

Constitution and Bylaws of
Summit Harvest Church

CONSTITUTION

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Constitution and Bylaws of
Summit Harvest Church

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE.

We, the members of Summit Harvest Church, of Oconomowoc, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, in order to establish rules and procedures with which to administer this local assembly, do hereby recognize ourselves as a sovereign local church and do ordain and establish the following Constitution and Bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE 1 – NAME.

The name of this church shall be **Summit Harvest Church**, and herein and hereafter referred to as “this church” or “the church” in this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE 2 – FOUNDATION AND PURPOSE.

Section 1. Foundation.

The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ, and its code of guidance in all its affairs is the Word of God. This church here affirms its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God.

Section 2. Purpose.

The purpose of this church is to worship God according to the teachings of His Word; to bring glory and honor to God by faith in and obedience to His Son, Jesus Christ; to be an expression of the Church of Jesus Christ by practicing the precepts and examples of the Church as set forth in the New Testament, by sustaining its ordinances and doctrines, by preaching and propagating among all people the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; by making disciples of Jesus Christ and training the faithful in servanthood and spiritual growth in accordance with the Scriptures.

ARTICLE 3 – PREROGATIVES.

Section 1. Constitution over the Bylaws.

The Constitution of this church, which is subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of the Confession of Faith below. Whenever possible, the Bylaws shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Constitution; should any bylaw be found to contradict a provision of the Constitution, the Constitution shall control. All procedures for governing the church and conducting the business of its ministries are meant to conform with the spirit and intent of the Christian faith outlined in the Scriptures and declared by this Constitution. This church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the Scriptures.

Section 2. Legal Nonprofit Classification.

The church shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Section 3. Affiliation.

Summit Harvest Church is an autonomous local gathering of the Church of Jesus Christ and independent of formal, denominational affiliations.

Section 4. Registered Office.

The registered office of the church shall be located within the State of Wisconsin at the address of the church’s registered agent. The Council of Elders may change the registered agent and the address of the registered office from time to time, upon filing the appropriate statement with the Secretary of State.

ARTICLE 4 – DOCTRINE.

The following doctrinal statements below in the “Confession of Faith” do not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final authority for all that we believe.

Section 1. Purpose of an Abbreviated Confession of Faith.

This Confession of Faith, in the abbreviated form below, has as its intention to allow into membership those who are in process of arriving at a full understanding of faith as expressed in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. This abbreviated Confession of Faith contains the great fundamentals of the Christian faith and should be the basis of Christian unity and love as expressed and recognized by orthodox Christianity.

Section 2. Confession of Faith.

The doctrine of the church is expressed in abbreviated form in this following Confession of Faith.

Of the Scriptures.

We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings. The Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for the salvation of man and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life.

Of God.

We believe there is one living and true sovereign God, the Creator of all things, who is infinite, all glorious, eternal and unchangeable in all His attributes. He eternally exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Of God's Creation of the Universe.

We believe God created the universe and all things out of nothing by the Word of His power, planned all things by His wisdom, and controls all things by His sovereign power – all for His glory

Of the Creation of Man.

We believe man was created in the image of God, male and female, to have fellowship with Him and serve Him, enjoy Him, and reflect His holy character.

Of the Fall of Man.

We believe by Adam's willful sin, yielding to the temptation of Satan, all mankind came under God's wrath and condemnation and were separated from God. All persons are thus corrupt by nature, enslaved to sin, spiritually dead and unable to please God or merit salvation.

Of Jesus Christ.

We believe Jesus Christ **is the son of God**, Who is God and true man, was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We believe in His sinless life, His miracles, and the truth of His teachings. He died on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins, according to the Scriptures. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into Heaven where, at the right hand of the Father, He is our High Priest and Advocate.

Of Salvation in Christ.

We believe the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only basis for justification, forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation of all who believe. Only those who receive Jesus by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become the children of God. Salvation begins with God's declarative act by which He pronounces believers righteous in Christ (justification); it continues with God's progressive process in the life of a believer, producing conformity toward Christlikeness (sanctification); and finally, salvation finds fulfillment in eternity in a total transformation of being in the likeness of Christ (glorification).

Of the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Holy Spirit is active from eternity in the creation of the world, the ministry of redemption, and the inspiration of the Word. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; regenerate the unbelieving sinner; and indwell, guide, comfort, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

Of Christ's Church.

We believe in the Church as the community of all true believers for all time and in every place. The Church is composed of all those united to Christ through faith by the Holy Spirit into one Body, with Christ as Head. Summit Harvest Church is an expression of the universal Church. As such, we endeavor to covenant together to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to preach and teach clearly the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to engage in corporate worship; to build each other's faith through truth and love; to hold each other accountable according to biblical principles; to use the gifts that Christ gives for works of service; and to engage in local and world evangelization to make disciples. The church is to rightly administer and practice the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We subscribe to the Christian tradition called *believer baptism*; that is, baptism following (or responding to) personal faith in Jesus Christ. For those traditionally embracing infant baptism, Please see Bylaws, Article 1, Section 2, (2), (j)

Of the Resurrection and the Lord's Return.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of everyone who has lived, the everlasting blessedness of those united with God through Christ, and the everlasting punishment of those who have rejected God. We believe in the blessed hope that at the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to the earth personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory; and that He will gather His elect, raise the dead, judge the nations, and establish His kingdom.

Of Marriage and Family.

We believe that the first institution established by God is the family. We commit ourselves to protect the marriage covenant between one man and one woman, and to maintain moral purity before and during marriage. We affirm that the primary responsibility for the spiritual instruction and training of children belongs to the parents.

Of the Unity of the Church.

