

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF MADISON CHAPEL, INC.

January 9, 2012

PREAMBLE

God's Word, the Bible, is the source of authority of Madison Chapel, Inc. (to be known as "Madison Chapel"). Accordingly, as Scripture requires Madison Chapel (hereinafter referred to as "MC") will submit to its government, and these bylaws are set forth in accordance with North Carolina State law and are always subject to reconsideration regarding their full and indisputable agreement with God's Word. The following articles and bylaws provide doctrine and guidelines for the orderly function of MC, yet are intended to equip the Elders with the latitude necessary to lead and direct MC as God leads. The members of MC voluntarily ordain and establish the following bylaws and articles as the legal document governing the functions and procedures of MC and agree to voluntarily submit to them.

PURPOSE

The purpose of MC is to glorify God. Our Mission is to see unbelieving people become changed by God to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. MC will engage in the following activities for that purpose: 1) the public worship of God, 2) the preaching and teaching of the Bible, 3) evangelism, 4) missionary endeavors, 5) teaching and equipping members to live a faithful Christian lifestyle, and 6) such other future activities consistent with our Mission (Eph.1:5-14; Col. 1:9-10; Matt 5:16; 1 Pet. 2: 9-12; Matt. 28:18-20; and Mark 12:29).

INCORPORATION

To implement this purpose legally, MC is incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina so that it may own, provide and/or maintain a place of worship (including suitable real estate and buildings), receive, hold and disburse gifts, bequests and funds, and/or do all and sundry things necessary or incident to carry on this purpose.

GOVERNING BODY

The Council of Elders is the governing body of MC. In certain decisions the Elders will desire member confirmation of those decisions. Those circumstances are described in Article XIV.

AFFILIATION

MC voluntarily chooses to be unaffiliated with any denomination at its founding, but chooses to allow the Elders of the church to make such affiliations as seem necessary and proper to accomplish the mission of the church. Such affiliations as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Buncombe Baptist Association are some of the possibilities, but not all inclusive. Based on 2 John: 10-11, we expect and remain steadfast that all our giving is meant to support only doctrinally, morally, and ethically sound ministries and affiliations.

ARTICLE I NAME

The legal name is Madison Chapel, Inc., in Asheville, North Carolina, and will be called Madison Chapel. MC, Inc. is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE II DOCTRINE

MC accepts the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice and adopts and stands firmly upon the following as its interpretation of Bible Doctrine.

I) MC believes that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (the "Scriptures") are divinely and verbally inspired by God. MC believes that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John 10:35; Luke 16:17) and were incapable of error and never wrong (John 10:35; Luke 16:17). Accordingly, the Scriptures stand alone as MC's sole source for doctrine and teaching.

II) MC believes there is one and only one, living and true God ("God"). God is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being. He is the Creator, the Redeemer, the Preserver, and the Ruler of the universe. God is holy and perfect. God is all-powerful, all knowing and ever present; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future. To Him, all people owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. God exists as Spirit and reveals Himself to people as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

III) MC believes that Jesus the Christ is God, The One and Only Begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to the virgin, Mary.

IV) MC believes in God, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who is equal with God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; indwells every genuine believer and empowers them; as well as empowering the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

V) MC believes that mankind was created in the image of God. Adam sinned and thereby experienced spiritual death (which is separation from God). This eventually led as well to physical death. All human beings, as descendants of Adam, are therefore born spiritually dead, with a sinful nature.

VI) MC believes that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice.

VII) MC believes that all those who believe in and receive Jesus Christ by faith are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life ("believers"). All believers are justified on the basis of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. A genuine believer will show evidence of belief by true repentance, and response to God's Word and the Holy Spirit's leading. For this reason, after physical death, all believers live eternally in God's holy presence. In contrast, all who do not believe in and do not receive by faith Jesus Christ are not justified before God (The "lost"). Upon physical death, the lost will live eternally separated from God, tormented in the Lake of Fire, as described in the Scriptures.

VIII) MC believes that: Jesus Christ's physical, crucified body resurrected from the dead after three days; after His resurrection and forty day ministry on earth, He ascended into heaven; He is presently acting as the High Priest, representing believers before God; and He is the advocate for believers.

IX) MC believes that Jesus Christ will return to the earth in glorified form.

X) MC believes in the bodily resurrection of all people, the lost and the believers; the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire; and the eternal fellowship of believers in heaven.

XI) MC believes in the existence of the devil, also known as Satan. Satan is a liar, seeking to deceive men and turn them from God. Satan, his entire angelic host, and all the lost; those who have not received Christ as their Lord and Savior, will be eternally separated from God and tormented in the Lake of Fire.

XII) MC believes that all believers comprise the "Church." The Church's mission is to preach, teach, declare, and make known the Scriptures to the entire world, through the formal proclamation of the Scriptures and through the Christian's complete, transformed, and consistent lifestyle.

XIII) MC believes that, within the local body of believers ("Local Church"), God provides a team of Pastor(s), Elders, Deacons and other workers who are to guide and enable the congregation to develop spiritual maturity.

XIV) MC believes each believer is commanded by God to exercise care and concern with regard to all the time, all the possessions, and all the wealth which God has entrusted to him.

XV) MC believes in two ordinances of the Church, given by Jesus Christ: (1) baptism and (2) the Lord's Supper. MC believes that baptism by immersion is commanded of all believers as an act of obedience, signifying the participation of the believer in the death, burial, and resurrection "in Christ." MC does not believe in baptismal regeneration, nor does it believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. Likewise, MC believes that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience by which believers memorialize, celebrate, and honor the death of Jesus Christ until He returns.

XVI) Modification of Doctrine.

A) Modification of this section, Doctrine Article II or the Beliefs Appendixes A and B requires the following:

- 1) The Elders must prepare a written statement of the new section of Doctrine or Beliefs, and a written justification for the changes or additions;
- 2) The Elders must present those changes to the congregation in an appropriate way.
- 3) A three (3) month period of prayer and contemplation by the congregation and the Elders is required before the proposal can be voted upon.
- 4) The modification, addition, or removal of a part of these sections, would then require a two thirds majority vote (2/3) in favor of the change to pass the changes.

Article III
MEMBERSHIP

I) **Reasons for Membership:** Church membership is not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures and therefore it is not required for anyone choosing to attend MC and its functions. However, for the practical functioning of MC, membership is encouraged and is required for any leadership or teaching position within MC. It is essential that those in leadership and teaching positions within MC be unified through the biblical doctrine in this document and the Holy Spirit. Membership is a mechanism by which that unity is determined, acknowledged, and committed to. Furthermore, membership is a covenant agreement between MC and the member. It is an agreement that each member desires to be accountable to one another in walking with God, and to the discipline of the leadership of the MC. Those who have deep seated scriptural objections to membership may seek alternate means of commitment, but exceptions will be rare and infrequent.

