



Arise and Live Church Constitution & Bylaws

Table of Contents

<i>Preamble</i>	3
<i>Article I. Name and Location</i>	4
<i>Article II. Doctrinal Beliefs</i>	5
1. The Bible: Scripture, the Written Word of God	5
2. One God. Three Persons	6
3. Jesus Christ	6
4. Holy Spirit	8
5. Salvation	10
6. The Church & Sacraments	11
7. Humanity	12
8. Eschatology (End Times)	16
9. Angels and Demons	17
10. Christian Living	18
<i>Article III. Purpose and Mission</i>	20
<i>Article IV. Membership</i>	21
4. Church Covenant	22
<i>Article V. Governance</i>	23
<i>Article VI. Meetings</i>	25
<i>Article VII. Decision-Making</i>	26
<i>Article VIII. Criterion for Elders & Deacons (Ministers)</i>	28
<i>Article IX. Elders & Deacons (Ministers)</i>	31
<i>Article X. Church Discipline</i>	37
<i>Article XI. Ethical Guidelines of All members and Leaders</i>	40
<i>Article XII. Conflict Resolution & Disputes (Non-Sin)</i>	41
<i>Article XIII. Child Protection Policy</i>	42
<i>Articles XIV. Finances</i>	43
<i>Article XV. Officers, Directors, and Trustees</i>	47
ARTICLE XVI. CORPORATE POWERS	49
<i>Article XVII. Limitations</i>	50
<i>Article XIX. Amendments</i>	51
<i>Article XX. Dissolution</i>	52

This is the foundational document that outlines the fundamental principles, organizational structure, governance, and operational procedures of Arise and Live Church. It provides a clear framework for how the church is governed, how decisions are made, and how members and leaders are expected to conduct themselves.

Preamble

We, the members of Arise and Live, establish this constitution to guide our church in its mission. Our purpose is to exalt God and share the message of Jesus Christ. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we strive to save those who are lost and build up the church, fostering a community built on faith, teaching, and discipleship.

Our aim is to exalt God by sharing the message of Jesus Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to save those who are lost and edify the church.

Article I. Name and Location

Currently, Arise and Live does not have a dedicated physical location. As our church grows, we aspire to establish a permanent facility for worship and community activities. Additionally, we seek to engage in church planting efforts, expanding our presence and ministry to new communities.

Article II. Doctrinal Beliefs

1. The Bible: Scripture, the Written Word of God

1.1 The Bible is unique among all literature because it is divinely inspired.

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, its words are "breathed out by God," separating it from ordinary texts. Every book within the Bible is believed to originate from divine revelation, written by human authors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), guaranteeing the authenticity of God's truth through a human lens. As the supreme authority, the Bible serves as the ultimate arbiter in all matters of faith and conduct, and its teachings are binding for every believer (Hebrews 4:12). Despite cultural evolution, its eternal truths remain unchanged. Jesus underscored this when He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

1.2 The Bible's reliability is reinforced by its assertions of infallibility and inerrancy. Infallibility suggests that the Bible is entirely trustworthy in all it proclaims because it comes from God, and thus cannot lead readers astray (Psalm 19:7). Inerrancy means that the original manuscripts are free from error; every word is pure, correct, and without mistake (Proverbs 30:5). The Bible is also divided into canonical books. The Old Testament includes 39 books that recount God's covenant with Israel, covering history, law, prophecy, poetry, and wisdom literature. The New Testament contains 27 books that outline the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the formation of the Church, and future prophetic writings. The early church affirmed these 66 books as inspired by the Holy Spirit, with the canon being solidified by criteria such as apostolic authorship and doctrinal consistency.

1.3 The Bible is described as "living and active," meaning it possesses the unique power to convict, guide, and transform individuals even today (Hebrews 4:12). Its engagement can change lives, renew minds, and lead believers to maturity in Christ (Romans 12:2). All of Scripture is centered around Jesus Christ, with the Old Testament anticipating His coming and the New Testament revealing His life and work (Luke 24:27). Jesus fulfills the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, thus confirming the Bible's unity and divine origin (Matthew 5:17). Conclusively, the Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, essential for guiding believers in all matters of faith and practice. It reveals God's will and brings believers to salvation and sanctification. Christians are called to study, interpret, and apply the Bible, relying on the Holy Spirit for understanding and transformation.

2. One God. Three Persons

2.1 The Trinity refers to the Christian doctrine that God exists as three distinct but coequal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity has unique roles and functions, yet they are of one essence and together comprise the totality of God.

2.2 Creator and Sustainer: God the Father is recognized as the creator of the universe and all that is in it. He sustains and governs all things according to His sovereign will. He is the origin of all life and the one who sets in motion and maintains His sovereign plan for all of creation. Scriptures like Genesis 1:1 emphasize His role as the creator, while Psalm 103:19 highlights His supremacy and control over all things.

2.3 God the Son, who is Jesus Christ, is eternally begotten of the Father, who became incarnate. According to the Gospel of John 1:14, He is the "Word" that became flesh to live among humanity. Jesus served as the ultimate sacrifice to atone for human sin, a cornerstone of Christian faith detailed in John 3:16. Through His sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection, believers are offered redemption and eternal life, restoring the broken relationship between humanity and God.

2.4 The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, represents God's active presence in the world and within believers. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as a helper in John 14:16-17, describing how the Spirit would dwell within believers, guiding, comforting, and empowering them to live according to God's will. The Holy Spirit also plays a crucial role in the process of sanctification, making believers more like Christ. Additionally, the Spirit bestows various spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) to equip the Church for its mission and to build up the body of believers.

Understanding the Trinity is essential to grasping the full scope of God's relationship with humanity and His ongoing work in the world. Together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit encapsulate the attributes of being all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), present everywhere (omnipresent), holy, loving, and just, manifesting God's complete and perfect nature.

3. Jesus Christ

3.1 Deity: Jesus Christ embodies the unique nature of being both fully God and fully man. In His deity, He shares in the divine essence and attributes of God (John 1:1), while in His humanity, He experienced the full range of human life and emotions (John 1:14). This dual nature allows Him to bridge the gap between God and

humanity, making Him the central figure in Christian theology and salvation (Philippians 2:6-8).

3.2 Virgin Birth: The birth of Jesus Christ was marked by a miraculous event known as the virgin birth. According to the scriptures, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to the Virgin Mary, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14) and recounted in the Gospels of Matthew (Matthew 1:18-23) and Luke (Luke 1:26-35). This extraordinary occurrence underscores the divine nature of Jesus and sets the foundation for His unique role in God's plan of salvation.

3.3 Sinless Life. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, demonstrating perfect obedience to God's will. His life was without sin, making Him the perfect sacrifice for our transgressions and a model for holy living. As it is written, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The apostle Peter also affirms, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Additionally, the author of Hebrews declares, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15). John further emphasizes, "But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

3.4 Death. Substitutionary Atonement. Jesus Christ's death on the cross is central to the Christian faith. He died as a substitute for sinners, taking upon Himself the punishment that we deserve. This act of substitutionary atonement satisfies the justice of God and provides the means for our reconciliation with Him. As Isaiah prophesied, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

The apostle Paul explains, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole'" (Galatians 3:13). Furthermore, Peter affirms, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Lastly, Paul underscores the significance of Jesus' sacrifice: "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith" (Romans 3:25).

3.5 Bodily Resurrection. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a cornerstone of the Christian faith. It demonstrates His victory over sin and death and assures believers of their future resurrection. After His crucifixion, Jesus rose physically from the grave on the third day, appearing to many of His followers. As Paul declares, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was

raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

The Gospel of Matthew recounts, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay" (Matthew 28:6). Additionally, Peter proclaims, "God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:24). Jesus Himself affirms the importance of His resurrection, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25).

3.6 Ascension: Seated at the right hand of the Father. Following His resurrection, Jesus Christ ascended bodily into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. This exalted position signifies His authority and intercession on behalf of believers. The Gospel of Luke records, "While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:51-52).

In the book of Acts, it is written, "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (Acts 1:9). Paul emphasizes His exalted position, stating, "God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (Ephesians 1:20-21). Furthermore, the author of Hebrews declares, "After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Hebrews 1:3).