We believe that not all things in this affirmation are necessarily of equal weight, some being essential relative to salvation, some not. But we believe biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the Church in her mission to prevail against the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and the unity of Christ's Church is served by the way we love our fellow Christian brothers and sisters across those borders. We would agree with a well recognized statement, "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, charity; in all things, Jesus Christ."

ARTICLE 5 – MEMBERSHIP.

Section 1. Meaning of Membership.

The Scriptures portray the local church as a community of believers living willfully in harmony as a covenantal people under God, mutually committed to God's best in one another. To this end, we mean membership to refer to an individual's willing contribution of himself as an active and engaged participant of the covenant family of Summit Harvest Church.

Section 2. Qualifications of Membership.

The membership of this church shall consist of persons 18 years of age or older, who confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving evidence of regeneration by a living profession consistent with the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this church, and who have been received into membership according to the Bylaws of this church. Who have been baptized (see bylaws Article 1 Section 2 number 2-prerequisites for membership) upon believing in Jesus Christ

ARTICLE 6 – LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.

Section 1. General description.

Scripture presents the congregation of the church as the final authority or the final "court of appeal." Meanwhile the Book of Acts particularly demonstrates the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church as being exercised by the elders. What this means is that the last and final court of appeal in matters of the life of the local church is not vested in any one individual personality, nor some international body, nor a national Assembly, Conference, or Convention; nor is it the president of a denomination nor the chairman of a board of trustees, nor a regional synod or ministerial association, nor is it in a group of elders alone inside the local church, nor in the pastor himself. The last and final court of appeal in a matter of the life of the local church is the local congregation. But the authority of the local church's congregation is paradoxically exercised through the selection, affirmation, and appointment of representative officers to govern the Church, upon which the congregation subsequently yields in love and submission to its own appointed elders. This is an important symbiosis to recognize and strive to sustain, and it provides a proper check and balance relationship between powers.

Section 2. Powers and Rights of the Congregation.

Affirmation or rejection by the membership of this church is required to effect the following actions as provided by the Bylaws:

- a. Selection and Acceptance of Church Officers;
- b. Adoption, amendment, or revision of the Constitution or Bylaws of this church;
- c. Approval of the Selection and Dismissal of vocational pastors and ministers;
- d. Approval upon removal of a member or a church officer;
- e. Adoption of the annual budget and any single non-budgeted item exceeding 5% of annual budget;
- f. Approval of purchase of any real estate;
- g. Acceptance, rejection, or otherwise disposal of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting; and,
- h. Commissioning, licensing, and ordination of individuals for the ministry.

Section 3. Officers of the Congregation.

The officers of the church shall be its elders. The purpose of the officers of the church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

Section 4. Council of Elders.

The leadership of the church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this church. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

Section 5. Deacons.

Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation.

ARTICLE 7 – REVISIONS, ADDITIONS, AND AMENDMENTS.

Revisions, additions, or amendments of this Constitution may be made only in the following manner:

1. At the annual meeting; and
2. By a majority of the membership, or a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and
3. After presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting; and
4. If notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.

Constitution and Bylaws of
Summit Harvest Church

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BYLAWS

of

Summit Harvest Church

ARTICLE 1. MEMBERSHIP.

Section 1. Member Classifications.

The categories of recognized membership within the church shall be:

(1) Resident Members.

Resident members are those individuals who are desirous of active participation in this church. They have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and are eager to grow spiritually and engage in areas of ministry and fellowship with other Christians.

(2) Non-resident Members.

Non-resident members are those individuals who meet the requirements of resident members but are often geographically removed from the church (examples are college students, active military personnel, missionaries). They are desirous of a continuing integration, communication, and fellowship with the church.

Non-resident membership is an effective method of transitioning from one body of believers to another during periods of extended absence. When a non-resident member makes a permanent move from the area, he/she is automatically removed from the membership rolls.

Non-resident members are not considered in sustaining any necessary quorum for a church business meeting due to their inaccessibility to attend one.

Membership classification shall be determined by the Council of Elders in concert with the individual.

For the purposes of the remainder of these bylaws, the term "member" refers to resident members, unless otherwise specifically noted to include non-resident members.

Section 2. Admission of Members.

(1) Admission Procedure.

A person may be received into membership by meeting the requirements for membership listed below, completing any available membership indoctrination (unless waived by the Council of Elders, in which case, available written information will be provided), submitting an Application for Membership, signing and submitting the Covenant of Membership, and being accepted by the Council of Elders contingent upon an interview with at least one council member.

(2) Prerequisites for Membership.

- (a) 18 years of age;
- (b) A minimum of three months regular attendance at Summit Harvest Church;
- (c) Profession of faith in Christ;
- (d) Submission of a written testimony along with an interview with an elder to demonstrate a personal understanding of being "born again"
- (e) Willingness to formally acknowledge and accept the authority of the elders to teach doctrine as it is set forth in the Confession of Faith (as outlined in the Constitution, Article 4), the doctrinal standard for all teaching under the auspices of Summit Harvest Church.
- (f) Agreement to support the church financially according to biblical stewardship principles;
- (g) Agreement to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this church
- (h) If transferring from another church, provision of contact information from your previous church
- (i) Review and approval by the Council of Elders or their delegates.
- (j) Believer baptism following or responding to a profession of faith. Our standard practice is immersion in water. Any individual who adamantly prioritizes infant baptism (not wishing to duplicate infant baptism with believer immersion baptism) can appeal in writing explaining his/her reasons for requesting special consideration. The elder council will address these appeals with the individual after review

At any of the regular meetings for worship, this church may, without special notice, receive members, or acknowledge transfer of members to other churches.

Section 3. Discipleship Responsibilities of Membership.

