following the Church Family meeting in which such elder is elected and concluding at the end of the first Church Family Meeting held three years after the date of such elder's election. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the number of elders in office (not including any Lead Pastor(s)) at the end of a Church Family meeting is less than six, the Board of Elders may extend the term of any elder whose term expired at the end of such meeting until the end of the next Church Family meeting. Upon conclusion of a term, an elder shall be eligible to be elected to another term.

d. Election. Each elder must be a male member of this Church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28. Elders may only be elected by vote of the Church members at a Church Family Meeting from candidates nominated by the Board of Elders, all in accordance with this section. Any Church member may at any time submit the name of a candidate for election as an elder to the Chair or Secretary of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the elders in office, may nominate one or more such candidates for a vote by the Church membership and may call a Church Family Meeting for the purpose of voting upon such nominated candidate (or candidates). Such meeting may include other agenda items. If the number of elders in office (not including any Lead Pastor(s)) falls below six, the Board of Elders must call a Church Family Meeting for the purpose of electing elders at least every sixty days until the number of such elders is at least six.

e. Meetings. The Board of Elders may provide by resolution the time and place for the holding of regular meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called by the Chair of the Board or at the request of one half of the elders in office. Notice of each meeting of the Board of Elders stating the place, date, and time of the meeting shall be given to each member of the Board of Elders. Elders may participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all elders participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting, as determined by the Board of Elders for the meeting, and all such elders so participating shall be deemed to be present for purposes of establishing a quorum and voting at the meeting. A majority of elders in office (including any Lead Pastors) present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at such meeting. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, a two-thirds vote of the elders present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Elders. In all decision-making, elders shall prayerfully aim and work toward Spirit-led consensus (Acts 15:22, 38).

f. Removal. An elder may be removed from office by resignation or by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the elders in office. The elder in question shall cast no vote in such deliberations. An elder may also be removed from office by the delivery to any elder in office of a written statement demanding such removal that is verifiably signed by Church members entitled to vote constituting at least fifty percent (50%) of the total number of Church members entitled to vote. Such removal shall be effective immediately upon such delivery. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an elder in office may not be removed by such written statement if such removal results in the number of elders in office being less than three.

Section 2. Lead Pastor(s)

One or more Lead Pastors may be elected only by the Church membership in accordance with this section. The Board of Elders may nominate a candidate for Lead Pastor to be voted upon by the Church membership according to the process for electing elders in this Constitution. Each Lead Pastor shall provide Word-driven, Spirit-directed vision and leadership for the Church and shall serve as an elder in office, including as a voting member of the Board of Elders as described in this Constitution. Each Lead Pastor may also be removed from office in the same way that any elder may be removed according to this Constitution. A Lead Pastor shall not be subject to three year terms, and he shall serve until his resignation or removal. A Lead Pastor may take a sabbatical during his tenure with the Church with the approval of the Board of Elders, provided that such Lead Pastor will remain an elder in office during such sabbatical.

Section 3. Other Pastors

In light of the interchangeability of the biblical terms for “elder,” “pastor,” and “overseer” (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4), the Board of Elders may appoint other pastors who meet the biblical qualifications of elders and who help shepherd the body of Christ, teach the Word of Christ, and model the character and mission of Christ. These pastors shall be male members of the Church and may include both Staff and non-Staff members.

Section 4. Deacons and Deaconesses

In accord with biblical teachings, deacons and deaconesses are members of the Church responsible (under the authority of the Board of Elders) for assisting the elders in caring for the needs of the Church and community, and promoting the unity of the Church (Acts 6:1-6). Deacons and deaconesses shall be those members of the Church, both men and women, who are designated as deacons and deaconesses by the Board of Elders. The biblical qualifications for deacons and deaconesses are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 5. Staff

The Church may employ and compensate individuals (including elders and deacons in office) to equip and enable the Church for ministry. The Board of Elders may delegate to one or more employees specific legal authority and duties pursuant to Article VII, Section 2 of this Constitution. All Church employees are accountable to their respective supervisors and/or designated leaders, and to the Board of Elders, for implementation of the Church’s mission. Church employees serve at the will of the Church and may be separated from employment with or without cause or notice.

Section 6. Legal Officers

All legal officers shall be appointed by the Board of Elders.

- a.** Chair. The Chair of the Board of Elders shall be an elder and shall preside at meetings of the Board of Elders. The Chair shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. The Chair shall have authority to execute legal instruments and documents on behalf of the Church as directed by the Board of Elders, and shall perform all other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the Board of Elders.
- b.** Vice Chair. The Vice Chair, if any, shall be an elder and shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. He shall assume all of the above enumerated duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- c.** Secretary. The Secretary shall be an Elder and shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. He shall (i) keep (or cause to be kept) the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Elders and any committees of the Board of Elders; (ii) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution or as required by law; (iii) be custodian of the Church records; and (iv) in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the Board of Elders.
- d.** Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. The Treasurer shall (i) be the chief financial officer of the Church and have the care and custody of all its funds, securities, evidences of indebtedness and other personal property and deposit the same in accordance with the instructions of the Board of Elders; (ii) have authority to execute legal instruments and documents on behalf of the Church as directed by the Lead Pastor or Board of Elders; (iii) upon request of the Board of Elders, make such reports to it as may be required at any time; and (iv) perform all other duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the Board of Elders.
- e.** Resignation or Removal. The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, or Treasurer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Elders. The officer's resignation shall take effect upon receipt by the Church unless the notice specifies a later effective date, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. An officer shall be deemed to have resigned in the event of such officer's incapacity as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction. In addition, the Board of Elders may remove an officer at any time.