3.7 Jesus Christ will return to earth in glory and power to judge the living and the dead and to establish His eternal kingdom. This second coming is a central hope for believers, affirming the ultimate triumph of God's purposes. As Jesus Himself declared, "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). The book of Acts records the angelic message at His ascension: "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Paul writes, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). John the Revelator envisions this return, stating, "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen" (Revelation 1:7)

4. Holy Spirit

4.1 Personhood

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, fully God, and distinct in personhood. He is not an impersonal force or force of any kind. The Holy Spirit teaches, guides, and intercedes for believers. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a person, saying, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). Paul highlights His personal nature by stating, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with personal understanding: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8:26). These scriptures affirm that the Holy Spirit is a personal and active presence in the lives of believers.

4:2 Regeneration. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in the regeneration of believers, bringing new spiritual life and transforming hearts. This process, often referred to as being "born again," is essential for salvation. Jesus explained this to Nicodemus, saying, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). Paul also emphasizes the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

4:3 Indwelling. The Holy Spirit indwells believers, making their bodies His temple and guiding them in their daily lives. This indwelling presence is a constant source of strength, comfort, and guidance. Paul writes, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Additionally, Jesus promised His disciples, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17).

4:4 Sanctification. The Holy Spirit is actively involved in the sanctification of believers, helping them to grow in holiness and conform to the image of Christ. This process involves the Holy Spirit convicting of sin, empowering for righteous living, and producing spiritual fruit. Paul writes, "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Furthermore, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

4:5 Gifts. The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon believers, equipping them for service and building up the body of Christ. These gifts are diverse and are given according to the Spirit's will for the common good. Paul explains, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:4-5). He further elaborates,

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

5. Salvation

5.1 Grace: By Grace Through Faith

Salvation is a gift of God's grace, received through faith in Jesus Christ. It is not earned by human efforts or works but is freely given by God to those who believe. Paul emphasizes this in his letter to the Ephesians, writing, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). This underscores that our salvation is solely based on God's grace and our faith in Christ.

5.2 Justification: By Faith Alone

Justification is the act of God declaring sinners righteous through their faith in Jesus Christ. This doctrine of "sola fide" (faith alone) teaches that we are justified before God by faith, not by our own works. Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Romans: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Additionally, he states, "For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Romans 3:28).

5.3 Sanctification: Progressive Work

Sanctification is the ongoing process by which believers are made holy through the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul describes this process in his letter to the Philippians: "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). He also exhorts believers, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13). Their actions are driven and sustained by God's work within them. As the Apostle Paul advised the Philippians, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12–13). Believers are called by God to overcome sin in their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 13:12; Col. 3:9). The Holy Spirit is the force of sanctification, working in believers to make them willing and able to put sin to death in their lives.

5.4 Glorification: Final State

Glorification is the final stage of salvation, where believers are fully conformed to the image of Christ and experience eternal life in God's presence. This transformation occurs at the resurrection of the dead, where believers receive glorified bodies. Paul explains, "And those he predestined, he also called; those he

called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified" (Romans 8:30). He also writes, "For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

6. The Church & Sacraments

6.1 Universal Church: Body of Christ

The Universal Church is the collective body of all believers in Jesus Christ, transcending time, space, and denominational boundaries. It is composed of all who have trusted in Christ for salvation, making up His spiritual body. Paul describes this unity in his letter to the Corinthians: "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13). He further emphasizes, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

6.2 Local Church: Community of Believers

The Local Church is a community of believers who gather together in a specific location for worship, teaching, fellowship, and service. It is an essential expression of the Universal Church, where believers can grow in their faith and support one another. The writer of Hebrews encourages this gathering: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Additionally, Paul writes, "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

6.3 Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ, serving as an outward sign of an inward grace. It symbolizes the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Jesus commanded His disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is a public declaration of faith and a step of obedience for those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior. Paul explains its significance: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

6.4 The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper, also known as Communion, is an ordinance that commemorates Christ's sacrificial death and fosters unity among believers. It involves partaking of bread and wine (or juice), symbolizing Christ's body and blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus instituted this practice at the Last Supper:

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:19-20). Paul further instructs the Church on its significance: "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

7. Humanity

7.1 Creation: Made in God's Image

Humanity was created by God, uniquely made in His image, reflecting His character and attributes. This foundational truth highlights the inherent dignity, worth, and purpose of every person. The book of Genesis records, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). This divine image grants humans the capacity for relationship with God, moral responsibility, and the ability to reason and create.

7.2 Complementary Design

God designed men and women with distinct and complementary roles, reflecting His creative intent and purpose. This complementary design is evident in the creation narrative, where God created humanity in His image, male and female, each with unique attributes and roles that together reflect the fullness of God's image. Genesis states, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). This binary and complementary nature of gender is foundational to human relationships and is intended to be expressed within the covenant of .

7.3 Sexuality

Heterosexuality is part of God's original design for human relationships, there are no other configurations. This design is rooted in the creation account in Genesis 2:24 that describes the creation of woman for man, establishing the foundation for heterosexual intimate pairing: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." Similarly, Leviticus 18:22 explicitly states, "Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable." In the New Testament, Romans 1:26-27 speaks against same-sex relations, describing them as contrary to the natural order established by God. Further, Paul reinforces this in his letters, stating, "But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2).

7.3 Marriage

Marriage is presented in Scripture as the union of one man and one woman, where both partners contribute equally yet differently, fulfilling their God-given roles. Jesus

affirms this design, quoting Genesis: "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" (Matthew 19:4-5). This union is not only physical but also spiritual and emotional, designed to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

7.4 Monogamy

Monogamy emphasizes that marriage is a lifelong, exclusive union between one man and one woman, as established in the creation narrative. Genesis 2:24 states, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." Jesus reaffirms this in the New Testament, underscoring the permanence and exclusivity of marriage. This "one flesh" union emphasizes the deep, intimate, and exclusive nature of the marital relationship, where two individuals become one in a lifelong bond.

Monogamy reflects God's covenantal faithfulness and promotes a stable family structure. The exclusivity and commitment required in a monogamous marriage mirror God's unwavering loyalty to His people, as illustrated in the book of Hosea. Moreover, a monogamous relationship provides a secure environment for raising children, contributing to their emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:22-33 highlights the mutual love and respect necessary for a nurturing family unit. Thus, monogamy glorifies God through faithful and loving relationships, aligning with His original design for marriage.

Creation Ideal:

Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." This verse establishes the ideal of one man and one woman becoming one flesh, indicating a monogamous relationship.

New Testament Teachings:

- Matthew 19:4-6: Jesus reaffirms the creation ideal by quoting Genesis, emphasizing that marriage is between one man and one woman.

"He answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.'"

- 1 Timothy 3:2, 12: The qualifications for church leaders (bishops and deacons) include being the husband of one wife.

"Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach."

"Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well."

- 1 Corinthians 7:2: "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

This verse emphasizes monogamous relationships to avoid sexual immorality.

God Forbids Kings from Taking Multiple Wives:

- Deuteronomy 17:17: "And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold."

God specifically commands that kings should not take multiple wives, to prevent their hearts from turning away from Him.

Negative Examples of Polygamy:

Solomon: King Solomon had many wives and concubines, which led him away from God and into idolatry.

1 Kings 11:1-4: "King Solomon loved many foreign women... And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God."

David: King David's multiple marriages led to family strife and tragedy. The story of David's children, such as Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom, illustrates the dysfunction and tragedy that can arise from polygamous relationships (2 Samuel 13-18).

Idea of One Flesh:

Genesis 2:24: The concept of becoming "one flesh" signifies a unique, exclusive union between one man and one woman, reinforcing monogamy as the ideal.

Israel and God's Covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-32: The covenant between God and Israel is often compared to a marriage, symbolizing a singular, exclusive relationship.

"The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord."

Greek Word Porneia:

Porneia: The Greek word often translated as "sexual immorality" includes a range of unlawful sexual acts, including adultery and other forms of unlawful intercourse. This term implies that sexual relationships outside the monogamous marriage covenant are considered sinful.

Practical Issues with Polygamy:

The stories of Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon all illustrate the complexities, jealousy, and familial discord that can result from polygamous relationships.

Argument from Silence:

While the Old Testament includes accounts of polygamy, it does not provide a divine command or endorsement of the practice. The silence on direct approval, combined with the problems arising from polygamous relationships, suggests it was a cultural practice rather than a divine ideal.

7.5 Fall: Sin Entered Through Adam

The fall of humanity occurred when Adam disobeyed God's command, resulting in the entrance of sin into the world. This act of rebellion brought spiritual death, separation from God, and the corruption of all creation. Paul explains the widespread impact of the fall: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). The Genesis account narrates, "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (Genesis 3:6).