Members of this church willingly accept a life yoked to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as expressed and interpreted from the Bible. This infers a personal commitment to be a continuing, fruitful disciple of Christ, one who pursues personal holiness, moral exemplariness, and doctrinal purity. When applicable, this infers an equal commitment to the spiritual nurture of his

own family unit. Within a local church community, this also implies a willing availability to and participation in the worship, fellowship, ministry, relational unity, and financial support of the church. A member is expected to serve in the body of Christ in some capacity, optimally where he may be gifted and where God's purposes through the church are to be advanced.

Section 4. Administrative Responsibilities of Membership.

The membership of this church has a crucial role to perform in assisting the elders on making decisions concerning the church.

The elders lead and guide the church in all matters. Scripture teaches that the congregation is to esteem, love, and honor its elders (1 Thess 5:12, 13 and 1 Tim 5:17).¹ This requirement, however, does not suggest blind submission to the elders. Christ's presence is with the whole congregation and not only with the elders. Christ ministers through all members because all genuine believers are Spirit indwelt. All members have a voice in assuring that what is done in the church is done according to Scripture. Thus there is a tightly knit, delicate, and reciprocal relationship between elders and the congregation. Both elders and congregation realize and utilize this biblical dynamic. Both use all their collective wisdom, experience, and guidance in making major decisions. This consultation with the membership, including their affirmation and/or rejection on key issues in the following areas, is necessary and wise.

- (a) Selection and acceptance of church officers in accordance with procedures as outlined in Article 2, Section 5;
- (b) Adoption, amendment, or revision of the Constitution or Bylaws of this church in accordance with procedures outlined in Article 11, Section 2;
- (c) Adoption of the annual budget and any single non-budgeted item exceeding 5% of annual budget;
- (d) Purchase of any real estate;
- (e) Approval upon the selection and dismissal of vocational pastors and ministers;
- (f) Approval upon removal of a member or a church officer;
- (g) Commission, licensing and ordination of individuals for the ministry; and,
- (h) Acceptance or rejection of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the Council of Elders.

Various modes of communicating affirmation and/or rejection by the membership may include, for instance, (1) a casting of anonymous written ballots of vote and precisely counting the voting results, (2) a show of hands for both affirmation and rejection, (3) a verbal speaking of "aye" and "nay" in response to the question of all in favor; or any other such means deemed effective for the specific situation and most beneficial to the congregation's unity in the Spirit. The specific manner is to be determined by the elders who are to seek to steward both expedience of process and principles of biblical love for the congregation.

Section 5. Resignation and Removal from Membership.

(1) Resignation.

Members may resign or request a transfer from membership by informing the Council of Elders in writing of their intention to withdraw and the reasons thereof. Members in good standing shall, upon request, be granted a letter of commendation in uniting with a church they so designate.

If a member requests to resign because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Council of Elders shall attempt to address those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal growth. If the Council of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can correspond more effectively to his needs.

If the Council of Elders concludes that a member has requested resignation primarily to avoid church discipline as outlined in Article 6, that request shall not be given effect until the biblical disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

(2) Removal.

Any of the following reasons are cause for removal from membership:

- (a) If a member is not regularly present in the church services for a period of 6 months and/or if after personal consultations with the member, he or she indicates no desire to fulfill their obligations as members;
- (b) If a member is being removed as an act of church discipline.

¹ **1Th 5:12-13** We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, (13) and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

1Ti 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

If a removal from membership is by an act of the Council of Elders, affirmation or rejection by the membership is required in accordance with Article 1, Section 4(f).

Section 6. Restoration of Membership.

All scriptural discipline has the hope of restoration of the sinning believer. Therefore, any person who has been removed from membership of this church may, upon evidence of repentance, and on the decision of the Council of Elders, have their church status restored.

ARTICLE 2. GOVERNANCE.

Section 1. General Statement.

The church functions not as a pure democracy but as an institution under the headship of Jesus Christ and governed lovingly in a representative leadership by a council of qualified elders, of which the vocational pastor(s) of Summit Harvest Church are members. Determinations of the affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined by procedures as established by the Council of Elders and/or the church's Bylaws.

(1) Officers.

The Officers of the church shall be its elders. Elders shall be male and called to office by affirmation or rejection by the membership of the church as provided for in Article 2, Section 2(1) of these Bylaws. All officers of the church shall be members of the church in good standing.

(2) Statutory Officers.

The church shall not be required to adopt the secular offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer, but any such officers may be appointed at the discretion of the Council of Elders. All officers appointed by the Council of Elders shall be an elder.

All corporate powers shall be exercised by, and under authority of, the Council of Elders.

Section 2. Council of Elders.

(1) Composition, Term, and Calling.

The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both lay elders and vocational elders. The Council of Elders shall be composed of no less than three (3) elders. There shall be at least one more lay elder than the number of vocational elders. The number of elders to compose the council may change from time to time as is deemed necessary by majority vote of the council. Each elder shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms. The terms of the elders will be staggered so that no more than one third of the positions of the council are up for election in any given year.

(2) Qualifications.

Elders and nominees for elder shall be qualified for office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:3; and 1 Peter 5:1-4². Elders are required to have been members of this church for at

² **1Tim 3:1-13** The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. **(2)** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **(3)** not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. **(4)** He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, **(5)** for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? **(6)** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. **(7)** Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. **(8)** Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. **(9)** They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. **(10)** And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. **(11)** Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. **(12)** Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. **(13)** For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Tit 1:5-9 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- **(6)** if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. **(7)** For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, **(8)** but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. **(9)** He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Act 6:3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

least one (1) year (with an exception of the first election of elders upon approval of these Bylaws); Elders shall demonstrate in their Christian life a practice of spiritual maturity and wisdom and shall have followed the Lord's commandment through believer's baptism. They are to be faithful and loyal supporters of the vision and mission of the church, and regular, proportionate givers in belief and practice, in stewardship of service and personal finances.

(3) Responsibilities.

