

**T H E R I V E R**  
**C H U R C H**



Constitution  
and  
Confession of Faith

The River Church  
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# Constitution and Confession of Faith

## Preamble

Jesus Christ shall be the head of this church. In order to establish and promote the orderly operation of an independent, non-denominational church and to set forth in order a statement of those truths commonly believed among us, we do therefore establish and ordain this Constitution and Confession of Faith for The River Church.

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## **Section 1: Name**

### **Article 1**

This organization shall be called The River Church of Liberty Township, Ohio.

## **Section 2: Purpose and Functions**

### **Article 1**

The River Church exists to connect people with God in a way that will change their lives forever. There are five key functions of the church that will allow The River to fulfill this stated purpose. Those functions are Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, Fellowship, and Ministry.

1. Evangelism – “To share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world.” (*Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9*)
2. Discipleship – “To help members develop toward full Christian maturity and train them for effective ministry. To promote personal, spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching.” (*Ephesians 4:11-13, Matthew 18:20, 2 Timothy 2:2*)
3. Worship – “To participate in public worship services together and to maintain personal daily devotions.” (*John 4:24*)
4. Fellowship – “To encourage, support, and pray for each other as members of the family of God. To share our lives together.” (*1 John 1:7, Acts 2:44-47, Hebrews 10:23-25, Romans 15:5,7, John 13:34-35*)

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5. Ministry – “To serve unselfishly, in Jesus’ name meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our church, community and in the world.” (*1 Peter 4:10-11, Matthew 25:34-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Galatians 5:13*)

## **Section 3: Confession of Faith**

### **Article 1 - The Scriptures**

We believe the Bible is the infallible, divinely inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original 66 books. It is the only authoritative rule for faith and practice.

*(2 Tim. 3:16, Psalm 19:7-11, Psalm 119:9-16, 97-105, 140, 160, Hebrews 4:12, Deuteronomy 4:2, 6:6-9, 8:3, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 22:29, John 17:17, Romans 10:17, 1 Peter 1:23-25, 2 Peter 1:19-2:2)*

### **Article 2 - The Trinity**

We believe that God has revealed Himself to us as being three distinct persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, but yet One God. The Holy Scriptures show that there are three individuals in the Bible who may be called YHWH without error and without blasphemy, who interact with one another and with us. We believe that the Bible affirms that there is only one God consisting of these three persons.

*(Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19, Acts 10:38, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2, FATHER--Matthew 6:9, John 6:27, Ephesians 4:6, Isaiah 63:16, 64:8, Jeremiah: 19-20, SON--Matthew 3:3, 26:63-64, Acts 20:28, Colossians 1:14-17, John 1:1, 18, 5:18, 14:9, 16:15, 20:28, Phil 2:6, Col 2:9, Titus 2:13, 1 John 5:20, Matt 4:10 and Hebrews 1:3-6, Hebrews 1:8-12, Revelation 1:7-18, 22:12-13, 16 and Isaiah 44:6, Isaiah 35:46 and Matt 11:3-6, Jeremiah 11:20, 17:10 and Revelation 2:18, 23, Zechariah 12:9-10 and John 19:34-37, Isaiah 45:21-23 and Philippians 2:10-11, Isaiah 9:6 and Revelation 1:8 Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:4,9-13, HOLY SPIRIT--Genesis 1:2, Psalm 139:7-8, Acts 5:1-4, John 16:13-15, 1 Cor 3:16, 12:4-6, 15:45, Eph 4:30, Heb 9:14, Psalms 95:6-11 and Hebrews 3:7-11, Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Hebrews 10:15-18)*

### **Article 3 – The Person of God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, an Infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He is supreme in His person, eternal in His being, absolute in His attributes and glorious in His Perfection. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that he hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of human history according to the purpose of His grace.

*(1 Cor 8:6, Eph 3:9-10, Ps 103:19, Rom 11:36, 1 Chron 29:11, Jn 1:12, Exodus 15:11)*

#### **Article 4 - The Person of Jesus Christ**

We believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, His Deity and sinless life, His vicarious death, along with His bodily resurrection and ascension, and in the blessed hope of His glorious return for His Bride, the church.