7.6 Redemption: Available Through Jesus Christ Alone

Redemption is available to humanity solely through Jesus Christ, who, through His sacrificial death and resurrection, reconciles us to God and offers forgiveness of sins. This redemptive work restores the broken relationship between God and humanity, providing the hope of eternal life. Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Paul emphasizes the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation: "In him we have

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Moreover, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

8. Eschatology (End Times)

8.1 Life After Death, Conscious Existence

The intermediate state refers to the condition of the soul between physical death and the final resurrection. Scripture teaches that there is conscious existence after death. Believers are in the presence of the Lord, while unbelievers experience separation from God. Paul writes, "We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus also illustrates conscious existence after death (Luke 16:19-31).

8.2 Return of Christ: Imminent, Personal, Visible

The return of Jesus Christ is a central doctrine of Christian eschatology, emphasizing that it will be imminent, personal, and visible to all. Jesus promised His return, saying, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3). His return will be visible and unmistakable, as described in Revelation: "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him" (Revelation 1:7). Paul also speaks of the suddenness of His return: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

8.3 Resurrection: Bodily Resurrection of the Just and Unjust

The doctrine of the bodily resurrection teaches that both the righteous and the wicked will be raised from the dead. This resurrection will occur at the end of the age, when Christ returns. Jesus affirmed this, stating, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:28-29). Paul also writes, "There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:15).

8.4 Judgment: Final Judgment

The final judgment will occur after the resurrection, where all people will stand before God to be judged according to their deeds. This judgment determines the eternal destiny of each individual. Jesus describes this event: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him" (Matthew 25:31-32). John also sees this in his vision: "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The dead

were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books" (Revelation 20:11-12).

8.5 Eternal State: Heaven, Hell

The eternal state refers to the final, everlasting condition of all people, either in Heaven or Hell. Heaven is the eternal dwelling place of believers in the presence of God, characterized by perfect fellowship, joy, and the absence of suffering. Jesus promises, "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2). Hell is the place of eternal separation from God, reserved for those who reject Him, described as a place of torment. Jesus warns, "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). John also writes, "Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

9. Angels and Demons

9.1 Angels. We affirm the existence and essential role of angels as celestial beings created by God to serve and worship Him. Throughout Scripture, angels are depicted as messengers of God's divine will, intervening in human affairs to carry out His purposes and provide protection and guidance to believers (Hebrews 1:14, Psalm 91:11, Luke 1:26-38). Their presence and ministry underscore God's sovereignty and care over His creation, serving as a testament to His divine order and the spiritual dimension of His kingdom.

9.2 Demons: We acknowledge the reality of demons as malevolent spiritual beings. According to Scripture, demons are understood as the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim, originating from the union of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4. These entities seek to oppose God's will, often manifesting through spiritual oppression, deception, and temptation (Matthew 12:43-45, Mark 1:23-26). We do not see this as primary doctrine and are open to alternate views supported by scripture.

9.3 Fallen Angels. We affirm the biblical teaching regarding fallen angels, who are distinct from demons. These celestial beings originally created by God chose to rebel against Him under the persuasion of Satan, resulting in their expulsion from heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15, Revelation 12:7-9, Jude 1:6). Their rebellion continues today as their agenda is to oppose God's kingdom, influencing humanity towards disobedience, spiritual conflict, and rejection of Jesus.

9.4 Satan, referred to by various names and titles that reflect his role as an adversary and tempter, is primarily known as "Satan," meaning "adversary" or "accuser." Other names include "Lucifer," highlighting his pride and fall from

heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15); "Devil," signifying "slanderer" (Revelation 12:9); "Beelzebub," denoting the ruler of demons (Matthew 12:24); and "the evil one," emphasizing his essential nature (1 John 5:19). In Revelation, he is symbolically depicted as "the dragon," symbolizing his power and ferocity (Revelation 12:9). These names and titles illustrate Satan's opposition to God and his role in tempting humanity toward sin throughout biblical history and end times.

Originally created as a high-ranking celestial being, Satan led a rebellion against God, seeking to exalt himself above the divine order (Ezekiel 28:12-17). His pride led to his fall from grace, marking the beginning of spiritual warfare and deception (1 Peter 5:8). As "the accuser of our brothers and sisters," he continues to oppose God's purposes and lead humanity astray through lies and temptation (Revelation 12:10). Understanding Satan's role brings context to the disease, death, and bloodshed that we experience in life and emphasizes the need for spiritual vigilance, salvation, and reliance on God's strength and truth (Ephesians 6:10-12, James 4:7).

10. Christian Living

10.1 Ethics: Holiness, Love, Service

Christian ethics are rooted in the call to live a life of holiness, love, and service, reflecting the character of Christ. Holiness involves being set apart for God, living in moral purity, and growing in Christlikeness. Peter exhorts believers, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16). Love is the defining mark of a Christian, demonstrated through selfless actions and compassion towards others. Jesus commands, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). Service is an expression of love and obedience to Christ, manifesting in acts of kindness and meeting the needs of others. Paul encourages, "Serve one another humbly in love" (Galatians 5:13). The Christian ethic calls believers to embody these principles in their daily lives, striving to honor God and serve others.

10.2 Mission: Evangelism, Discipleship

The mission of the Church involves evangelism and discipleship, fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel, sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with others. Jesus commands His followers, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). This involves both verbal proclamation and living a life that reflects the gospel message. Discipleship is the

process of growing in faith and helping others grow in their relationship with Christ. It involves teaching, mentoring, and encouraging believers to mature spiritually and live out their faith. Paul instructs Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). The mission of the Church is to make disciples who make disciples, extending the reach of the gospel and building up the body of Christ.

Article III. Purpose and Mission

Mission Statement The church's overarching goals and vision:

Our aim is to exalt God by sharing the message of Jesus Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to save those who are lost and edify the church.

We are committed to exalting God in all we do. This begins with our unwavering faith, which guides our actions and shapes our worship. We believe in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ boldly, sharing His message of redemption, hope, and love with everyone we encounter.

Central to our mission is relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live out our faith, minister effectively, and witness transformation in the lives of individuals and communities. Through exaltation, we seek to glorify God, inspire faith in others, and reflect His love in a world that needs His grace.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." - John 12:32 (ESV)

Edification of The Church

In our pursuit of edifying the church, we prioritize the study and teaching of Scripture as foundational for understanding God's will and character. Through diligent study and reflection, we deepen our knowledge and faith, equipping ourselves and others to live according to His teachings and principles.

Nurturing spiritual growth is integral to our mission. We strive to support and encourage individuals in their personal journeys of faith through meaningful relationships, prayer, and discipleship. Our aim is to cultivate spiritual maturity and resilience, empowering each member to grow in their relationship with God.

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." - 2 Peter 1:5-8 (ESV)

Article IV. Membership

- 1. Eligibility:** Membership in the church is open to all individuals who profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9), have been baptized by immersion as a public declaration of their faith (Matthew 28:19-20), and agree with the core doctrines and beliefs outlined in our doctrinal beliefs document. The process for becoming a member includes meeting with church leaders to discuss their faith journey and understanding of church membership, receiving approval from church leaders, and being presented to the congregation for affirmation. New members will be formally welcomed during a church service (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
- 2. Rights and Responsibilities:** Members have the right to participate in all church activities, ministries, and events (1 Corinthians 12:14-27), vote on significant church decisions such as the election of church leaders and major financial decisions as directed by the elders (Acts 6:3, 1 Timothy 3:1-13), and access pastoral care, counseling, and other forms of spiritual support (James 5:14-16). In return, members are expected to regularly attend worship services and other church gatherings (Hebrews 10:25), use their gifts and talents to serve in various ministries (1 Peter 4:10), contribute financially to the church to support its operations and outreach efforts (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), promote unity within the church by resolving conflicts biblically and maintaining the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3, Matthew 18:15-17), live out their faith in their daily lives while actively sharing the gospel with others (Matthew 5:16, Matthew 28:19-20), and submit to the leadership and guidance of the church eldership (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).
- 3. Termination:** Membership in the church can be terminated under certain conditions. These conditions include voluntary resignation, where a member chooses to leave the church, and transfer of membership, where a member moves their membership to another church (Acts 18:27). Membership can also be terminated if a member persistently and unrepentantly engages in behavior that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible and the church's covenant. This process involves attempts at biblical reconciliation and church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5:11-13. Additionally, membership may be terminated if a member consistently fails to fulfill their membership responsibilities without valid reason, despite attempts at pastoral care and encouragement (Hebrews 10:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:14). The decision to terminate membership is made by the church eldership in accordance with the guidelines and principles set forth in the Bible, always aiming for restoration and reconciliation where possible (Galatians 6:1).