(a) Spiritual Responsibilities. The fundamental spiritual responsibilities of the elders are to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word for the advancement of Christ's Great Commission within and through the church to "go and make disciples of all peoples." This implies a high commitment to the task of making disciples and developing a church which grows toward excellence in this task. It also implies a readiness and ability to actively define, protect and defend the doctrine of the church. Serving the flock while governing the congregation are implicit.

(b) Administrative Responsibilities include but may not be limited to:

- (a) teaching the Scriptures both formally and informally;
- (b) mobilizing the church for evangelization and world mission;
- (c) conducting worship services;
- (d) administering the ordinances of the church: Baptism and the Lord's Table;
- (e) overseeing, coordinating, and promoting the ministries of the church;
- (f) examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Confession of Faith and the Covenant of Membership;
- (g) equipping the membership of the church for the work of the ministry including leadership in the church;
- (h) overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees;
- (i) overseeing the process of church discipline;
- (j) correcting error;
- (k) examining prospective candidates for office;
- (l) scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings; and,
- (m) conducting reporting and recording of official church business.

(4) Organization.

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to best achieve the mission of the church. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the elders may simultaneously interact with each other. Unless the council provides otherwise, meetings of the council may be held upon adequate notice. A quorum for meetings of the elders is defined as at least one-half of the lay elders plus at least one-half of the vocational elders. The council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its lay elders.

Section 3. Committees and Appointees.

The Council of Elders has the authority to create or dissolve committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to appoint and remove members of the church to serve on its committees and to act as its agents. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who may be appointed by the Council of Elders.

Section 4. Vocational Elders (Pastors).

(1) Definition.

Vocational elders (pastors) are men of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the Church of Christ. Vocational elders (Pastors) are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

(2) Duties.

1Pe 5:1-4 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: **(2)** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **(3)** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. **(4)** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Vocational elders (pastors) shall perform duties determined by the Council of Elders, including those in Article 2, Section 2(3) and those additional duties unique to the particular pastoral position. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service.

(3) Vocational Call by the Church.

The members shall affirm or reject the call of the vocational elder (pastor) recommended by the Council of Elders. The decision requires that at least 25% of the membership be present.

(4) Termination.

- (a) **Resignation.** A vocational elder (pastor) may be removed from his call by informing the Council of Elders, in writing, of his desire for removal and stating his reasons thereof. The Council of Elders shall consider, respond, and act upon his request. If the resignation is agreed upon, it shall be announced to the membership.
- (b) **Grievance.** Where a grievance exists against a vocational elder (pastor) of the church either due to preaching, beliefs contrary to the Confession of Faith of this church as set forth in the Constitution, or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting a pastor, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Article 6 of the Bylaws of this church in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19.³ If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then a non-scheduled meeting for the vocational elder's (pastor's) removal may be called in accordance with Article 5, Section 3 of these Bylaws. If the Council, after thorough investigation does not believe the grievance to be true and the members still wish for a non-scheduled meeting, then the procedures outlined in Article 5, Section 3 must be followed.

Section 5. Lay Elders.

(1) Calling and Installation.

The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay elder.

- (a) **Nominations.** Nominations may be by individual members of the congregation including any members of the Council of Elders. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee the reasons for this conclusion. The Council of Elders shall present to the congregation for their review a list of qualified candidates for the position of elder prior to their selection at the annual meeting.
- (b) **Selection/Installation.** Lay Elders shall be called by the church for a term of three (3) years duration. The selection shall be based upon affirmation or rejection by the membership in attendance at the meeting. When more than one position is open and there are more names on the ballot than there are positions, then a ballot shall be used, and the individuals receiving the highest number of affirmative ballots will hold those positions. In the case of a tie between two or more men for a position(s), a run-off election must be held for the position(s). Elections for elder will be held by secret paper ballot unless the number of names on the ballot equals that of the number of positions available. In this case ballots may, at the discretion of the presiding officer, be an affirmative verbal response or raised hands.
- (c) **Initial Elders of the Church.** Special provision shall be made in the selection of the historical first slate of elders to stagger their terms to ensure an ongoing stagger of terms represented on the council henceforth. The designated Chairman shall be for a full three year term. The council shall then assign the duration of terms for the remaining initial elders (two years and one year respectively, as applicable) to ensure an ongoing stagger and then publish such to the congregation.

(2) Removal.

- (a) **Resignation.** An elder may be removed from his call by informing the Council of Elders, in writing, of his desire for removal and stating his reasons thereof. The Council of Elders shall consider, respond, and act upon his request. If the resignation is agreed upon, it shall be announced to the membership.
- (b) **Grievance.** Where a grievance exists against an elder of the church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the Confession of Faith of this church as set forth in the Constitution, or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Article 6 of the Bylaws of this church in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19.⁴ If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration,

³ 1Tim 5:19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

⁴ 1Tim 5:19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then a non-scheduled meeting for the elders removal may be called in accordance with Article 5, Section 3 of these Bylaws. If the Council, after thorough investigation does not believe the grievance to be true and the members still wish for a non-scheduled meeting, then the procedures outlined in Article 5, Section 3 must be followed.

(3) Filling of Vacancies.

The Council of Elders may fill a vacancy on the council with a qualified nominee from the previous selection process.

ARTICLE 3. SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

We declare servanthood as not only a feature distinctive of Christian leadership, but a required virtue of character for all people who call upon the Name of Jesus Christ. God's people are called to be servants of Christ and servants in Christ of one another. We are indeed followers of Christ Himself who "emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant in the likeness of men."⁵

We observe how the early Church honored key, noteworthy Christian individuals within local bodies with the designation deacon, meaning "servant." In effect, they were *the* servants among God's household of developing servants; people who were respected for their high level of sacrifice, labor, and character in the work of the ministry; and in this sense, were leaders within their scope of labor. While all Christians are to be deacons in heart (servants), we believe Scripture suggests the responsibility of servant leadership be carried out by qualified men of the church.