II) **Criteria for Membership:** Before a person may become a member of MC, these criteria must be met.

A) First, the person seeking membership must be a believer.

B) Second, the person seeking membership must be baptized by immersion after they have made a commitment to Christ in a church or through an organization that is a credible Church authority.

- C) Third, the person seeking membership must attend and complete a series of classes offered by MC. These classes will acquaint the person with the doctrine and philosophy of ministry.
- D) Fourth, the person seeking membership must sign a covenant, stating that they will uphold the doctrine and philosophy of ministry of MC, seek to live in unity with the other members of MC, and submit to the authority of the Elders of MC. The covenant agreement is used for the purpose of modeling the biblical covenants between God and His people. The MC covenant is an agreement between MC and the member, reflecting the desire to be mutually accountable to each other. It is not a creed, it is not all inclusive, nor is it a set of manmade requirements, but a simple statement of what membership in a local church should mean as a covenant.
- E) Finally persons seeking membership in MC must be approved by the Elders.

ARTICLE IV AUTHORITY OF MC

The authority of MC is as follows:

- I) **God.** - God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is the head of MC. He is the supreme authority (as revealed in the Word of God) to whom MC submits.
- II) **Elders.** –(for qualifications of Elders see Article V)
 - A) **Priorities of Elders.** The Elders are the specific men of MC, who have been set aside and called by God:
 - 1) To pray and seek God's direction for MC;
 - 2) To minister the Word to the people, and;
 - 3) To shepherd God's people at MC: members first; regular attendees second; and others as time and resources are available. Shepherding is not the same as evangelizing. Evangelizing is a part of the ministry of the Word.
 - B) **Responsibility/Authority.** The Elders will protect the doctrine of MC, will apply biblical discipline within MC as necessary, and will direct the ministry and business of MC. All authority regarding church policy, ministry, business, and financial matters rests with the Elders. The Elders' function is not only to oversee the administration of MC, but also to shepherd, guide, and nurture MC with a spirit of wisdom, compassion, servant-hood, and love.
 - C) **Voting.**
 - 1) The Elders will make decisions together by voting. All Elders are considered equal and have equal voting authority.
 - 2) Elders are expected to abstain from votes that they have a personal stake in, a family interest in, or otherwise might be perceived as being biased. In matters of staff compensation or discipline, regarding an Elder who may have a conflict of interest, the Elder in question is required to abstain and will not have a vote.
 - 3) The Elders' desire is that they would be led by the Holy Spirit to vote together unanimously on all votes. The fundamental underlying belief is that God by His Spirit can move all Elders united by Christ to the same place over time. (Acts 15:1-29, Phil. 2:1-2). If the Elders are not unified in a particular matter,

they are to decide together if the issue is important enough to require unanimity. Some minor issues may not require unanimity. If unanimity is deemed to be desired and not attained, then the Elders are encouraged to study, pray, and seek God's will together, until unanimity is attained. The basic prayer of every Elder in these situations should be, "Lord change my mind if I am not in conformance with you; or change their minds if that is what you want, but bring us together."

- 4) This desire for unanimity should not be misused or taken as wooden. Unanimity should also not be used as a club or hammer, to batter, coerce, or improperly influence a "lone Elder" who has a different opinion from the majority.
 - 5) There is no place for politicking, campaigning, or any other worldly methods of seeking to obtain one's way. The only way is the way of Jesus Christ and He by His Spirit will lead these men called of God to lead His church. None of this is humanly possible without the supernatural intervention of God and the mutual submission of will to God first, the church second and finally to each other as leaders. It also requires the prayers of the congregation.
- D) In the initial set up of the Elder system, three Elders are recommended. Once the Elder system is in place, the number of Elders may grow as the Elders deem necessary.
- E) If an Elder resigns his position, the remaining Elders must diligently pray and search for an Elder who meets the biblical requirements, trusting God to raise up the replacement. All Elder nominees are then confirmed by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the church members. This vote by the members is not an election, but a confirmation, by God through the flock, that the selectee has no hidden disqualification that has been missed by the Elders. Since we now live such separated and isolated lives, a two thirds (2/3) majority confirmation vote does not automatically confirm an elder nominee, but may do so. Each and every non confirmation vote should be looked at and considered seriously. Confirmation is finalized after the Elders review the vote, and determine in prayer there is sufficient confirmation to move to the next step of ordaining the new Elder.
- F) The Senior Teaching Pastor is the only Ordained Pastoral position within MC that is automatically required to be an Elder. Therefore, the Senior Teaching Pastor must meet the requirements of an Elder as well as the requirements for Senior Teaching Pastor before he is chosen for the position.
- G) The tenure of an Elder is not defined by years, but rather his ability and desire to effectively and enthusiastically serve the Lord in His church. It is expected that when an Elder is in a position that he can no longer effectively carry out his duties, he will resign his position as Elder or take a temporary or permanent sabbatical leave. It is also possible to become an Elder Emeritus, which an honorary title, recognizing past service.
- H) Elders may take leaves of absence for times of refreshment and rejuvenation. Leaves of absence are not expected to be longer than twelve to twenty four (12 -36) months.
- I) Elders are called and then confirmed for a life of service.

- 1) The term of an Elder may be terminated by the Elder for any number of reasons such as a permanent move, a decline in health, or a family crisis of major proportions requiring full time energy.
 - 2) An Elder's term may also be terminated at any time by the other Elders if the Elders determine he no longer meets the biblical requirements for Eldership, or if his termination is in the best interest of MC.
 - 3) Members who observe behavior of an Elder which may lead to an accusation against an Elder are to follow the guidelines for church discipline and the scriptures referred to there.
- J) There is no minimum age for an Elder nor is there any maximum age. Elders should be chosen on the basis of Spiritual maturity (Spiritual age). It is incumbent on the Elders to continually be preparing the church for the future by continually identifying, developing, and training the next generation of church leadership, Elders, Deacons, and teachers.
- K) In Jesus' church there is no place for complacency, stagnancy, power trips, personal agendas, or social aloofness. Elders are under shepherds of Jesus for the church and as such they need to pray for a supernatural love for the flock (the people of MC). Only God can supply such a love, through a willing spirit and prayerful seeking.
- L) Elders do not receive compensation for their service as Elders. The Senior Teaching Pastor receives compensation for his duties as the Senior Teaching Pastor, but not for his service as an Elder. Likewise, there may be other Elders who are compensated by MC as paid pastors, but this compensation is not for service as an Elder.