4. Church Covenant

At Arise and Live Church, we unite under our faith in Jesus Christ and commit to living according to His teachings as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This covenant outlines our collective commitment to embody Christian principles in every aspect of our lives. Colossians 2:6-7

We believe in one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and embrace His offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. In response, we strive to mirror God’s grace and love, fostering an environment where every member can pursue spiritual growth without fear of judgment, hypocrisy, or control. Ephesians 4:15-16

Our community is a sanctuary of unity, where spiritual humility prevails. We address conflicts with grace, understanding, and a commitment to reconciliation. We strive to live in peace with all, providing a welcoming space for everyone, while upholding God's standard of righteousness. Ephesians 4:2-3; Romans 12:18

In our interactions, we practice forgiveness and strive to see each other as Christ sees us—without superiority or prejudice. We aim to act justly and love mercifully, as we live out the compassion and righteousness that God desires. Colossians 3:12-13

Together, we commit to supporting one another through life's joys and challenges, celebrating triumphs and sharing in each other’s sorrows, in obedience to God’s word. Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15

We will guide and nurture our children in the faith, demonstrating the beauty of the gospel through our daily lives and relationships. Ephesians 6:4

We pledge to lead disciplined lives of holiness and godliness, anticipating the glorious return of our Savior, Jesus Christ, while being steadfast in our duties and hopeful in our spirits. Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 1:14

Moreover, we will not forsake assembling together but will uphold the sacred practices of our faith including preaching, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and church discipline, cherishing each as a vital aspect of our walk with Christ. Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 11:26

We also vow to contribute joyfully and generously to the needs of our church and community, assisting the less fortunate and supporting the spread of the gospel both locally and globally. 2 Corinthians 9:7; Acts 20:35

This covenant is our promise to live out these principles, upheld by the Holy Spirit, as we work together to glorify God and foster a vibrant community of growth at Arise and Live Church.

Article V. Governance

1. Structure: The church is structured as an elder-led, congregational rule body, ensuring effective leadership, accountability, and spiritual guidance. The church is governed by a body of elders who are responsible for the overall spiritual direction, teaching, and pastoral care of the congregation (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9). While the elders provide leadership and oversight, major decisions are made with the input and affirmation of the congregation, ensuring that the church remains responsive to the collective discernment and will of its members (Acts 6:3, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Deacons assist the elders by managing various practical aspects of church life, including administration, finance, and service ministries (1 Timothy 3:8-13). The church also includes other leadership roles, such as ministry leaders and coordinators, who oversee specific areas of ministry and ensure that the church's mission and vision are effectively carried out.

2. Leadership Roles: Elders are tasked with shepherding the congregation, preaching and teaching the Word, providing pastoral care, and ensuring doctrinal purity (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-3). They are to lead by example, demonstrating Christ-like character and integrity. Deacons (who may also be referred to as ministers) support the elders by attending to the practical needs of the church, such as managing resources, organizing service projects, and facilitating the smooth operation of church programs (Acts 6:1-6). They are also expected to exemplify Christian maturity and service. Other leadership roles within the church include ministry leaders who are responsible for specific areas such as worship, youth, outreach, and discipleship. These leaders are expected to collaborate with the elders and deacons, fostering a cohesive and unified church body (Ephesians 4:11-13). All leaders are accountable to the congregation and to each other, ensuring transparency, mutual support, and adherence to biblical principles (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

3. Elder-Led Congregational Rule

Elder-Led Congregational Rule is a model of church governance in which a group of elders provides spiritual oversight and leadership, while the congregation retains authority for significant decisions. This structure ensures that the church is both elder-led and congregationally governed. The scriptural basis for this model includes passages such as Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5, and 1 Peter 5:2-3, which emphasize the appointment of elders and their roles in directing church affairs, preaching, teaching, and shepherding God's flock.

In practice, this governance model involves a balanced approach to decision-making, where elders provide spiritual direction, oversee teaching, and ensure doctrinal integrity, while the congregation participates in key decisions such as selecting elders, calling a pastor, approving financial budgets, and major church

projects. Governance meetings include regular elders' meetings to discuss church matters and long-term vision, and congregational meetings, often held annually or semi-annually, to vote on key issues, approve budgets, and discuss church achievements and goals.

The selection of church leaders typically involves the elders identifying and recommending candidates, with the congregation voting to affirm these decisions. Other ministry leaders may be appointed by the elders with the congregation's knowledge and support. In conflict resolution, elders act as the first line of mediation, following biblical principles, while the congregation may be involved in more significant or unresolved matters to ensure transparency and communal responsibility.

Teaching and preaching responsibilities often fall to elders who focus on ensuring sound doctrine, with the congregation encouraged to actively engage with teachings, provide feedback, and hold leaders accountable. Church discipline is initially handled by the elders according to biblical guidelines, with the congregation potentially involved in severe cases to help restore members lovingly and justly.

4. Lead Elder/Senior Pastor All elders are pastors, as seen in 1 Peter 5:2 and Acts 20:28, with no distinction made in Ephesians 4:11. The "senior pastor" will be the elder who primarily teaches, officiates ceremonies, and oversees staff, he is seen as the leader among leaders. The elders should regard him as an equal, recognizing he holds the same office and has one vote in matters. His role as a primary teacher might give him more influence, positioning him as the first among equals. Elders must balance appreciating his unique gifts while responsibly fulfilling their own roles, requiring wisdom to maintain this balance.

Article VI. Meetings

1. Congregational Meetings: Congregational meetings are held quarterly to ensure transparent communication and collective decision-making within the church body. These meetings provide a platform for members to receive updates on church activities, financial reports, and future plans. They also offer an opportunity for members to voice their concerns, provide feedback, and participate in important decisions, such as budget approvals and the election of church leaders (Acts 6:3). Special congregational meetings may be called as needed to address urgent matters. These meetings are conducted in a spirit of unity and mutual respect, following a structured agenda to ensure orderly and productive discussions (1 Corinthians 14:40).

2. Leadership Meetings: Leadership meetings, involving the elders, deacons, and ministry leaders, are held monthly to coordinate and oversee the various aspects of church life. These meetings focus on strategic planning, pastoral care, ministry updates, and addressing any issues that may arise. The elders lead these meetings, ensuring that all discussions and decisions align with the church's mission and biblical principles (Acts 20:28). Minutes of leadership meetings are documented and shared with the congregation to maintain transparency and accountability (Hebrews 13:17). Additionally, annual retreats or extended meetings may be organized for in-depth planning and spiritual renewal among the leadership team (Proverbs 15:22).

Article VII. Decision-Making

1. Decision-Making Process

The church operates under an elder-led, congregational rule model. This means that while the elders provide spiritual oversight and leadership, major decisions are ultimately made by the congregation through a voting process. This approach ensures that the congregation actively participates in significant church decisions, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

2. Voting Processes

Proposal Submission:

Proposals for church decisions can be submitted by either elders or members. Once submitted, these proposals are reviewed by the elders before being presented to the congregation. This review process helps to ensure that all proposals are aligned with the church's mission and values.

3. Congregational Meetings:

Regular congregational meetings are scheduled, typically on a quarterly or biannual basis, to discuss and vote on significant matters. These meetings provide a forum for open discussion and decision-making, promoting transparency and inclusiveness.

4. Notification:

Members are notified of upcoming votes at least two weeks in advance. This notification period allows time for prayerful consideration and discussion among members, ensuring that decisions are made thoughtfully and deliberately.

5. Quorum Requirements

Establishing a Quorum:

A quorum of 25-30% of active members must be present for any vote to be valid. This quorum requirement ensures that decisions are made with substantial participation from the congregation, reflecting the collective voice of the church community.

6. Voting Thresholds

Routine Decisions:

Simple Majority (50% + 1):

Routine operational decisions, such as budget adjustments and minor policy changes, require a simple majority vote. This threshold is sufficient for everyday matters that do not have a significant long-term impact on the church.

7. Significant Decisions:

Two-Thirds Majority (66.7%):

More impactful decisions, including major financial commitments, amendments to the church constitution or bylaws, and significant policy changes, require a two-thirds majority vote. This higher threshold ensures that these important decisions have strong support within the congregation.