To this end, in Summit Harvest Church, we refer to the title "deacon" as implying an unusually graced servant positioned within the ministry who commands the respect of leadership by his character and labor. Deacons assist the work of the church governed by the elders. Relevant texts include Mark 9:35, 10:45; Rom 15:8, 16:1,2; 1Cor 4:1, 9:19, 16:15; 2Cor 4:5, 6:4; Gal 1:10; Eph 6:6; Phil 2:7; 1Tim 4:6; 2Tim 2:24; 1Pet 2:16.⁶

⁵ **Php 2:7** but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

⁶ **Mar 9:35** And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Mar 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Rom 15:8 For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,

Rom 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, **(2)** that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

1Co 4:1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1Co 9:19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

1Co 16:15 Now I urge you, brothers--you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints--

2Co 4:5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

2Co 6:4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

Gal 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Eph 6:6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

Phi 2:7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

1Ti 4:6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,

1Pe 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Section 1. Deacon.

(1) Composition, Term, and Calling.

The deacons shall be men. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualification of men in the church. Each deacon shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. All deacons shall be affirmed by the congregation at the annual membership meeting.

(2) Qualifications.

Deacons are required to be members of this church and must be qualified for the position as specified in the Bible.

Relevant texts include:

1Timothy 3:8-12; Romans 16:1,2; Acts 6:3; 1Pet 4:10,11.⁷

(3) Responsibilities.

The deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the elders in any service that supports and promotes the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Deacons function in a servant capacity and as such, are subject to the direction of the Council of Elders.

(4) Organization.

The elders may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in some particular deaconal function. Meetings of the deacons, or subcommittees thereof, may be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the deacons.

(5) Removal.

(a) **Resignation.** A deacon may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of his office by submitting a signed letter to the Chairman of the Council of Elders.

(b) **Grievance.** Where a grievance exists against a deacon of the church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of this church as set forth in the Constitution, or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting a deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing consistent with 1Timothy 5:19, Deut. 19:15 and Matthew 18:16.⁸ If the council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the deacon may be removed from position by the Council of Elders.

(6) Filling of Vacancies.

The Council of Elders may fill any deacon vacancy with a qualified member.

ARTICLE 4. FINANCES.

Section 1. Methods.

⁷ **1Tim 3:8-12** Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. **(9)** They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. **(10)** And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. **(11)** Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. **(12)** Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

Rom 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, **(2)** that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Act 6:3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

1Pe 4:10-11 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: **(11)** whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁸ **1Tim 5:19** Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Deu 19:15 "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established."

Mat 18:16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

The ministries of this church shall be supported primarily by the freewill offerings of those who are led by the Holy Spirit to contribute to its support. No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the church. The Council of Elders shall act to determine the biblical soundness of fundraising methods.

Section 2. Contributions.

- (1) **General Contributions.** Membership in this church involves financial responsibilities to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, recalling tithing as an Old Testament practice and submitting to the spirit and intent of generous, willing, and cheerful giving according to 2 Cor 9:6-8.⁹
- (2) **Special Contributions.** Special contributions may be sought by the church for projects approved by the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special contributions or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them. In the case of special contributions, when recommended and approved, all collected proceeds must be disbursed for that purpose.

(3) **Use of Funds.** The Council of Elders has full and complete discretion in the use of all funds in accordance with the annual budget and approved special contributions. Any money spent above what has been approved in the annual budget must be unanimously approved by the Deacons and Elders or must be taken to the congregation for approval. When the aggregate of expenditures exceed \$5,000 in a fiscal year, all future expenditures for the continuing fiscal year must have congregational approval. Those giving relinquish all rights to direct the use of funds once the gift has been made.

Section 3. Financial Planning.

- (1) **Annual Budget.** The financial planning of the church shall be carried out by means of an annual budget. The budget shall be affirmed or rejected by the church membership at the annual meeting upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, consistent with Article 1, Section 4(c) of these Bylaws.
- (2) **Compensation.** Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders.

Section 4. Funds Accountability.

Accountability of financial contributions from all sources shall be the responsibility of the Council of Elders. An individual shall be appointed to disburse funds according to the financial program of the church as detailed in the annual budget or other authorized designations. The Council of Elders is responsible to conduct an audit of the finances of the church at least once every other year. Those conducting the audit shall not be members of the Council of Elders.

Section 5. Obligations.

No loan or contract exceeding 5% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the church is pledged, or no single non-budgeted item exceeding 5% of the budget shall be made or purchased except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and approved by the church at the annual business meeting or a non-scheduled special meeting. These are situations requiring prompt notification to the congregation.

Section 6. Authority to Bind the Church.

The Chairman, or his designee from the Council of Elders, are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these Bylaws, the church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

Section 7. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of this church shall be fixed by resolution of the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE 5. MEETINGS.

⁹ **2Co 9:6-7** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (7) Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Section 1. Congregational Worship.

Public services shall be held weekly. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such times and frequencies as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the church may require.

Section 2. Congregational Business.

- (1) **The Annual Business Meeting.** The annual business meeting shall be held during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year of the church for the purpose of the election of elders, affirming deacons, approving proposed budgets and other business. It shall be called with at least a fifteen (15) days notice with written announcement to the resident membership for the specific, intended purpose of the meeting and agenda, with verbal announcement given from the pulpit prior to the meeting.
- (2) **Non-Scheduled Meetings.** There are two types of non-scheduled meetings.
 - (a) **Special.** Special meetings can be called to address any issue dealing with the church other than a grievance.
 - (b) **Grievance.** A grievance meeting can be called to address a specific issue of heightened concern regarding identifiable violations against Scripture, State law, church Constitution, or Bylaws by an individual or individuals in the church.