III) **Functional Relationships within the Church**

- A) **Members of MC.** In Scripture, the Church is compared to the human body which has one head and consists of many different parts and components, all of which are necessary for the Body to function in a healthy manner. God has given each believer within the Church specific gifts and abilities, all for the purpose of building up the Church. God calls all people in the church to serve Christ according to their special gifts and abilities, relying on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.
- B) **Ordained Pastors at MC.** Ordained and God-called Pastors are necessary to oversee ministry areas of MC. The Ordained Pastors will be called, as God leads, by the Elders and will oversee ministry areas, as the Elders direct. The duties of the Ordained Pastors will be defined by the Senior Pastor with advice and counsel from the Elders. Each Ordained Pastor will have a performance review regularly as directed by the Elders. Ordained Pastors must meet the scriptural requirements for Eldership in I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:5-9, and hold to the doctrinal statement of MC, Article II. If a Pastor resigns, he must complete an exit interview.
- C) **Support Staff and Ministry Staff at MC.** Each ministry area also may require God-called support people that are responsible and gifted to serve. The authority to hire support staff and ministry staff is delegated to the Ordained Pastors and will be done in accordance with guidance from the Elders. Each staff member and ministry

person will be reviewed by their Pastor-Elder team periodically. If a staff or ministry member resigns, he or she must complete an exit interview.

- D) **Reviews/Objectives/Exit Interviews.** It is the desire of the church that all paid Pastors, support staff, and ministry associates receive periodic objectives (or job descriptions) and performance reviews. It is also the desire of the church that all associates departing the church for whatever reason or new assignments will complete an exit interview unless that is prevented by local law or common sense.
- E) **Deacons at MC.** Deacons are men within the membership of MC who function to serve the practical needs of the ministry of MC. They are to be “full of the Spirit and wisdom,” according to Acts 6:3.
- F) **Teachers at MC.** Teachers are men and women within MC who have a calling to teach and will have at least one of the speaking gifts of teaching, encouragement, or exhortation. Teachers are subject to the oversight of the Ordained Pastor or Elder over the particular area in which they teach. Their ultimate subjection is to the Elders of the Church.
- G) **Other Serving Positions.** Many other people are necessary to carry out the ministry of MC, through their gifts and talents. The needs are ever changing with the ministry needs of MC. To serve in any capacity of leadership within MC, membership is required, but attendees who are genuine believers can serve in various positions of responsibility and value. All leaders appointing servants should be careful not to select “unbelievers or seekers” for service except in rare and very specific circumstances and even then not without prayer and consultation.

ARTICLE V QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

D) **General Qualifications:** Each leadership position has its own specific requirements, as set forth above and below. However, to hold any leadership position, a person must be a member of MC, because membership represents mutual accountability between MC and the member.

A) **Elders:**

1) **Scriptural Requirements:** An Elder is to be a model of Godliness so that the congregation will follow him, and must meet the qualifications as stated in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. No man but Jesus has all these virtues in perfection, but these characteristics should exist in an Elder’s life not in perfection, but in good measure. The Elder’s life is marked by a humble, genuine, prayerful, Spirit filled effort to see Jesus sanctify him. (Philippians 1:9-11; Philippians 2:12-16)

(i) **Above Reproach:** Blameless in his lifestyle, displays a lifestyle free from continual and habitual patterns of scriptural disobedience, an example of “walking by faith” to others; nothing in his life about which an adversary could bring a charge. (I Timothy 3:2)

(ii) **Husband of One Wife:** A one-woman man, one man and one woman living in a pure marriage relationship without adultery or adulterous attitudes; devoted and faithful to his only wife. (I Timothy 3:2). We take this to mean a man who has never been divorced and remarried.

- (iii) **Temperate:** Stable, vigilant; not given to excesses or abuses in any area of life, spiritually together and balanced, displaying a solid individual with a clear biblical perspective on life. (I Timothy 3:2)
- (iv) **Prudent:** Self-controlled; knows life's priorities, sensible and of a sound mind, self-disciplined and practical in approach. (I Timothy 3:2)
- (v) **Respectable:** Living a well-ordered life of good behavior and actions, living such a well-arranged life that he is honored for it. Quietly fulfills his responsibilities in an orderly manner. (I Timothy 3:2)
- (vi) **Hospitable:** More interested in service to others than self pleasure, not self-willed; given to the love of strangers; friendly, polite and gracious. (I Timothy 3:2)
- (vii) **Able to Teach:** This is a significant qualification that sets the Elder apart from the Deacon. The Elder is the one apt to teach, either one to one or in groups of various sizes. He is also teachable; not necessarily possessing the gift or office of teacher, but he is able to be taught truth and able to communicate that truth to others with care and sensitivity. An Elder also teaches by example, with a Godly life, the right attitudes and a humble spirit in all his communication. (I Timothy 3:2)
- (viii) **Not Addicted to Wine:** An Elder has self control of his own desires. He allows the Spirit to master his life; not alcohol or drugs; or any other substances or material objects; and any intangible addictive behaviors. He realizes the importance of his Christian influence and is willing to limit his liberty for the sake of others. (I Timothy 3:3). This does not mean he is a teetotaler!
- (ix) **Not Pugnacious:** Not a brawler; not violent- does not use physical means to resolve differences; doesn't attack others emotionally or verbally as a regular pattern of behavior. Not contentious in his attitude and manner toward others. (I Timothy 3:3)
- (x) **Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre:** Does not seek money in a way that defiles Christian character. (I Timothy 3:3)
- (xi) **Gentle:** Not quick tempered; equitable toward all; fair; one who shows consideration and understanding.
- (xii) **Patient:** Allows the Holy Spirit to control his attitude and actions. (I Timothy 3:3)
- (xiii) **Not Contentious:** Not prone to arguing or taking up a personal agenda; not possessing a fighting attitude; yields his rights and not prone to be against something or competing for a position. (I Timothy 3:3)
- (xiv) **Free From the Love of Money:** His life is not consumed with amassing of material things - not covetous; does not desire to gain wealth through the ministry; understands receiving and giving under grace. (I Timothy 3:3)
- (xv) **One Who Manages His Household Well:** Has earned the respect of family; is the spiritual leader in blessing the family with a spiritual legacy; demonstrates leadership in his home and life; has a well-ordered family life. (I Timothy 3:4). One, who cannot and has not led in the home, should not lead in the church.