8. Critical Decisions:

Three-Quarters Majority (75%):

Highly critical decisions, such as the selection or removal of elders, senior pastor appointments, purchasing property, or entering into significant long-term commitments, require a three-quarters majority vote. This stringent requirement ensures that critical decisions are made with overwhelming support and consensus.

9. Unanimous or Near-Unanimous Consent:

90-100%:

For decisions of utmost importance or when seeking to ensure complete unity, such as in cases of church discipline or resolving deep conflicts, a unanimous or near-unanimous consent may be required. This highest level of agreement ensures that the congregation stands united on these crucial issues.

10. Voting Methods

In-Person Voting:

Voting typically takes place during congregational meetings. Depending on the sensitivity of the issue, voting may be conducted by a show of hands, voice vote, or secret ballot. This flexibility in voting methods accommodates different levels of privacy and formality as needed.

11. Absentee Ballots:

Members who cannot attend the meeting in person may submit absentee ballots. This provision ensures broader participation in the decision-making process, allowing all members to have their voices heard regardless of their ability to be physically present.

12. Announcement of Results

The results of the vote are announced promptly to the congregation, ensuring transparency and accountability in the decision-making process. This timely communication helps maintain trust and clarity within the church community, reinforcing the congregation's active role in church governance.

Article VIII. Criterion for Elders & Deacons (Ministers)

A. Criterion for Elders:

1. Blameless (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:2): An elder must maintain a reputation above reproach in every aspect of life, ensuring there are no valid accusations against their character.
2. Husband of One Wife (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:2): Demonstrates faithfulness and commitment to their marital vows, reflecting integrity and relational stability.
3. Children Who Believe (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:4): If children are still living at home under the father's authority, children of an elder must not exhibit immorality or undisciplined rebelliousness.
4. Biological Male (1 Timothy 3:2): Must be a man by birth, aligning with traditional interpretations of gender roles in church leadership.
5. Blameless as God's Steward (Titus 1:7): Manages God's household with utmost integrity and responsibility, ensuring trustworthy leadership.
6. Not Self-Willed (Titus 1:7): Demonstrates humility and a servant's heart, avoiding arrogance and self-centeredness in decision-making.
7. Not Quick-Tempered (Titus 1:7): Maintains patience and a calm demeanor, essential for handling conflicts and stress with composure.
8. Not Addicted to Wine (Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3:3): Practices sobriety and self-control, setting a positive example by avoiding excessive alcohol consumption.
9. Not Pugnacious (Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3:3): Displays a peaceful and gentle nature, refraining from aggression or violent behavior.
10. Not Fond of Sordid Gain (Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3:3): Rejects greed and dishonesty, upholding ethical standards by avoiding the pursuit of ill-gotten wealth.
11. Above Reproach (1 Timothy 3:2): Maintains a reputation that is beyond legitimate criticism, ensuring credibility and trustworthiness.
12. Generosity (Hospitable) (Titus 1:8, 1 Timothy 3:2): Shows love and care for others by welcoming and providing for strangers, demonstrating hospitality.
13. Loving What is Good (Titus 1:8): Devotes oneself to goodness and virtue, pursuing and promoting what is right and commendable.

14. Prudence (Sensible) (Titus 1:8): Exercises sound judgment and wisdom in decision-making, displaying a balanced and thoughtful approach.
15. Impartiality (Just) (Titus 1:8): Acts with fairness and equity, treating all individuals with equal consideration and respect.
16. Godliness (Devout) (Titus 1:8): Lives a life dedicated to God, reflecting His character and conforming to His will in all aspects.
17. Self-Control (Titus 1:8, 1 Timothy 3:2): Exercises discipline over desires, emotions, and actions, demonstrating moderation and restraint.
18. Faithfulness (Titus 1:9): Holds firmly to sound doctrine and the teachings of faith, able to teach and defend the truth effectively.
19. Able to Teach (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9): Possesses the skill to instruct others in sound doctrine and refute opposing viewpoints effectively.
20. Not a New Convert (1 Timothy 3:6): Has matured in faith and wisdom over time, avoiding the pitfalls of pride and susceptibility to spiritual challenges as a recent convert.

B. Criterion for Deacons (Ministers):

1. Deacons must be worthy of respect, living in a manner that others can admire and trust.
2. Sincere: They should be sincere, speaking the truth and demonstrating integrity in all their dealings.
3. Not Indulging in Much Wine: Deacons must not indulge in much wine, showing moderation and control over their appetites.
4. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain: They should not pursue dishonest gain, being honest and ethical in financial matters.
5. Hold to the Deep Truths of the Faith: Deacons need to hold to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience, demonstrating a strong and well-founded belief in the core principles of Christianity.
6. Tested and Proven: They must first be tested and proven, demonstrating their capabilities and faithfulness before being appointed to the role.
7. Faithful to Their Spouse: Deacons should be faithful to their spouse, maintaining a strong and faithful marriage.

8. **Manage Their Children and Household Well:** They must manage their children and household well, providing a godly example for their family and others.

Article IX. Elders & Deacons (Ministers)

Appointing church elders is a significant process that typically includes several steps:

A. Selection of Elders

1. **Biblical Qualifications:** Elders must meet the qualifications outlined in passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. This includes being above reproach, hospitable, able to teach, not a lover of money, and having a good reputation.
2. **Congregational Involvement:** The congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the candidates that the elders nominate, ensuring that the selection process reflects the consent and affirmation of the church body.
3. **Prayer and Discernment:** Prayer is central throughout the process. Both the leadership team and the congregation will pray for discernment to ensure that those chosen possess the spiritual maturity and calling necessary for eldership.
4. **Assessment and Interview:** Nominees will undergo assessment through interviews that evaluate their spiritual maturity, doctrinal understanding, character, and leadership abilities.
5. **Background Checks:** Background checks may be conducted to verify the credibility and reputation of the candidates.
6. **Training and Equipping:** Newly appointed elders may undergo a period of training to equip them for their roles effectively, ensuring they understand the responsibilities and expectations of eldership within the church context.
7. **Formal Appointment:** Once the selection process is complete, elders are formally appointed during a church service. This may include a ceremonial laying on of hands and prayer by existing elders and church leaders, symbolizing the recognition and commissioning into their role.
8. **Ongoing Support:** Continuous support and accountability are crucial for elders. Regular meetings, mentoring, further training, and spiritual encouragement help sustain their effectiveness in leadership.

B. Selection of Deacons (Ministers)

The selection of deacons is a significant process that typically involves several steps to ensure those chosen are suitable for their role and can effectively serve the church community:

1. **Biblical Qualifications:** Deacons must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, which include being dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, and being tested first.

2. **Step-by-Step Process:**

- a. **Identifying Needs:** The church leadership or congregation identifies specific areas where deacons are needed, such as hospitality, administration, or caring for the needy.
- b. **Nomination:** Candidates are nominated by the elders, with the congregation having an opportunity to affirm these nominations through a voting process.
- c. **Evaluation:** Nominees are evaluated based on biblical criteria and their adherence to doctrinal beliefs and moral conduct. This may involve personal interviews and background checks.
- d. **Training:** Candidates may undergo training sessions or mentoring to prepare them for their responsibilities as deacons, ensuring they understand their role and the church's expectations.
- e. **Congregational Input:** The congregation is involved in the selection process, providing an opportunity for feedback or affirmation of the candidates, promoting transparency and communal involvement.
- f. **Appointment and Commissioning:** Upon confirmation, a formal appointment service is conducted, typically involving prayer and the laying on of hands by existing church leaders to commission the deacons into their roles publicly.

C. **Deacon Removal Procedures**

Removing a deacon from their position involves a careful, respectful process that upholds the church's values of integrity, accountability, and compassion. Here is how our church approaches the removal of a deacon:

- **Grounds for Removal:** The basis for considering the removal of a deacon includes moral failure, significant doctrinal disagreement, persistent non-performance of assigned duties, or behavior that is clearly in conflict with the biblical standards expected of church leaders. The process is initiated only when such issues are evident and after they have been substantiated.
- **Initial Review:** The procedure begins with an initial review conducted discreetly by a small committee of elders or senior deacons. This step serves to verify the validity of the concerns raised and determine whether there is sufficient cause to proceed with a more formal investigation.
- **Formal Investigation:** Should the initial review justify further action, a formal investigation is undertaken. This includes detailed interviews, gathering of evidence, and consultations with all involved parties, ensuring that the process is thorough and fair.