Section 3. Calling of Non-Scheduled Meetings.

- (1) **Called by the Council of Elders or at least two (2) elders.** A non-scheduled meeting called by the Council of Elders or at least two elders requires fifteen (15) days notice with written announcement to the resident membership stating the intended purpose of the meeting and agenda with verbal announcement given from the pulpit prior to the meeting.
- (2) **Called by petition of the membership.** A non-scheduled meeting called by a petition of the membership requires a meeting date set within forty-five (45) days by the Council of Elders. This meeting requires fifteen (15) days notice with written announcement to the resident membership for the specific, intended purpose of the meeting and agenda, with verbal announcement given from the pulpit prior to the meeting. The petition calling for this meeting must be signed by twenty (20) percent of the resident membership stating the specific issue of heightened concern as per Section 2(2)(b) and submitted either to the Chairman of the Council of Elders or the head vocational pastor.

Section 4. Format of a Grievance Meeting.

A grievance meeting requires deliberate thought to evaluate an issue of heightened concern. This process is designed to promote prayerful and constructive evaluation leading to a resolution.

- (1) **Phase One: Discussion.**
The meeting will be for clarification and discussion of the specific grievance. If at the end of the initial discussion meeting no resolution has occurred, then a second meeting can be called for the intent purpose of requesting a resolution or requesting further action by the Council of Elders. The second meeting (Phase Two) can be set by the elders or a majority vote of those present, provided that the affirmative vote is equal to or greater than twenty (20) percent of the resident membership. If the vote is insufficient to call for a second meeting, then a petition to call a second meeting may be submitted to the Council of Elders as described in Section 3(2) above to set the time and place for the second meeting.
- (2) **Phase Two: Action toward Resolution.**
This meeting will be for resolving the specific grievance or requesting further action by the Council of Elders on the issue of concern.

Section 5. Quorum at Congregational Meetings.

Any number of members physically present shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the congregation's membership, except for introducing amendments to these Constitution and Bylaws and voting on them as defined by Constitution Article 7 and Bylaws Article 11, Section 1 and 2. Proxy votes will not be allowed.

Section 6. Conduct.

Congregational meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Council of Elders, or his designate chosen by the elders.

As the Scriptures are our rule for the Christian believer's faith and practice, so the principles and mandates of the Scriptures shall be the governing rule and guide for all order, practice, and communication in the business meetings of the church. Robert's Rules of Order will be observed at the discretion of the presiding official over the meeting. Meetings shall be governed by such procedures as may be approved from time to time by the Elders, insofar as such rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or with provisions

of law. Seeking the Lord's wisdom in all things and God's blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting. (2Cor 5:9 , Col 4:6, and Eph 5:1,2).¹⁰

Section 7. Elder Meetings.

Meetings of the Council of Elders are open to the membership unless predetermined otherwise by the Council of Elders. Meetings may be held in person or by any technology by which all elders may simultaneously interact with each other in real-time or any other means permitted under legal statute. An elder participating in meetings through said technology, will be deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

(1) **Regular Meetings.** The Council of Elders' meetings will be held at least monthly and at places and times as may be agreed to by a majority of the Council of Elders. The Chairman of the Council of Elders shall give notice to each elder regarding the meeting and the proposed meeting agenda not less than three (3) days prior to the date of the meeting.

(2) **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the head vocational pastor or by any two elders. The person or persons calling the meeting shall give notice to each elder of a special meeting at least three (3) days prior. No additional items may be added to the agenda for a special meeting unless approved by a majority of the Council in attendance.

(3) **Notice.** Notice can be in verbal form or in a written announcement for regular or special meetings. An elder may waive any three-day notice. An elder's presence at a meeting waives any required notice unless at the beginning he states an objection, thus ending the meeting.

(4) **Quorum at Elder Meetings.** A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the Council of Elders present in person. In the absence of a continued quorum at any meeting of the Council already in progress, a majority of the elders present may adjourn the meeting.

(5) **Council Action.** Unless the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or provisions of law require a greater voting percentage or different rules for approval of a matter by the Council, every act or decision done or made by a majority of the elders present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present is the act of the Council of Elders.

(6) **Conduct of Meetings.** Meetings of the Council of Elders shall be presided over by the chairman, or in his absence, by an acting chairman chosen by the elders present at that meeting. As the Scriptures are our rule for the Christian believer's faith and practice, so the principles and mandates of the Scriptures shall be the governing rule and guide for all order, practice, and communication in the business meetings of the Council of Elders. Robert's Rules of Order will be observed at the discretion of the presiding official over the meeting. Meetings shall be governed by such procedures as may be approved from time to time by the Elders, insofar as such rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or with provisions of law. Seeking the Lord's wisdom in all things and God's blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting. (2Cor 5:9 ; Col 4:6 ; and Eph 5:1,2).¹¹

ARTICLE 6. CORRECTIVE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE.

Section 1. Biblical Counseling.

(1) Scriptural Mandate.

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (Rom 3:23; 7:7-25).¹² Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands

¹⁰ **2Co 5:9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Eph 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

¹¹ **2Co 5:9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Eph 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

¹² **Rom 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from pastors and elders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (Rom 15:14; Gal 6:1,2; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16 – 4:2; Heb 10:24,25; 13:17; James 5:16).¹³ Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession, to seek counsel from each other, and especially from pastoral counselors.

(2) Scriptural Philosophy.

We believe that the Bible provides guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on Scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are expected to be trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

(3) Scope of Biblical Counselors.

Although some members of the church may work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as pastoral or lay counselors within the church they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek advice from such independent professionals. Our pastoral and lay counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

Section 2. Conflict Resolution.