*(Isaiah 7:14, Matt 1:23, Luke 1:27-31; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Heb 4:15, 1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:21-24, Matt 24:30, 26:64, Acts 1:9-11, Rev. 1:7, 22:20, Eph 5:25-27, Rev 21:9-24)*

#### **Article 5 - The Person of The Holy Spirit**

We believe the Holy Spirit executes the plan of God for our conviction and salvation. All Christians are partakers of the Holy Spirit at salvation and are empowered by Him for service and purity.

*(1 Cor 2:13, 3:16, 12:4-13, Eph 1:13, 4:30, John 4:24, 6:63, 14:16-17, 26, 16:7-14, Gal 5:16-25, Luke 11:13, 12:11-12, Romans 7:6, 8:1-16, 14:17-18, 2 Thess 2:13-14, Titus 3:5)*

#### **Article 6 - Man**

We believe that man was created in the image of God and by choice fell into sin and death. Hence, every person is sinful and under condemnation to eternal judgment.

*(Gen. 1:27, 2:16-17, 3:6; John 3:18, Rom. 3:10-23; 6:23, 7:18 Isaiah 53:6, 59:2, 64:6, Gal 3:10, 22, Eph 2:3-5, James 2:10, Rev. 20:10-15)*

#### **Article 7 - Salvation**

We believe that the salvation of sinners unto eternal life is wholly of grace, and that the assurance of our salvation comes through faith in Christ alone. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.

*(Eph 1:7, 2:8-9, Jn 3:3-5, 16, 36, Rom. 3:21-26, 4:5, 16, 5:1-2, 10:9-10, 13, Gal 2:20-21)*

#### **Article 8 - The Local Church**

We believe that the visible church is a congregation of believers practicing New Testament principles, believing its doctrines, observing its ordinances, and exercising its autonomy.

*(Matt 16:18, 19, 24, Matt. 28:18-20, John 8:31-32, 13:35, Acts 2:40-47, 17:11, 1 Cor 5:12-13, 12:14, 26, Heb 10:25)*

## **Article 9 - Ordinances**

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation. We acknowledge that our preferred practice of baptism is by full immersion, but we also recognize that there might be circumstances when an alternative method of baptism may be administered.

*(Matt 28:19, Acts 2:38, 1 Cor 11:23-26, 1 Cor 1:14-17)*

## **Article 10 - Heaven and Hell**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting punishment.

*(John 3:16, 5:25-29, 14:1-3, 1 Cor 15:35-55, Luke 16:22-24, Matt 10:28, 18:8-9, 25:41, Mark 9:43-48, Rom 6:4-8, 8:11, Rev 14:10-11, 20:10-15, 21:1-22)*

# **Section 4: Government**

## **Article 1 - Policy**

This church shall be informal in ritual, and government is vested in the body of believers of which the church is composed. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, and no denominational or associational representatives shall ever sit in judgment or council over its affairs.

## **Article 2 - Doctrine**

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in all matters of faith and practice.

## **Article 3 - Congregational Voting**

Voting privileges shall be extended in all business meetings to any member whose name is on the membership roll and who is at least eighteen years of age.

The following decisions are to be made through formal business action process. Each shall require a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting unless otherwise stated below.

1. Approval of previous business meeting minutes
2. Approval of land and building appropriations, discharges, conveyances, or encumbrances
3. Approval of all incurred debt exceeding \$10,000.00
4. Approval of constitution and bylaw amendments
5. Selection of the Lead Pastor/Elder (three-fourths majority required)
6. Dismissal of Lead Pastor/Elder or Elder (simple majority required)
7. Approval of annual budget

# Section 5: Membership

## Article 1 - General

Membership in this church shall consist of all persons who confess Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, who covenant together to abide by the 5 key areas of commitment as listed in Article 2, and who are listed on the membership roll.

A current membership roll shall be maintained by the church secretary/clerk in consultation with the Lead Pastor/Elder and the Board of Elders.

The procedure to become an adult (18 and older) voting member at The River Church shall be as follows:

- (a) The candidate must have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and publicly professed their commitment to Christ through the ordinance of Baptism.
- (b) Attend a membership class, which will cover such things as: The five key areas of Christian living as described below; a short history of The River Church; the importance of membership, etc.
- (c) Formally apply for membership after completing the above class.
- (d) The applicant will be interviewed by the Elder Board or its designee.
- (e) If approved by the Elders for membership, the applicant's name will be placed on the roll.