- (xvi) **Keeps Own Children Under Control With All Dignity:** Children are well behaved and respectful. (I Timothy 3:4)
- (xvii) **Not a Recent Convert:** A man who has been tested and has a “walk of faith” and that walk is reliable and credible. (I Timothy 3:6)
- (xviii) **One With a Good Reputation With Those Outside the Church Family:** A man whose character, walk, and ways are demonstrated by integrity and his lifestyle leaves the world with the fragrance of our sweet Savior, whether in his business or social relationships. (I Timothy 3:7)
- (xix) **Not Accused of Dissipation or Rebellion:** One who is not extravagant for the sake of other’s approval or for personal enjoyment at other’s expense. Not rebellious. One who is not only submissive to authority, but is teachable. (Titus 1:6b)
- (xx) **Not Self-Willed:** Does not demand his own way and is not self-centered. His perspective of life is concern for others and is sensitive to the needs of others. (Titus 1:7)
- (xxi) **One Who Loves What is Good:** Seeks the good works of Christ in which we are called to walk; desires the best for another in relationships. One who is motivated by kindness and demonstrates this by being benevolent to others. (Titus 1:8)
- (xxii) **Devout:** Set apart for the purposes of God and the practices of the Christian life; holy inwardly and outwardly in his character and actions. (Titus 1:8)
- (xxiii) **Sensible:** A person who practices discernment and discretion in the use of wisdom in everyday life. (Titus 1:8)
- (xxiv) **One Who Is Not Fond of Sordid Gain:** Does not teach law as a way of manipulating people to do what he wants them to do. (Titus 1:10-11)
- (xxv) **One Whose Children Are Believers:** Having faithful children who are trustworthy and respectful. (Titus 1:6)
- (xxvi) **Holding Fast the Faithful Word:** A clear conscience; clings firm to, discerns and applies truth so as to exhort sound doctrine; refutes those in error without violating the respect for others or compromising conviction. (Titus 1:9)
- (xxvii) **Not Quick Tempered:** Not ready to blow up or spout off; slow to anger; controlled in speech and actions. (Titus 1:7)
- (xxviii) **Just:** Deals with others in a fair and consistent manner; lives in accordance with God’s righteous standards. A principled man who allows God to produce His virtues in him.

B) Deacons

- 1) **Qualifications.** Deacons must be members of MC, have a God-given desire to serve MC, and meet the qualifications of a Deacon as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and must be approved by the Elder Council.
- 2) **Assignments.** The leadership of MC will review each Deacon’s gifting, energy, and inclinations. Each Deacon will be selected to serve on a specific ministry team or will be selected to do independent service for which they are uniquely gifted, always led or guided by an Ordained Pastor, an Elder or a Deacon.

- 3) **Doctrine.** They must agree with the Doctrinal Statement of MC. Being a member of MC presupposes and assumes agreement with all the doctrines of the Bible and MC. Such agreement allows a Deacon to serve while insuring unity and consistency in what is taught by example and word.
 - 4) **Reviews.** A periodic review will be given in order to assure the Deacon's accountability.
- C) **Teachers.**
- 1) As a leader, each Teacher is expected to have a walk with Christ that is above reproach.
 - 2) They must agree with the Doctrinal Statement of MC and be a member of MC to insure a consistency in what is taught.
 - 3) They will be reviewed regularly to insure accountability. This will be done by the Ordained Pastor or Elder of the area in which they serve.
- D) **Other Spiritual Requirements of all Leaders**
- 1) The man or woman must adhere to the doctrine of MC as written here in Article II and in the Appendix A, Beliefs.
 - 2) The man or woman must possess a mature and living relationship with Jesus Christ, which is evident in their actions and their words. They must desire to seek God's will for their own lives and for MC, and be able and willing to put aside their own desires and agendas, for the good of the church.
 - 3) The man or woman must have a desire to serve and to minister and must be compassionate and loving in their daily lives.
 - 4) **Reviews.** A periodic review will be given in order to assure the leader's accountability and to express love in the form of genuine coaching.

Article VI SENIOR TEACHING PASTOR

- I) The Senior Teaching Pastor, as an Elder, is specifically responsible to give himself to prayer and to the study of God's Word. This is so that he will be able to teach and preach the Word of God from the pulpit on a consistent basis. It is the Word of God that shepherds, guides, and nurtures the flock of God at MC. It is the Word by the Spirit that provides freshness and vitality and power.
- II) He will oversee the ordinances of the Church in accordance with the Word of God. He acts as an ex-officio member of any ministry or team. He is free to accept invitations to preach the Word of God to other groups or organizations provided such speaking engagements are affirmed by the other Elders as not being in conflict with his responsibilities at MC.

ARTICLE VII SELECTION AND TERMINATION OF THE SENIOR TEACHING PASTOR AND THE ELDERS

I. Selection of Senior Teaching Pastor: When the position of Senior Teaching Pastor becomes vacant, the Elders, after prayerful consideration, have the responsibility to initiate the process to select a Senior Teaching Pastor. They will oversee the process to select a Senior Teaching Pastor candidate who meets the requirements described in Article V and VI. They will delegate tasks and authority to a Pastor Search Team if needed to find a suitable candidate. Upon the Elders approval and God's blessing the Elders will present the candidate to the membership for a confirmation vote. It is the desire and hope of the founding Elders, that the Senior Teaching Pastor will always be about the work of discipling and nurturing the next Senior Teaching Pastor as a part of the functioning staff of MC. In this way consistency of direction, philosophy, and ministry may be maintained. Given that this may not always be possible the following procedures are laid out.

1) The Process.

(i) **Pastor Search Team.** If the Elders select a Pastor Search Team to find a suitable candidate, the Search Team will be led by one Elder, have at least one serving Deacon, and consist of not more than four (4) other persons to be named by the Elders. The search Team will not be made up of more than 6 people. The Elders will seek a balance for the team members so that worship, teaching, personnel, finance, and various age groups are represented. They will ask the Lord to guide them to the right 6 people and will ask the congregation to pray with and for them.

(ii) When a candidate is approved by the Pastor Search Team, he shall be presented to the Elders for an interview and a time of fellowship and such other interviews as the Elders deem necessary. The candidate must receive unanimous approval from the Elders in order to be recommended for consideration and confirmation by the membership.

(iii) After having received unanimous approval from the Elders, the candidate will be invited to participate in at least the following events. More events and actions may be required by the Elders if it is deemed necessary.

(a) A meeting with all the appropriate leadership in the church.

(b) A time to preach and teach the church.

(c) A time of fellowship with the church congregation at large.

(d) If all of these events confirm the candidate, then the candidate will be asked to confirm that he would like to have his name placed before the membership as a candidate for Senior Teaching Pastor.

2) Vote by the membership. This will be the only step required for a candidate that has been discipled and developed within the church. For outside candidates, assuming the candidate confirms he would like his name placed before the membership and the Elders are still united in their decision to call this man to service, then the candidate's name will be placed before the membership of the church for a final confirmation vote. The vote will be taken at a special business meeting called specifically for that purpose.