(1) Primacy of Scriptural Principles.

In the eventuality of disputes which may arise within our body, the church is committed to resolving all disputes in a biblical manner. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (Matt 5:9; John 17:20-23; Rom 12:18; and Eph 4:1-3)¹⁴ and that when disputes arise,

Rom 7:7-25 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." **(8)** But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. **(9)** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **(10)** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **(11)** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. **(12)** So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. **(13)** Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. **(14)** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. **(15)** I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. **(16)** Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. **(17)** So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **(18)** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. **(19)** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. **(20)** Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **(21)** So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. **(22)** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, **(23)** but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. **(24)** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **(25)** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

¹³ **Rom 15:14** I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

Gal 6:1-2 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. **(2)** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

2Tim 3:16-4:2 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **(17)** that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. **(4:1)** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **(2)** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **(25)** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Jam 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

¹⁴ **Mat 5:9** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Joh 17:20-23 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **(21)** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **(22)** The

Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scripture (Prov 19:11; Matt 5:23-25; 18:15-20; 1 Cor 6:1-8; Gal 6:1).¹⁵ We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians and absolutely essential for the well-being and work of the church. Therefore, all disputes in this church shall be resolved according to biblical principles.

(2) Scriptural Procedures.

When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another person, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows:

(1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself and take responsibility for his contribution to a problem (Matt 7:1-5),¹⁶ and he shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious that it cannot be overlooked (Prov 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 19:11; 20:3; Eph 4:2; Col 3:13; 1 Pet 4:8).¹⁷

glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **(23)** I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Rom 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Eph 4:1-3 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **(2)** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **(3)** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

¹⁵ **Pro 19:11** Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Mat 5:23-25 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **(24)** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. **(25)** Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

Mat 18:15-20 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **(16)** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **(17)** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. **(18)** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. **(19)** Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. **(20)** For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

1Co 6:1-8 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? **(2)** Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? **(3)** Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! **(4)** So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? **(5)** I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, **(6)** but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? **(7)** To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? **(8)** But you yourselves wrong and defraud--even your own brothers!

Gal 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

¹⁶ **Mat 7:1-5** "Judge not, that you be not judged. **(2)** For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. **(3)** Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? **(4)** Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? **(5)** You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

¹⁷ **Pro 12:16** The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.

Pro 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Pro 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

Pro 19:11 Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Pro 20:3 It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.

Eph 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

Col 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

1Pe 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

(2) If the offense is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned party shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed his own wrongdoing (Matt 18:15).¹⁸

(3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matt 18:16);¹⁹ these other people may be members or officers of the church, other respected Christians in the community, or trained mediators or arbitrators (conciliators) from a Christian conciliation ministry. At the request of either party to the dispute, the church shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

Section 3. Church Discipline.

The object of discipline is to restore, in God's love, an erring or sinning person. The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Council of Elders under such rules and procedures as the elders establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Church discipline shall be carried out as explained in the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Council of Elders.

All membership rights will be suspended from an individual while under church discipline until such time that all corrective actions have been taken and the Council of Elders has been satisfied that the member has repented and is seeking reconciliation.

Section 4. Confidentiality.

(1) Necessity for Confidentiality.

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt 7:12). It also discourages gossip (Prov 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (Prov 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (Prov 20:19; Rom 15:14).²⁰ Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, the pastor(s) and elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

(2) Limitations of Confidentiality.

Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

¹⁸ **Mat 18:15** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

¹⁹ **Mat 18:16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

²⁰ **Mat 7:12** "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Pro 16:28 A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

Pro 26:20 For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.

Pro 11:13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.

Pro 28:13 Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Jam 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Pro 20:19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler.

Rom 15:14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

- (1) when a pastor or elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or elders of that church (Prov 11:14; 13:10; 15:22, 19:20; 20:28; Matt 18:15-17);²¹ or,
- (2) when the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov 24:11,12);²² or,
- (3) when a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (Matt 18:15-20²³ and Bylaws Article 6) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom 13:1-5);²⁴ or,
- (4) when required by law to report suspected child abuse; or,
- (5) Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt 18:15-17).²⁵ Therefore, except as provided in this Article, a pastor or elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Council of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Council of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Cor 6:1-8)²⁶ and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside the church (Rom 13:1-5).²⁷ This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse; also,

²¹ **Pro 11:14** Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

Pro 13:10 By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.

Pro 15:22 Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

Pro 19:20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

Pro 20:28 Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

Mat 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **(16)** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **(17)** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

²² **Pro 24:11-12** Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. **(12)** If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?

²³ **Mat 18:15-20** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **(16)** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **(17)** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. **(18)** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. **(19)** Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. **(20)** For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

²⁴ **Rom 13:1-5** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **(2)** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **(3)** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, **(4)** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **(5)** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

²⁵ **Mat 18:15-17** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **(16)** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **(17)** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

²⁶ **1Co 6:1-8** When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? **(2)** Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? **(3)** Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! **(4)** So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? **(5)** I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, **(6)** but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? **(7)** To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? **(8)** But you yourselves wrong and defraud--even your own brothers!

²⁷ **Rom 13:1-5** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **(2)** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **(3)** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do

- (6) The pastors and elders may, but not need to, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

ARTICLE 7. COMMISSIONING, LICENSING, AND ORDINATION.

When, in the judgment of the Council of Elders, a member, or in very special cases a nonmember, is called to the Christian ministry for the function of vocational pastor or missionary, it shall be within the power of the Council to call and conduct a Ministry Examination Council.

All candidates for licensing or ordination must be of the necessary experience and qualifications, and shall have demonstrated their ability to undertake the responsibilities of the Gospel ministry. No person shall be licensed or ordained until he/she has been engaged in the active work of the ministry, exhibiting a teachable and humble spirit and exercising the gifts of his/her calling. Credentials shall be renewed annually.