- **Opportunity for Repentance and Correction:** Throughout the investigative process, the deacon in question is provided with pastoral support and multiple opportunities for repentance and correction of the behavior. The church seeks restoration wherever possible, emphasizing correction over punitive measures.
- **Decision Making:** The final decision on the removal of a deacon is typically made collectively by the elder board or a designated leadership committee. A consensus or supermajority may be required to finalize the removal, depending on the church's specific governance structure.
- **Communication:** The decision, once made, is communicated with sensitivity and confidentiality, primarily to those within the church who need to be aware. The process respects the privacy and dignity of the deacon involved, aiming to handle the matter with grace and discretion.
- **Follow-Up and Restoration:** Following the removal, the church provides ongoing support to the former deacon and their family, aiming for their spiritual welfare and restoration. The church also takes steps to address and mitigate any disruption within the congregation, facilitating healing and unity.

Important Considerations

- **Character Over Skill:** Emphasize spiritual maturity, biblical understanding, and character in the selection process, prioritizing these qualities over skills or popularity.
- **Transparency:** Maintain transparency throughout both the elder and deacon selection processes to foster trust and confidence within the congregation.
- **Support:** Provide ongoing support and oversight for both elders and deacons, ensuring they are spiritually nourished and equipped to fulfill their roles effectively.

D. Elder Removal Procedures

The removal of an elder is a serious and sensitive matter, approached with the utmost gravity and in alignment with biblical principles. The process for removing an elder is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and spiritual integrity, reflecting the church's commitment to upholding God's standards.

- **Grounds for Removal:** Reasons for considering the removal of an elder include moral failure, doctrinal deviation, inability to perform duties due to health, or continuous unrepentant behavior contrary to biblical standards. This process is initiated only after careful and prayerful consideration.
- **Initial Assessment:** The process begins with a confidential preliminary assessment by a select group of elders not directly involved in the matter. This step is to determine if the concerns warrant a formal review.
- **Formal Investigation:** If the initial assessment indicates a need for further action, a formal investigation is conducted. This involves collecting evidence,

interviewing witnesses, and giving the accused elder an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

- **Spiritual Counseling and Opportunity for Repentance:** Throughout the process, the elder is offered spiritual counseling and multiple opportunities to repent and rectify the behavior in question. The goal is always restoration and reconciliation, whenever possible.
- **Decision and Action:** The decision to remove an elder is made collectively by the remaining elders, based on the evidence and biblical guidelines. A supermajority vote is typically required to finalize the removal.
- **Communication:** The outcome of the process, while maintaining respect for the privacy of all individuals involved, is communicated appropriately within the church. This communication is handled sensitively to uphold the dignity of the removed elder and to promote healing within the congregation.
- **Aftercare and Restoration:** Post-removal, the church provides support and counseling to the removed elder and their family, aiming for spiritual restoration and healing. The church also addresses the congregation to facilitate understanding and reconciliation within the community.

E. Elder Responsibilities & Accountability

1. Duties: Elders are entrusted with the spiritual oversight and pastoral care of the church. Their primary responsibilities include:

- **Preaching and Teaching:** Elders are to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God, providing sound biblical instruction and doctrinal clarity to the congregation (1 Timothy 5:17, 2 Timothy 4:2).
- **Shepherding the Flock:** Elders are called to shepherd the church members, offering pastoral care, guidance, and support. This includes visiting the sick, comforting the grieving, and counseling those in need (1 Peter 5:1-3, James 5:14).
- **Spiritual Oversight:** Elders oversee the spiritual health and growth of the church, ensuring that all activities and ministries align with biblical principles and the church's mission (Acts 20:28).
- **Prayer and Intercession:** Elders are devoted to prayer, interceding for the congregation, seeking God's wisdom, and discerning His will for the church (Acts 6:4, James 5:16).
- **Leadership and Vision:** Elders provide visionary leadership, setting strategic direction and goals for the church. They work collaboratively with other leaders and the congregation to fulfill the church's mission (Proverbs 29:18).
- **Discipleship and Mentoring:** Elders are responsible for discipling and mentoring emerging leaders within the church, equipping them for service and leadership (2 Timothy 2:2, Ephesians 4:11-13).
- **Church Discipline:** Elders are tasked with maintaining church discipline, addressing issues of sin and conflict according to biblical principles, always aiming for restoration and reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1).

2. Accountability: To ensure integrity and faithfulness in their role, elders are subject to several mechanisms of accountability and support:

- **Peer Accountability:** Elders are accountable to each other, meeting regularly for prayer, mutual support, and accountability. They are to hold each other to high standards of conduct and faithfulness (Proverbs 27:17).
- **Congregational Feedback:** Elders are to be transparent with the congregation, seeking feedback and input from members. Regular congregational meetings provide a platform for open communication and accountability (Hebrews 13:17).
- **Performance Reviews:** Periodic performance reviews are conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and faithfulness of each elder's ministry. These reviews consider feedback from fellow elders, deacons, and congregation members.
- **Spiritual Growth and Development:** Elders are encouraged to pursue ongoing spiritual growth through personal study, prayer, and participation in leadership development opportunities. This ensures they remain spiritually vibrant and effective in their role (1 Timothy 4:15-16).
- **External Oversight:** When necessary, the church may seek the counsel and support of external advisors or denominational leaders to provide additional oversight and accountability for the elders.

F. Deacon (Minister) and Lay Leader Responsibilities & Accountability

1. Duties: Deacons and lay leaders play crucial roles in supporting the church's ministry and ensuring its effective operation. Their primary responsibilities include:

- **Service and Support:** Deacons are tasked with managing practical needs within the church, such as administering benevolence funds, organizing service projects, and assisting with the logistical aspects of church operations (Acts 6:1-6). Lay leaders support various ministries, such as youth, worship, outreach, and education, providing leadership and coordination.
- **Administration:** Deacons handle administrative tasks, including maintaining church facilities, overseeing financial management, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. They work closely with the elders to ensure the smooth operation of the church's day-to-day activities (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- **Pastoral Care:** Deacons and lay leaders assist in providing pastoral care to church members, visiting the sick, comforting the grieving, and offering counsel and support to those in need. They play a vital role in fostering a caring and compassionate church community (James 1:27).
- **Ministry Leadership:** Lay leaders are responsible for leading specific ministries or programs within the church. This involves planning, organizing, and executing ministry activities, as well as recruiting and training volunteers to serve effectively (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- **Spiritual Growth:** Both deacons and lay leaders are to exemplify a commitment to spiritual growth and maturity, engaging in regular Bible study, prayer, and personal development. They are to model Christ-like behavior and encourage others to do the same (1 Timothy 4:12).

- **Community Engagement:** Deacons and lay leaders actively engage with the broader community, representing the church in outreach initiatives, mission projects, and community service. They are to be the hands and feet of Christ, demonstrating His love through tangible acts of service (Matthew 5:16).

2. Accountability: To ensure effective and faithful service, deacons and lay leaders are subject to several mechanisms of accountability and support:

Regular Meetings: Deacons and lay leaders participate in regular meetings with the elders and other ministry leaders. These meetings provide opportunities for prayer, coordination, and mutual support, ensuring alignment with the church's mission and vision.

Performance Reviews: Periodic performance reviews are conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and faithfulness of each deacon and lay leader's ministry. These reviews consider feedback from fellow leaders, the congregation, and the individuals they serve.

Mentorship and Training: Deacons and lay leaders receive ongoing training and mentorship to enhance their skills and spiritual growth. This includes attending workshops, conferences, and other development opportunities (2 Timothy 2:2).

Peer Accountability: Deacons and lay leaders hold each other accountable, fostering a culture of mutual encouragement and accountability. They are to support and challenge one another to maintain high standards of conduct and service (Proverbs 27:17).

Congregational Feedback: Transparency with the congregation is crucial for accountability. Deacons and lay leaders seek feedback and input from church members, ensuring that their service meets the needs and expectations of the congregation (Hebrews 13:17).

Spiritual Oversight: The elders provide spiritual oversight and support to deacons and lay leaders, offering guidance, encouragement, and correction as needed. This ensures that all leaders are aligned with the church's mission and biblical principles (1 Peter 5:1-3).

Article X. Church Discipline

1. Biblical Basis

Church discipline is a cornerstone of our community's spiritual well-being, rooted deeply in the teachings of Scripture. When a concern arises regarding the conduct of a member, we follow a biblical framework to address the issue with care and integrity.

Our approach to church discipline is grounded in the wisdom of Scripture. As Jesus instructed in Matthew 18:15-17, the process begins with private confrontation. This step encourages personal accountability and seeks to resolve conflicts discreetly, fostering an atmosphere of repentance and reconciliation.