- (a) **Who is eligible to vote?** Only active members of MC shall be eligible to vote. Active membership is defined as those who have been in habitual attendance within the last year (with exceptions made for shut-ins and the infirmed who have continued to support the church but because of health have been absent). The Elders will be the arbiters of any questionable voters. All ballots will be signed by members and unsigned ballots will not be counted.
- (b) The reason for signed ballots is simple. Voting in a church is not like voting in politics or anywhere else. It is more important and eternally significant than that. Specific feedback may be extraordinarily important. In our culture it is easy for an individual to live an isolated existence, and for some serious sins or personality flaws to be present and unknown because we no longer live side by side, work next to each other, nor relax together after hours. We simply do not know each other like men and women did in Palestine. Therefore a single “NO” vote or several “NO” votes from members who are extraordinarily mature in the faith, may be cause for prayer, discussion, investigation, and maybe even disqualification of a candidate. Therefore it is incumbent on the Elders to make sure that the way members have voted is never used in an inappropriate way such as bullying, influencing, politicking, or manipulations of any kind.)
- (c) **Majority required.** The candidate must receive at least an 85% favorable vote of the membership at the meeting to confirm for the Elders the wisdom of issuing a call to ministry at MC.
- (d) If the Elders are still in unanimous agreement concerning the candidate’s call after the vote and consideration of the “no” votes, they will issue the call with confidence that the Lord has led them to this decision and has confirmed it with God’s people.
- (e) If the vote is less than 85% or the Elders, for some reason decide that the call should not be made, then the Elders will inform the candidate graciously of MC’s decision to remove the candidate’s name from consideration.
- 3) During this process, the Elders will provide regular updates to the members of MC. All members of MC, who desire to suggest the name of an individual for consideration as Senior Teaching Pastor, may do so in writing to the Elders.
- 4) During the process of selecting a Senior Teaching Pastor, the Elders will be responsible for the worship services, for providing preaching and teaching, for day-to-day leadership, and for complete Spiritual guidance at MC.

II) Selection of Elders:

- A) The Elders will be constantly listening to and observing the members of MC for men who stand out in their spiritual walk and their understanding of the Scriptures. If a member of MC submits a man’s name, the Elders will, through prayer and

examination, determine if he fulfills the requirement set forth in Article V and if he is to be called as an Elder.

- B) The process of the selection of all Elders shall be as follows:
- 1) If the Elders decide that an additional Elder is needed and upon determination that the candidate meets the requirements of Article V, his name will be submitted to the members of MC for a period of thirty days, alongside the biblical requirements for an Elder for confirmation.
 - 2) If there is a biblical objection to the candidate put before the members of MC, the person objecting will have thirty days in which to address this objection with the Elders. This may not be done anonymously.
 - 3) The member who makes the objection must be willing to go with an Elder to confront the candidate in love to see if the issue can be resolved.
 - 4) If the objection cannot be resolved to the Elders' satisfaction, then the candidate's name must be removed from consideration.
 - 5) When the thirty day period expires and (a) no biblical objection has been raised by the members of MC or the raised objection has been resolved and (b) at least a two thirds (2/3) confirmation, the candidate will be installed by the Elders.
- C) **Elder Offices:** The Elders will choose specific Elders to serve as Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman of the Elders will preside over the Elder meetings and will insure with the other Elders that the Elders serve the congregation in accordance with the guidelines described in the Bible and this document. The term of Chairman shall be for two years. If an Elder has served two consecutive terms as Chairman, he is not eligible to serve as Chairman again for twenty-four consecutive months.
- D) An Elder may resign his office if for any reason he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties required.
- E) In recognition that the responsibilities of an Elder are significant an Elder may take a leave of absence from his office for a defined period of time. Such sabbatical times will be arranged through mutual consent of the other Elders and will normally be no longer than twelve to twenty four (12-36) months.

III) **Termination of an Elder:** The Elders are accountable to God and to each other as men. Each is not a perfect man, but his character is constantly under scrutiny as an Elder. This is as it should be – a high standard.

- A) If an Elder commits a willful sin of grievous dimensions or an Elder's attitude or conduct consistently or habitually undermines his role as a leader of the church, then the other Elders have the responsibility to go to him and confront this issue in love and gentleness according to Matthew 18. This applies to the Senior Teaching Pastor as well as to the other Elders. This unhelpful conduct will likely be observed by the other Elders in the course of their leadership functions and may take many forms. Those forms may be contentiousness, lack of submission to Godly instruction, divisiveness, quick to anger, and many other possibilities. The Elders will confront the offender and practice the steps of church discipline with him, seeking to restore him biblically. If he refuses to repent, or if his sin has already disqualified him, then the Elders are obligated to remove him from his position and announce his removal to the members of MC. This function of the Elders is

extraordinarily important, difficult, and sensitive. The general rule of “public sins will be dealt with publicly, private sins dealt with privately,” and “personal sins dealt with personally” will be the guide.

- B) If a member of MC has an accusation against an Elder he or she is to follow the steps outlined in Matthew 18. If that does not produce results then they should bring the issue to one of the Elders in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19, “Do not entertain an accusation against an Elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.” The accusation will be heard by the Elder who received the accusation and then dealt with in accordance with Matthew 18 as outlined above.
- C) The office of Elder is not a position to be sought for power, influence or personal agendas. It is an under shepherd’s role, being an under shepherd for the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. Any confusion about this role would be cause for concern among the Elders to deal with the individual’s confusion with an appropriate sense of urgency and sensitivity.

IV) **Selection of Deacons.** The selection of Deacons is covered by a separate operating procedure, which may be changed from time to time as the Elders believe necessary for the welfare of the church and the flock.

ARTICLE VIII BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE

I) The Bible speaks often about the need for believers to be Holy, as God is Holy. This purity is an important and needed distinction for the members of MC who are expected (not by men, but by God) to conduct their lives in accordance with biblical standards. When a member of MC knowingly ignores the direct commands and prohibitions of Scripture, he/she will be disciplined according to Scripture. The purpose of this discipline is always: restoration, not destruction; obedience to God’s instruction and not woodenness, self-righteousness, or legalism; purification not punishment; and protection of the church from decidedly ungodly influences.

II) Therefore, discipline will be applied first through biblical counsel, admonition, and with loving concern. All discipline will be administered first, by the members, one on one to each other, and only after that by the Elders according to biblical principles found in such passages as Matthew 18:15-17. The general principle of “public sin will be dealt with publicly,” “private sin will be dealt with privately,” and “personal sin will be dealt with personally,” will be a general guide for the Elders. (Additional Bible passages of importance are 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, Galatians 6:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, Titus 3:9-11. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but simply helpful and guiding.)

III) This provision is not meant to be a license to intrude into an individual member’s life and choices in areas where the Scriptures give freedom of choice. Nor is it meant to be a wooden self righteous, judgmental, imposition of an arbitrary set of manmade rules. But where scripture is clear and unequivocal, the church is called to be different from the world and a light on a hill for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IX
PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- I) MC has the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, real or personal property and other assets. MC may hold such real or personal property as is authorized by the laws of the State of North Carolina and as is deemed necessary for the functioning of MC. MC has the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, bill of sale, deed, or otherwise. All property will be held in the name of MC.
- II) In case of division of MC caused by conflict (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), all property and assets of MC will belong to those who abide by its Articles and Bylaws as decided by the Elders.
- III) In case of dissolution of MC, the property and all assets shall become the property of the remaining members of MC as determined by the Elders. From the proceeds of either public or private sales, firstly all current and long-term obligations of MC will be paid. Secondly, all remaining funds shall be directed to one or more Christian organizations qualified under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, for the benefit of MC's supported missionaries and/or such other Christian endeavors as the Elders determine. The church will be considered dissolved if so decided by the members or when less than six members remain.
- IV) At the outset of MC no real property of a value above \$ 150,000 shall be purchased or disposed of without approval of the Elders, and a majority confirmation vote of members at the appropriate business meeting except as noted in Section III above. Property purchases under \$150,000 may be made upon the approval of the Elders, or the delegated authority they authorize. This limit begins the Corporation, but it is meant to rise with at least the rate of inflation, as measured by the national Consumer Price Index. The changes in this limit happen automatically and will be indexed to January 2012.

ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS

The members will be notified of any amendment to the Articles and Bylaws in an effective way: either at a member meeting called for that purpose; or at any other regular meeting; or by any other reasonable and thorough means of communication. There must then be at least a three month waiting period to pray and consider any changes to the Constitution and By-Laws. The Constitution may then be amended with a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present, or voting by absentee, at the meeting that is called for the vote. Rules for a quorum are spelled out in Article XIV.

ARTICLE XI
INDEMNIFICATION

- I) MC will indemnify and hold harmless any and all officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and business administrators for any expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with any action, suit or proceeding against said officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and business administrators. This indemnification shall include costs for attorney fees.
- II) The Elders reserve the right to conduct an internal and preliminary investigation of their own to determine if there is sufficient cause to believe that this indemnification should occur. Such approval should not be unreasonably or capriciously withheld.
- III) The indemnification shall occur as the expenses are incurred and in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, on receipt of the officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, or business administrators' promise: (1) to repay the amount advanced if proved by clear and convincing evidence in a hearing by church officials or in a court that the officers', directors', Elders', Ministers', Pastors', and business administrators' conduct involved a deliberate intent to injure the corporation's best interests, (2) to reasonably cooperate with the corporation in connection with the action, suit or proceeding.
- IV) This indemnification shall be available to any officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, and/or business administrator which is made or thereafter to be made a part to any action, suit or proceeding because of the person's relationship with the corporation. Persons who are officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and/or business administrators at the time of being made a party, or threatened with being made a party to any action, suit or proceeding, or were officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and/or business administrators shall be allowed indemnification.
- V) Indemnification will also be available in criminal actions only if it is found that the officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, or business administrator had no reasonable cause to believe that the subject acts were unlawful.

ARTICLE XII
EFFECTUAL POWER OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

These Articles and Bylaws take effect immediately upon ratification by two thirds (2/3) vote of the Elder or Elders of MC at the appropriate meeting to consider these Constitution and Bylaws in accordance with Article XIV. These Articles and Bylaws will remain in effect as presently formulated or as duly amended according to Article X until this corporation is legally dissolved. These Articles and Bylaws shall not be suspended or abrogated.

ARTICLE XIII

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHURCH RECORDS

Any member shall have the right to inspect the church records, as deemed appropriate by the Elders. This does not include the personal pay records of an individual Pastor or staff member but may include the agglomerated payroll information for all personnel at the church.

ARTICLE XIV CHURCH MEETINGS AND VOTES

- I) **Annual Meeting.** An Annual Church Meeting will be held on a schedule to be determined by the Elders. The Elders will determine the agenda for the annual meetings, but it will include at least the church budget for the upcoming year. The church budget will be approved by a simple majority of the members present at the time of the meeting. No quorum requirement is necessary.
- II) **Notice.** Notice of Church meetings will be given at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meetings. Such notice can be placed in the Sunday bulletin and the Church Newsletter and such other means of notification determined reasonable by the Elders.
- III) **Required Church Meetings.** Church meetings and votes are required for the following events in addition to the annual budget:
- A) Acquisition or construction of real property in excess of the capital spending limit specified in Article IX.IV and beginning with \$150,000 in 2012;
 - B) The calling or dismissing of the Senior Pastor;
 - C) A change in the Constitution and Bylaws;
 - D) Any other reason deemed necessary by the Elders.
- IV) **Quorums.**
- A) A quorum is required on these votes:
 - 1) Acquisition or construction of real property in excess of the capital spending limit specified in Article IX.IV and beginning with \$150,000 in 2012;
 - 2) The calling or dismissing of the Senior Pastor;
 - 3) A change in the Constitution and Bylaws;
 - 4) Any other reason deemed necessary by the Elders.
 - B) There is no quorum requirement for all other votes. Certain votes have specific requirements as specified below.
 - C) A quorum is defined as at least two thirds (2/3) of the membership voting either in person, or by absentee ballot or such other means as the Elders determine is reasonable. Votes by members require a signature as discussed above in section VII.2).b. The Elders may decide that more (not less) voters are necessary for the good of the Church's unity on a specific vote as long as such notice is given prior to the vote and the number of voters required for a quorum is specified clearly.
- V) **Summary of required majorities for various church votes.**
- A) The Annual Budget requires a simple majority of those present (no quorum required).

- B) A change of the Constitution and Bylaws requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote (quorum required).
- C) Confirmation of an Elder requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present (no quorum required).
- D) The modification of the Doctrine Section, Article II, or the Appendix A, Beliefs, requires a two thirds majority vote (2/3) (quorum required)..
- E) The calling of a senior Pastor requires an eighty five (85%) percent majority (quorum required)..
- F) The removal of a Senior Teaching Pastor requires a two thirds (2/3) majority. The process for removal of a Senior Teaching Pastor would follow the process outlined for dealing with a problem Elder outlined in Article VII, III. This process should never be undertaken lightly and should never be avoided when necessary (quorum required)..
- G) All other votes require a simple majority of the members present at the vote.

Appendix A

Beliefs

I. INSPIRATION

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are divinely and verbally inspired by God and are inerrant and infallible in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.

Terms explained:

- A. *Verbally: This means that the individual words of the Bible are true and without error in the original writings. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word (Matt. 5:17,18; Prov. 30:5,6). The term "plenary" is often used with the word "verbal" to give the view that all Scripture is fully and equally inspired (2 Tim. 3:16,17).*
- B. *Inspired (Inspiration): Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture and without excluding their human intelligence, individuality, literary style, personal feelings, or any other human factor, God's own complete and coherent message to men was recorded in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God Himself had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out by God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (2 Peter 1:20,21). Inspiration does not suppress the intellectual ability and talent but rather uses that intellectual ability and talent (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Samuel 23:2).*
- C. *Inerrant: Inerrant means that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).*

- D. *Infallible: Infallible means that the Scriptures in their original writings were incapable of error and never wrong (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).*
- E. *Final Authority: The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man and because they are inspired and inerrant they become our final authority. However, we take careful note of what the Bible indicates as not being authoritative, such as Satan's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You surely shall not die" (Gen. 3:45; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).*

II. TRINITY

We believe in one God eternally existing in one essence, yet three co-equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Terms explained:

- A. *Eternally existing: There is but one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21-22; Mark 12:29-32), Who has no beginning and no ending (Ps. 90:1-2; Gen. 1:1).*
- B. *Three in One: God is one in essence, yet three persons, co-equal, eternally existing (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 1:4; John 12:26; 15:26; 16:15; 1 Peter 1:2; Acts 2:32-36; I Cor. 12:3-6, II Cor. 13:14).*
- C. *Co-equal:*
 - 1. *The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Rom. 1:7).*
 - 2. *The Son is God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; I John 5:19-27; Phil. 2:6).*
 - 3. *The Holy Spirit is God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:4,9).*

III. INCARNATION

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to the virgin, Mary.