- (1) Commissioned minister – those who have recognized a call and giftedness by God and who have just entered into the ministry and will, if such call and giftedness be confirmed, work their way to licensing and ordination.
- (2) Licensed minister – those called and gifted by God to minister to the body of Christ who are in training under the authority of the Council of Elders.
- (3) Ordained minister – those called and gifted by God to minister to the body of Christ as recognized and confirmed by the public laying on of hands by the Council of Elders and/or the Ministry Examination Council.

Summit Harvest Church shall have authority to examine all candidates. An application shall be filled out properly and to the prescribed person. A confidential questionnaire may also be required. Each candidate may be required to take a written examination. Each candidate may be requested to appear in person before a prescribed committee to respond to any matter relating to the ministry.

ARTICLE 8. OWNERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY.

The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided by the Bylaws.

In the eventuality of the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows:

- (1) all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made thereof;
- (2) assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements;
- (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that are approved by law and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the church; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Council of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Council of Elders; and,
- (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the church is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine.

ARTICLE 9. CHURCH RECORDS.

Section 1. Records Maintained.

Summit Harvest Church shall keep, at its principal office, as permanent records, the following:

- (1) minutes of all properly called congregational and elder meetings;
- (2) accounting records;

what is good, and you will receive his approval, **(4)** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **(5)** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

- (3) a list of members with their current address and membership details;
- (4) Articles of Incorporation; and,
- (5) Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. Congregational Access to Records.

A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the Council of Elders, any of the church records described above, provided the Council of Elders finds that the member has a proper purpose and is acting in good faith. The Council of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

ARTICLE 10. INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS.

Section 1. Indemnification.

Indemnification is understood as:

To the fullest extent possible permitted by Wisconsin law, as now in effect and as amended from time to time, an officer, employee, or agent of the church shall not be personally liable for any action taken or failure to take any action in his capacity as officer, employer, or agent.

The Council of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.

Subject to the provisions below of this section, the church may indemnify any officer, employee, or agent of the church or former officer, employee, or agent of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an officer, employee, or agent of the church, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:

- (1) The conduct of the officer, employee, or agent of the church was in good faith;
- (2) The officer, employee, or agent of the church reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and,
- (3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the officer, employee, or agent of the church had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the church may not indemnify an officer, employee, or agent of the church in connection with a proceeding brought against him/her by or in the right of the church, in which he/she was adjudged liable to the church, or where the officer, employee or agent is determined to not have received an improper personal benefit and he/she is adjudged on that basis.

Section 2. Insurance.

The church shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church against liability asserted against him/her and incurred by him/her in any such capacity, or arising out of his/her status as such, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him/her against such liability.

ARTICLE 11. REVISIONS, ADDITIONS, AND AMENDMENTS.

Section 1. Introduction of Amendments.

Amendments to the Bylaws may be introduced in the following manner:

- (1) by written presentation from the Council of Elders to the membership at a properly called meeting as prescribed in the Bylaws; or,
- (2) by a presentation from a member at a properly called meeting as prescribed in the Bylaws with the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present provided that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church be present and provided that it is presented in written form to the congregation at the time of notice.

Section 2. Voting on Amendments.

Amendments to these Bylaws may be voted upon once the following criteria have been met:

- (1) It has been properly introduced as prescribed above;

- (2) At least sixty days from introduction have been allowed for consideration by the membership;
- (3) Proposed amendment shall be in writing and mailed to the membership within 14 days of its introduction;
- (4) Proposed amendment shall be announced from the pulpit at least twice prior to a vote to amend; and,
- (5) At a properly called meeting as prescribed by the Bylaws with the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present provided that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church be present.

Glossary and Helpful Comments

*Not technically a part of these Constitution and Bylaws,
we submit the following clarifications of particular terms used in these documents,
which often are not well understood.*

- Church Discipline – historically this is church terminology, not a precise biblical term but a helpful blanket term meant to convey any number of biblical confrontations in love – individual and collective – toward a sinning believer in the fellowship who is not repenting of identifiable sin, in the hope of repentance and the restoration of his life with God. It may include private one-on-one confrontation, private confrontation with two or more in cooperation, exhortation before the whole church family, even excommunication from the fellowship; and also a restoring of the repentant sinner to the fellowship in the eventuality of former excommunication. Sometimes and unfortunately, “church discipline” is used in a more restricted sense to refer only to excommunication. We use the term to refer to the whole spectrum of biblical corrective confrontations when conducted by the church’s elders.
- Commission – a term used to recognize a church’s recognition of those who declare a call and giftedness by God, who also have just entered into the ministry and will, if such call and giftedness be further confirmed, work their way to licensing and ordination. Examples of this status include missionary individuals and missionary married couples.
- Dissolution – means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a corporate entity in a legal sense, recognizing it shall cease existing as a single spiritual community of faith.
- Good standing – means that a member is not presently under the censure of suspicion or deposition.
- Indemnify – means that an officer, employee, or agent of the church shall not be personally liable for monetary actions for any action taken or for failure to take any action. To indemnify an individual is to not hold him liable to be sued, for example, for some unfortunate event in which he was involved.
- License – a term used to recognize those called and gifted by God to minister to the body of Christ who are in ministerial and theological training under the authority of the Council of Elders.
- Notice – a clear communication informing an individual of a meeting
- Ordination – a term used to recognize those called and gifted by God to minister to the body of Christ, uniquely prepared and having proven faithful, trained under oversight by the Council of Elders or an approved overseeing authority, acknowledged and confirmed by the public laying on of hands by the Council of Elders and/or the Ministry Examination Council.
- Quorum – a pre-arranged number of attendance
- Written announcement — means announcements sent by regular U.S. mail or electronically to the address on file with the church office