Article VII - Additional Church Matters

Section 1. Custodial Trustees and Real Property

The Board of Elders shall appoint from among the membership of the Church three "Custodial Trustees" to hold title to Church real property in the name of the Church, in keeping with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Said trustees shall not convey, sell, buy or receive real property valued at more than 10% of the annual Church budget, or obligate the congregation regarding such real property except as authorized by the Church membership at a Church Family Meeting. Said trustees shall not convey, sell, buy or receive any real property valued at 10% or less of the annual Church budget, or obligate the congregation regarding such real property except as authorized by the Board of Elders. Although appointed for an indefinite period, their availability and suitability shall be reviewed annually. The title to all real property of the Church shall be in the name of the Church and no member or group of members shall have any individual property rights in the assets of the Church.

Section 2. Policies

The Board of Elders may adopt policies regarding the management and conduct of the Church's affairs and/or the exercise of legal powers, provided that such policies shall be subject to the provisions of Virginia law and this Constitution. Such policies may delegate to any officer or any other person or persons specific legal authority and duties, including, without limitation, authority to: (a) exercise general charge and supervision of the operations of the Church, including Church employees, contractors and volunteers; (b) enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church; (c) manage Church funds; (d) maintain Church records; and (e) indemnify directors, officers, employees and/or agents of the Church. Such policies may also circumscribe any such delegated authority and/or establish performance standards for any such persons with respect to the exercise of such authority or the management or conduct of the affairs of the Church.

Section 3. Church Budget

The Treasurer shall present for affirmation by vote at a Church Family Meeting the Church budget for the next year as adopted by the Board of Elders. If the Church membership does not approve the Church budget, then the Church shall operate to the extent practical with the prior year's Church budget until such time as a new Church budget is affirmed by vote at a Church Family Meeting.

Section 4. Audits and Church Records

The Board of Elders shall commission an annual audit of the Church's finances and shall present a summary of that audit to the Church membership at the Church Family Meeting following the completion of such audit. Church members may review the Church's audited financial statements or minutes of Church Family Meetings at the Church offices in the presence of Church leaders designated by the Board of Elders.

Section 5. Dispute Resolution

- a.** Scope. The Church and its members believe that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Church (Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11). This Section 5 thus applies to the Church and all its members. The Church and its members agree that any Dispute shall be resolved solely through alternative dispute resolution as described herein. A Dispute is any dispute, controversy, claim, or other disagreement arising out of, relating to, or in connection with this Constitution. This Section 5 shall be construed broadly in order to achieve its intended purpose of resolving Church matters within the Body of Christ rather than by litigation in the secular courts.
- b.** Biblically-based conciliation. The Church and its members agree to seek to resolve any Dispute first through confidential biblically-based conciliation as determined by the Board of Elders.
- c.** Christian arbitration. If biblically-based conciliation does not resolve the Dispute, the Church and its members agree that the Dispute shall be resolved solely through legally binding confidential arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation or any similar arbitration procedures approved by the Board of Elders.
- d.** Judicial enforcement. The Church and its members expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any court or other judicial body for any Dispute, except to enforce an arbitration decision as described above. Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.
- e.** Board of Elders authority. The foregoing conciliation and arbitration steps shall not be construed in any manner as a limitation on the authority of the Board of Elders as set forth in this Constitution, including without limitation the Board's authority to investigate reports of misconduct and administer discipline of Church members in accord with Scripture (see Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11). Likewise, this Section 5 shall not be construed to waive or limit the Church's rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; Article I, Section 16 of the Virginia Constitution; Virginia Code §§ 57-1 to 57-2.1; or any other federal, state, or local law protecting religious exercise or prohibiting secular interference into religious matters.

Section 6. Internal Revenue Code

The Church is organized and operated exclusively for Christian religious purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to any elder or officer of the Church or any other individual, and no elder or officer of the Church or any other individual shall be entitled to share in any distribution of any of the Church's assets on dissolution of the Church or otherwise (except that reasonable compensation may be paid to an elder, officer or other individual for services rendered to or for the benefit of the Church affecting one or more of its purposes).

Section 7. Dissolution

In the event that the Church is dissolved, it will be done in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, provided that the net assets of the Church, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the Church's liabilities, will be distributed exclusively for the religious purposes of the Church to religious organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as determined by the Board of Elders.