Terms explained:

- A. *Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ had two natures in one person, so that He was simultaneously fully God and fully man, and this relationship was such that there was no dividing of person nor confounding of the two natures (John 1:1-14).*
- B. *Conceived by the Holy Spirit: The conception of Jesus was a divine act of God, without human agency (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:26-38).*
- C. *Born to the virgin, Mary: At the time of Christ's conception and birth, Mary was a virgin (Matt. 1:18-25; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:27).*

IV. HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He is at work in the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

Terms Explained:

- A. *Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son (John 14:16; Matt. 28:19).*
- B. *Convicts: Jesus Christ said that the Spirit would perform this ministry with respect to the world (John 16:7-11).*
- C. *Life: The Holy Spirit is the agent of spiritual birth (John 3:5-8). The Spirit regenerates, indwells, seals, and baptizes into the Church body all believers (1 Cor. 12:13; Titus 3:5; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9,11; 2 Cor. 1:21,22). The believer's life is strengthened and guided by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 3:16; John 16:13; Rom. 8:4,14, 26-27). The believer is commanded to be filled or controlled by the Spirit, so that the characteristics of Christ-likeness will be evident in a powerful life (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16).*
- D. *Empowers: The Holy Spirit enables the spreading of God's Word in testimony, preaching and practical living (John 15:26-27). Spiritual obedience will give fruit to a spiritually powerful life of service for Christ (Eph. 5:15-21; Gal. 5:22-25).*

V. MANKIND

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature.

Terms explained:

- A. *Created in the image of God: God created Adam and Eve (mankind) in the image of God. This divine likeness of mankind's ancestors gives people dignity, value, and a unique purpose in all of creation. (Gen. 1:27; 5:1; 1 Cor. 11:7).*
- B. *Separation from God: When mankind, of their own free will, chose to disobey God, they sinned (the breaking of God's law). This original sin separated us from God, Who, because of His holiness, could not tolerate sin, and therefore, judged such sin (Rom. 6:23; 3:10; 8:7; Gal. 3:22).*

VI. ATONEMENT

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice.

Terms Explained:

- A. *Representative: This means that Jesus Christ represented all the sins of the world and that He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:14-21). As Adam was*

the representative of man in the fall, so Christ was the representative of man in the Atonement (1 Cor. 15:22). Therefore, if Christ represented all, His sacrifice will cover all (John 3:16).

- B. *Substitutionary: This is called the "vicarious" suffering since Christ died in our place. He did not die for His own sin (Heb. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:5), but died for the sins of others (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:8).*

VII. SALVATION, HEAVEN, HELL

MC believes that all who believe in Jesus Christ and by faith, repent of their sins and accept that He is Lord of their lives (as a natural outgrowth of belief) are genuinely born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life ("believers"). All believers are justified on the basis of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection alone. For this reason, after physical death, all believers will live eternally in God's holy presence. In contrast, all who do not believe in Jesus Christ by faith are not justified before God (the "lost"). Upon physical death, the lost will live eternally separated from God, tormented in the Lake of Fire as described in the Scriptures.

Terms explained:

- A. *All Who Believe: The gift of salvation provided by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is for all mankind (Rom. 1:13; 1 John 2:2), yet only those who exhibit faith are justified (Gal. 2:16; 3:11).*
- B. *Justified: Justification is that act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of God's own righteousness having been imputed, or credited to the sinner (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Rom 3:23-26; 4:5-8, 25; 5:18f; 8:33).*
- C. *Faith: Faith is the "gift of God" (Eph. 2:8) and is produced by the Word of God (Rom. 10:14,17). We are saved by faith alone apart from works (Eph. 2:9; Rom. 3:20; Titus 3:5). However, genuine faith necessarily leads to good works (Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:16; James 2:17-26).*
- D. *Born again by the Holy Spirit: The new birth (regeneration) is absolutely necessary for fellowship with God (John 3:7). Man is totally passive in regeneration since it is completely a work of God (John 1:13; 3:6). The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8) by which He creates within a person a new nature, a new heart, a new spirit (John 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17).*
- E. *Children of God: Those who have received the Spirit of Christ have therefore been born again into God's family (John 1:1-12; Rom. 8:9,14-17). As members of His family we not only have fellowship with our Father in Heaven, but we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ, and when Christ*

returns we will be completely changed in body and spirit to be like Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:19-23; 1 John 3:2).

- F. Eternal Life: This experience of the life of Jesus Christ within us now by the presence of the Holy Spirit and forever ours in the presence of Jesus Christ is "eternal life." This state of being is a gift from God where the believer is in perfect union with God (John 17:3, John 3:36, John 5:24, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 5:9).*
- G. Bodily resurrection: Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). After the resurrection, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne for judgment, and since their names will not be found in the Book of Life, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:11-15; 21:8, 27; Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Acts 13:48).*
- H. Everlasting conscious suffering: Hell will not be a place of joyous fellowship but rather a place of torment for eternity (Luke 16:19-31; Matt. 25:30; 24:51; Heb. 12:23; 2 Cor. 5:6-9; Phil. 1:23; Rev. 6:9; 20:4).*
- I. Heaven: We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Heb. 1:10-16).*
- J. Hell: We believe hell to be a literal place where all unsaved will spend eternity separated from God (Rev. 20:15; Matt. 13:36-43, 2 Thess 1:9).*

VIII. RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, EXALTATION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into Heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for us.

Terms Explained:

- A. Resurrection: We believe that after three days, Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Luke 24:23-40). The doctrine of the resurrection is essential to salvation (Rom. 10:9, 1-9; 1 Cor. 15:12-23, 35-37).*
- B. Ascension: After His resurrection and forty-day ministry Jesus ascended up into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11; 1 Peter 3:22).*
- C. High Priest and Advocate: Since Christ's atonement has restored our relationship with God, we now can approach God through Christ, Who as our High Priest represents us before God. As our Advocate, He compassionately deals with our needs and strengthens us (John 14:18; Heb. 4:14; 5:1-10; 13:5; 7:25; 8:1,2; 9:11-15, 24).*

IX. ESCHATOLOGY

We believe in the blessed hope, the personal, visible and imminent return of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The Bible's teaching concerning the Lord's impending return is always set in the context of practical exhortation: focusing upon our need to understand God: teaching us a Godly lifestyle; and avoiding an undue focus on the spectacular and speculation (2 Peter 3:11; Matt. 24:42-51).