2. Private Confrontation

When a member becomes aware of another's wrongdoing, they are encouraged to initiate a private conversation with the individual involved, following the guidance of Matthew 18:15. The goal is to address the issue directly and lovingly, allowing for genuine repentance and the restoration of relationships.

3. Involvement of Witnesses

If the private confrontation does not lead to resolution, Matthew 18:16 advises involving one or two additional individuals as witnesses. These witnesses provide support, ensure fairness, and help confirm the facts of the situation, contributing to a balanced perspective and a thorough understanding of the matter.

4. Involvement of Church Leadership

Should the issue persist despite private efforts, Matthew 18:17a directs us to bring the matter before the church leadership. Our elders or pastors then provide pastoral guidance and counsel, offering spiritual support and direction aimed at facilitating repentance and healing.

5. Involvement of the Congregation

In cases where serious sin affects the broader church community, Matthew 18:17b instructs us to involve the congregation. This step allows the church body to offer collective prayer, support, and accountability, emphasizing the communal responsibility for maintaining spiritual health and unity.

6. Disciplinary Action

If, after these steps, the individual remains unrepentant and the sin continues, the church may consider disciplinary action. This can range from temporary suspension of certain

privileges or responsibilities to removal from leadership roles or, in extreme cases, excommunication from the fellowship.

7. Restoration

Throughout the process, our ultimate aim is restoration. Galatians 6:1 reminds us to approach those caught in sin with a spirit of gentleness, seeking to restore them to fellowship and spiritual health. When genuine repentance is expressed, we extend forgiveness and support, welcoming the individual back into the fullness of community life with open arms.

8. Prayer and Support

Prayer is integral at every stage of church discipline. We seek God's wisdom and guidance, asking for His grace to permeate our interactions and decisions. Additionally, we provide ongoing pastoral care and support to those involved, ensuring they feel loved, valued, and encouraged on their journey of repentance and restoration.

9. Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is paramount throughout the process to protect the dignity and privacy of all individuals involved. We handle matters with discretion and sensitivity, limiting information sharing to those directly involved or necessary for providing support and accountability.

10. Handling of Serious Sins

The process of addressing serious sins typically begins with private confrontation, followed by elder intervention if needed, and may escalate to congregational involvement if the issue persists without repentance (Matthew 18:15-17). The objective of church discipline is never punitive but aimed at restoration and reconciliation. Throughout this process, confidentiality and respect for all parties involved are prioritized to protect the dignity and privacy of individuals undergoing disciplinary proceedings. This approach ensures that discipline is conducted with grace, humility, and a commitment to upholding the integrity and unity of our church community.

Certain serious sins within our church community may necessitate involvement of the congregation, especially if they persist without repentance or significantly impact our collective spiritual health. These sins are guided by biblical teachings and traditional church practices, serving as benchmarks for disciplinary action:

- **Sexual Immorality:** As addressed in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, sins such as adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, and other sexually immoral acts are considered grounds for public discipline due to their serious nature.

- Heresy or False Teaching: Drawing from Titus 3:10-11, spreading beliefs or teachings that deviate from core Christian doctrines can lead to public rebuke and disciplinary measures.
- Public Scandal or Gross Immorality: Referenced in 1 Timothy 5:20, actions such as criminal behavior (fraud, theft, assault) that bring disgrace to the church community warrant public admonishment and correction.
- Habitual Substance Abuse: Ephesians 5:18 cautions against drunkenness and substance abuse, making chronic alcoholism or drug addiction, when unaddressed, a matter for church discipline.
- Divisiveness and Sowing Discord: Romans 16:17 warns against those who cause divisions contrary to doctrine, including behaviors like gossip, slander, or actions that disrupt church unity.
- Unrepentant Theft or Financial Dishonesty: 1 Corinthians 6:10 highlights that dishonest financial practices, such as embezzlement or fraud, especially involving church funds, require disciplinary action.
- Chronic Absenteeism and Neglect of Church Responsibilities: Hebrews 10:25 emphasizes the importance of regular fellowship, making persistent neglect of church duties or responsibilities subject to disciplinary measures.

Article XI. Ethical Guidelines of All members and Leaders

All are expected to exhibit Christ-like behavior, demonstrating integrity, honesty, humility, and respect in their interactions with others (Philippians 2:3-4).

1. Personal Conduct: Believers are called to live holy and blameless lives, reflecting the character of Christ in their daily actions and decisions. This includes avoiding sinful behaviors such as lying, stealing, gossiping, and engaging in immoral activities (Ephesians 4:25-32, Colossians 3:5-10). Instead, members are encouraged to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

2. Speech: Members should strive to use their words to build others up, encourage, and edify the church community. They are to avoid harmful speech, such as slander, profanity, and deceit (Ephesians 4:29, James 3:1-12). Speech should always be gracious and seasoned with wisdom, reflecting the love of Christ (Colossians 4:6).

3. Relationships: Believers are to love one another as Christ has loved them, fostering a community marked by unity, compassion, and mutual support (John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:7-12). This includes bearing each other's burdens, forgiving one another, and resolving conflicts in a spirit of grace and truth (Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 18:15-17).

4. Work and Service: Members are encouraged to work diligently and ethically in their vocations, serving as witnesses to the gospel through their excellence and integrity (Colossians 3:23-24). They are to use their gifts and talents to serve the church and the broader community, demonstrating the love of Christ through acts of service and charity (1 Peter 4:10, Matthew 5:16).

5. Stewardship: Believers are called to be good stewards of their resources, including time, money, and talents. This involves managing personal and church finances responsibly, giving generously to support the church's mission, and using their time and abilities to further God's kingdom (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

6. Digital and Online Behavior: In today's digital age, members are also expected to uphold ethical standards in their online interactions. This includes being mindful of what they post, avoiding harmful or divisive comments, and using digital platforms to promote positive, edifying content (Philippians 4:8, Ephesians 5:4).

7. Commitment to Growth: Believers should pursue continuous spiritual growth through regular prayer, Bible study, and participation in church activities. They are encouraged to seek spiritual mentorship and accountability relationships to support their growth and walk with Christ (2 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 10:24-25).

Article XII. Conflict Resolution & Disputes (Non-Sin)

Conflict Resolution & Disputes: The church is committed to maintaining a spirit of unity and peace among its members. To address and resolve conflicts, the following biblical process is outlined:

1. Personal Resolution: Members are encouraged to first address the issue directly with the individual involved, seeking reconciliation privately. This step emphasizes humility, forgiveness, and the desire for peace (Matthew 18:15, Ephesians 4:2-3). Both parties should approach the conversation with a willingness to listen and understand each other's perspectives.

2. Mediation with Witnesses: If the conflict is not resolved through personal resolution, the next step involves bringing one or two neutral and trusted members of the church to mediate the discussion. These witnesses are there to facilitate constructive dialogue and help both parties reach a resolution (Matthew 18:16). The goal is to ensure fairness, accountability, and mutual understanding.

3. Leadership Involvement: Should the dispute remain unresolved, it should be brought before the church leadership, typically the elders. The elders will review the situation, provide counsel, and seek to mediate a resolution based on biblical principles. Their role is to guide the parties towards reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of unity and the teachings of Christ (Matthew 18:17, 1 Corinthians 6:1-6).

4. Congregational Intervention: In rare cases where the conflict significantly impacts the church community and remains unresolved after leadership involvement, the issue may be presented to the congregation. This step is taken with great care and prayer, aiming to restore harmony and uphold the church's testimony (Matthew 18:17). The congregation's involvement should be guided by the principles of love, grace, and truth.

5. Restoration and Forgiveness: Throughout the conflict resolution process, the ultimate goal is restoration and reconciliation. Members are encouraged to forgive one another, just as Christ has forgiven them (Colossians 3:13). The church community is to support and encourage those involved, fostering a spirit of healing and renewal (Galatians 6:1-2).

6. Preventive Measures: To prevent conflicts from escalating, the church promotes open communication, regular fellowship, and mutual accountability. Members are encouraged to address minor issues promptly and respectfully, seeking peace and understanding in all interactions (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14).