Terms Explained:

- A. *Blessed Hope: The return of the Lord is an event that believers ought to look forward to with high expectation and excitement. As still imperfect people, we eagerly await the restoration of all things to perfect Christ-likeness after the return of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; Rom. 8:18-25; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:7).*
- B. *Personal, visible: Jesus, not just in spirit, but also in bodily form, will return to this earth (Acts 1:11).*
- C. *Imminent: The Church, as God's steward, ought to consider the return of Christ as an event which is about to happen, and therefore, though patient, we are to be alert to such an event as we seek to glorify Him through our lives (Mark 13:33-37; Matt. 24:22,24,29-51; Luke 21:34).*

X. DEVIL

We believe in the existence of the devil also known as Satan. Satan is a liar, seeking to deceive men and turn them from God. Satan, his entire angelic host, and all the lost; those who have not received Christ as their Lord and Savior, will be eternally separated (perish) from God and tormented in the Lake of Fire.

Terms explained:

- A. *Devil: Though a created being and one of the highest angels, the devil fell because he wanted to be greater than God (Isa. 14:12-15).*
- B. *Eternally perish: The judgment upon the devil and his followers is an unending punishment (Rev. 20:10,14,15; 19:20).*

XI. CHURCH

We believe that all believers comprise the "Church." The Church's mission is to preach, teach, declare, and make known the Scriptures to all the world through the formal proclamation of the Scriptures and through the Christian's complete, transformed, and consistent lifestyle.

Terms explained:

- A. *Body of Christ: The collective body of believers in Jesus Christ is the Church (Eph. 5:23-32; Col. 1:18; Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 2:19; 3:15).*

- B. *Mission: The mission of the Church is to: 1) go into the world; 2) make disciples of all men, baptizing them; and 3) teach them to obey the Bible, God's Word (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 15:6; Eph. 1:15-23).*
- C. *Preach: By this term we encompass all of the believers who are to declare and make known God's truth through the totality of their lives, in addition to the formal proclamation of the Word of God (Eph. 3:8-10; 4:15,16; Col. 1:10-28).*

XII. CHURCH LEADERSHIP

We believe that, within the local body of believers ("Local Church"), God provides a team of Pastor(s), Elders, Deacons and other workers who are to guide and enable the congregation to develop spiritual maturity.

XIII. STEWARDSHIP

We believe each believer is commanded by God to exercise care and concern with regard to all the time, possessions, and wealth which God has entrusted to him.

- A. *Stewardship: As members of God's family we recognize the obligation under which God places us to exercise care and concern with regard to all time, possessions, wealth and persons as may be entrusted to us. One mark of the spiritually wise person is the mature choices made with respect to these areas (Matt. 20:8; Gal. 4:2; Luke 16:2,3; 1 Cor. 4:1,2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25).*
- B. *Tithe: We believe the guideline of ten percent to be appropriate, yet we recognize the individual believer as free from compulsion or formal requirements in stewardship matters or church support (Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:21-29; Deut. 12:5-7,17-18; 14:22-29; 26:12; Gen. 14:17-24; Luke 11:42; Matt. 23:23f; Heb. 7:1ff).*
- C. *Offerings: We believe that offerings consist of any gift, time or effort that is freely given in response to the direction of God's Spirit (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:24-: 15).*

XIV. ORDINANCES

We believe that the ordinances of the Church given by our Lord are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

Terms explained:

- A. *Baptism: Baptism is commanded of all believers and it is an act of obedience signifying the believer's death, burial and resurrection "in Christ" (Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 18:8; 1 Peter 3:21). The disciples were commanded to see to it that baptism was a part of their ministry (Matt. 28:19,20; 16:16) and the pattern of the book of Acts (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12,13,36,38) indicates the widespread practice of water*

baptism for believers. This church does not believe in baptismal regeneration, nor do we hold that baptism is necessary for salvation.

- B. *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).*

Appendix B **Definitions**

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I) **Elder.** Biblically an Elder in the Old Testament was referred to as a “grey beard.” It was a respectful term, acknowledging wisdom, a position of authority, and God ordained service. In the New Testament Elders were called, selected, and appointed in the fledgling church to lead God’s people and to be undershepherds to the Lord Jesus Christ.

II) **Elder Emeritus.** This is a title of respect generated to describe an Elder who for honorable and practical reasons is no longer able to serve actively as an Elder.

III) **Husband of one wife.** This is a phrase used by Paul to describe a qualification for Eldership and Deacon service. We define that term to mean that a man is qualified to serve if any of the conditions below exist:

- A) The man has never been married and he is living a chaste and celibate life;
- B) The man has been married to one woman throughout his entire married life and he remains married to her at the present time or until her death;
- C) The man has been married before and his wife has been taken by death from this world, and he has remarried and remains married to that woman at the present time or until her death;
- D) The man has never been divorced for any reason.
- E) We recognize that there are believers who differ with us on this definition and interpretation. We do not want to break fellowship with other genuine believers over this point, but simply have chosen to establish purity in leadership from the ills of divorce, because we believe this is where scripture takes us. We do not want this explanation to imply that we condemn our brothers and sisters in Jesus who have had divorces., We will go out of our way to make a loving, warm, and inviting place in our fellowship for those who have endured a divorce. That place will simply not be in Eldership or Deacon service.

IV) **Pastor/Ordained Pastor.** These two terms are used interchangeably in this document to refer to Ordained Pastors of MC. It does not refer to Ordained Pastors from any other church or denomination.

V) **Word and or Scripture.** This term refers to the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments in any of the many well accepted translations available to Christians today. We have chosen to place the New King James Version in the sanctuary, but many other translations are good and helpful (to name a few NIV, NASV, King James, The Message, ESV, and Amplified). From time to time, the Elders may change the version used in the sanctuary based on which version helps the cause of Christ best for our culture.

VI) **Believer.** A believer is one who has genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They have heard the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has moved in them to cause genuine faith to take root, and they have willfully decided to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Master. They are commonly referred to as “born again.” As a result of this change in Lordship in their lives, we believe over time there must be observable changes in lifestyle, in appetites, in character, and in hunger and thirst for God’s truth.

VII) **Active member.** An active member is a member who attends the church regularly, supports the church according to their means, serves the body in a manner appropriate to their giftedness, and has a Spirit driven desire to seek maturity in Christ. For voting purposes, a member who has not attended services regularly (5 of 8 weeks) for 2 successive bi-monthly periods (and does not have a legitimate reason such as health or family crisis or the like) is deemed to be inactive and therefore ineligible to vote.

VIII) **Baptismal regeneration.** Baptismal regeneration is a false belief that the physical act of baptism has salvific power – i.e. “baptism itself saves.” Those believing this sometimes believe that the act of baptism is either necessary or sufficient for salvation.