Article XIII. Child Protection Policy

The church is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children. To ensure their safety and protection, the following procedures are established:

- 1. Background Checks:** All volunteers and staff members who work with children are required to undergo thorough background checks, including criminal record checks, to ensure they are suitable for working with minors. This is to prevent individuals with a history of abuse or harmful behavior from having access to children (Psalm 127:3).
- 2. Training:** Volunteers and staff members who work with children must complete regular training on child protection policies, recognizing signs of abuse, and appropriate conduct when interacting with children. This training is designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills to create a safe environment (Proverbs 22:6).
- 3. Code of Conduct:** A clear code of conduct is established for all individuals working with children. This includes guidelines for appropriate physical contact, communication, and behavior. Volunteers and staff members are expected to model Christ-like behavior and uphold the highest standards of integrity and respect (Matthew 18:5-6).
- 4. Supervision:** Children's activities are to be supervised by at least two adults at all times to ensure accountability and protection. This policy minimizes the risk of inappropriate behavior and ensures a safe environment for children (Mark 10:14).
- 5. Reporting and Response:** Clear procedures are in place for reporting suspected abuse or neglect. All reports are to be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The church will cooperate with law enforcement and child protective services as necessary. A designated child protection officer will oversee the implementation of these procedures and ensure compliance (Ephesians 5:11).
- 6. Safe Environment:** The church facilities are regularly inspected to ensure they are safe and secure for children. This includes maintaining clean and hazard-free classrooms, playgrounds, and restrooms. Safety protocols, such as emergency evacuation plans, are established and communicated to all staff and volunteers (Psalm 91:1-2).
- 7. Parental Involvement:** Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's church activities. Open communication between parents and church leaders is promoted to ensure transparency and trust. Parents are provided with information about the church's child protection policies and procedures (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).
- 8. Confidentiality:** All matters related to child protection are handled with strict confidentiality. Information is only shared with those who need to know in order to protect the child and comply with legal requirements. This ensures the privacy and dignity of all individuals involved (Proverbs 11:13).

Articles XIV. Finances

Managing the financial resources of our church is vital to fulfilling our mission with integrity and transparency. Here's a detailed look at how we handle our finances:

1. Budgeting: Our church's budgeting process is a collaborative effort involving church leadership, finance committee members, and input from the congregation. We begin by assessing our ministry priorities and financial needs for the upcoming year. This process ensures that funds are allocated thoughtfully to support worship, ministry programs, missions, staff salaries, facility maintenance, and other essential expenses. The approved budget is communicated to the congregation, fostering transparency and accountability in financial stewardship.

2. Financial Oversight: We uphold rigorous procedures for financial reporting and oversight to ensure responsible management of church funds. Regular financial reports are prepared and reviewed by our finance committee and leadership team, detailing income, expenditures, and financial health. An independent audit is conducted annually by certified auditors to verify the accuracy of our financial records and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. This commitment to financial transparency and accountability helps maintain trust and confidence among our members and stakeholders.

These practices will demonstrate our commitment to honoring God through faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us, enabling us to serve our congregation and community effectively.

The handling of church finances shall be done with the utmost trustworthiness and integrity. It shall be the duty of the Church Administrator and the Finance Committee to guard against any conflict of interests or the mishandling of funds by establishing and monitoring a system of internal financial controls to safeguard the assets over which the church has been given stewardship.

3. Conflict of Interest:

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the interests of Arise and Live Church ("the Church") when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer, director, trustee, or other key individual of the Church. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions

Interested Person: Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

Financial Interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement,

A compensation arrangement with the Church or with any entity or individual with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement,

Or

A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures

Duty to Disclose: In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists: After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest:

An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee

shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Church's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy:

If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain:

The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Compensation

A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Church for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Church for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Church, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer, and member of a committee with governing board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
Has read and understands the policy,
Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
Understands the Church is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Church operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable and are the result of arm's-length bargaining.

Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or in an excess benefit transaction.

Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews, the Church may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Article XV. Officers, Directors, and Trustees

The purpose of this section is to outline the process for selecting officers, directors, and trustees who will guide and manage the affairs of Arise and Live Church in alignment with its mission and values.

1. Offices:

The officers of Arise and Live Church shall include, but are not limited to, the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Additional offices may be established as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

2. Eligibility:

Candidates for any office must be active members of Arise and Live Church, demonstrating a commitment to its mission, vision, and values. They should possess the skills and experience relevant to the responsibilities of the position they are being considered for.

3. Nomination Process:

- a. Nominations for officers, directors, and trustees may be made by any member of the Board of Directors or by a nomination committee appointed by the Board.
- b. Self-nominations are permitted.
- c. All nominations must be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting.

4. Election Process:

- a. Elections shall be held at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors.
- b. Each officer, director, and trustee shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board members present.
- c. Voting shall be conducted by secret ballot to ensure confidentiality and fairness.
- d. In the event of a tie, a runoff election shall be conducted between the tied candidates.

5. Term of Office:

- a. The term of office for all officers, directors, and trustees shall be three (3) years, with the possibility of re-election for consecutive terms.
- b. Terms shall be staggered to ensure continuity and stability within the Board.

6. Vacancies:

- a. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Board of Directors shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term.
- b. The appointment shall be made by a majority vote of the Board members present.

7. Removal from Office:

- a. Any officer, director, or trustee may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors if they are found to be in violation of the church's

bylaws, policies, or for conduct detrimental to the church.

b. The individual in question shall be given an opportunity to address the Board before the vote is taken.

8. Duties of Officers:

a. **President:** The President shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors and the congregation, represent the church in all legal matters, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board.

b. **Vice President:** The Vice President shall assist the President and assume the duties of the President in their absence.

c. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all meetings, maintain official documents, and handle correspondence.

d. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall oversee the financial affairs of the church, maintain financial records, and provide financial reports to the Board.

9. Meetings:

a. The Board of Directors shall meet at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called as necessary.

b. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of a majority of the Board members.

ARTICLE XVI. CORPORATE POWERS

1. Duration

The Church (known in this section as Arise and Live Church) shall have perpetual duration and succession in its corporate name.

2. Powers

The Church has the same powers as an individual to do all things necessary or convenient to carry out her business and affairs, including without limitation those powers enumerated in and by Section 14-3-302 of the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code, Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.), in effect on the date of ratification of this Constitution and Bylaws, or as expanded by amendment thereafter by the Georgia General Assembly, which powers are incorporated herein by reference.

3. Emergency Powers

(Powers) of this Constitution and Bylaws, the Church trustees shall have the powers in anticipation of or during an emergency enumerated in and by Section 14-3-303 of the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code, O.C.G.A., in effect on the date of ratification of this Constitution and Bylaws, or as expanded by amendment thereafter by the Georgia General Assembly, which powers are incorporated herein by reference. An "emergency" exists for the purpose of this section if a quorum of the church's leadership team cannot readily be assembled because of some catastrophic event, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 14-3-303(d).

4. Indemnification

The Church shall indemnify her officers and directors/trustees for those amounts authorized by Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 8, Part 5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A. § 14-3- 830ff); provided, however, indemnification shall only be made upon compliance with the requirements of, and only in those circumstances in which indemnification is authorized under, those provisions.

5. Insurance

Liability insurance may be purchased by the Church on behalf of those persons for whom she is entitled to purchase and maintain such coverage under, and to the extent permitted by, O.C.G.A. §14-3-857.

Article XVII. Limitations

The organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Article XIX. Amendments

Ensuring clarity and adaptability in our governance, amendments to our constitution follow a defined process:

Changes to Constitution: Amendments to our church constitution are proposed by church leadership or by petition from church members. Proposed amendments are reviewed by the elders and legal advisors to ensure they align with our doctrinal beliefs and legal requirements. Once reviewed, amendments are presented to the congregation for discussion and feedback during a designated period. Following this, a formal vote is conducted among church members, requiring a supermajority (specified percentage) for approval. Approved amendments are then integrated into the constitution, ensuring that our foundational document reflects the evolving needs and values of our church community.

Article XX. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Closure Procedures: Should the decision be made to dissolve the church, the process begins with a formal vote among church members, guided by biblical counsel and legal advice. Upon approval of dissolution, a dissolution committee, appointed by the elders, oversees the orderly closure of church operations. This includes settling outstanding debts and obligations in accordance with existing contracts and legal requirements.

Asset Distribution: Any remaining assets of the church, after satisfying debts and liabilities, are distributed in accordance with the church's constitution and applicable state laws. Typically, assets may be distributed to affiliated denominational bodies, other nonprofit organizations with similar missions, or charitable causes as determined by the membership or the dissolution committee. This process ensures that the legacy of the church continues to benefit the community and advances the kingdom of God in alignment with our shared values and commitments.