Anyone preaching or teaching regularly in any ministry of The River Church is required to be a member in good standing.

Minors in the family of members will be added to the church membership roll at the request of their parents and be considered to be members of this church. Only members of 18 years or older may vote in any church business affairs. When a minor turns 18, they must follow the adult membership process to become a voting member of the church.

## Article 2 - Membership Commitments

As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, we commit to the following five key areas of Christian living:

### 1. "We commit to growing in our relationship with God."

For example:

- . . . By studying His Word regularly
- . . . By spending time with God in prayer
- . . . By pursuing discipleship opportunities as they become available

*(Phil. 1:27, 1 Pet. 2:2, Phil. 3:12-14)*

**2. "We commit to protecting the unity of our church."**

For example:

- . . . By acting in love toward other members
- . . . By refusing to gossip
- . . . By submitting to the leaders
- . . . By adhering to Matthew 18 principles

*(Rom. 15:5, 1 Peter 1:22, Eph.4:29, Heb. 13:17)*

**3. "We commit to faithful involvement with the weekly Worship and Discipleship opportunities of The River Church."**

For example:

- . . . By attending weekly worship/celebration services regularly
- . . . By inviting the unchurched to attend
- . . . By warmly welcoming those who visit
- . . . By participating in small groups

*(Heb. 10:25, Luke 14:23, Acts 20:20)*

**4. "We commit to serving the Body through active ministry."**

For example:

- . . . By discovering our gifts and talents
- . . . By being equipped to serve by our pastors and spiritual leaders
- . . . By developing a servant's heart

*(1 Peter 4:10, Eph.4:11-12)*

**5. "We commit to giving of our resources to the Lord."**

For example:

- . . . By offering our time
- . . . By utilizing our talents, skills, and abilities
- . . . By giving financially according as God has blessed us

*(Phil. 2:3-4, 1 Cor.16:2; Lev. 27:30)*

### **Article 3 - Renewal of Membership**

Members will be expected to reaffirm their desire for membership each year. At a published time and in an agreed upon manner as laid out by the Board of Elders, all members will renew their covenant commitments and their membership will be reaffirmed for the coming year.

### **Article 4 - Termination of Membership**

Members shall be removed from the church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Failure to re-affirm membership.
3. By personal written or verbal request of the member.
4. By prolonged absence. The Board of Elders may drop from the membership roll those inactive members who have been absent from worship services and church gatherings. An elder will attempt to contact the member prior to termination.
5. Dismissal (or removal) by the Board of Elders, according to the following conditions:
  - (a) The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the membership covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the church in the community.
  - (b) Procedures for dismissal of a member shall be conducted by Elders according to Matthew 18: 15-17.

### **Article 5 - Restoration of Membership**

Members removed from the membership roll for reasons 3, 4, or 5 of Article 3 by the Elder Board, may be restored to full membership by the Elders according to 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their life-styles are judged to be in accordance with the membership covenant.

## **Section 6: Church Discipline**

### **Article 1 - Discipline of Church Members**

It should always be the sincere desire of the local church that any and all members be lovingly brought to repentance and restoration. The Lead Pastor/Elder and the Elders are in the best position to do so as long as the individual remains in attendance.

Un-repentance of persistent sin in the life of the believer obstructs his/her walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the church, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among unbelievers. The relationship between un-repentance and discipline for the professing believer is fundamentally different than that for the unbeliever. Yet in both cases, there is a serious problem with a relationship between God and man; for the believer the relationship is broken, while for the unbeliever it is non-existent.

Scripture, therefore, encourages discipline of continuous, unrepentant sin for restoration of a believer's relationship with God and fellow believers. When discipline is enacted, it should be carried out with a servant attitude of love, humility, and commitment to biblical process. Jesus Christ gives clear instruction regarding this discipline procedure in Matthew 18:15-18:

**Step 1:** V. 15 – *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”*

If a person has knowledge of unrepentant sin in the life of a fellow believer, he/she should go promptly and point out the individual's sin in private.

**Step 2:** V. 16 – *“If he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”*

If there is no repentance, he/she should point out the individual's sin with the support of one or two witnesses of the sin, for the purpose of clarifying the facts.

**Step 3:** V. 17a – *“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;”*

If there is still no repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the church. The New Testament organization of the local church allows for review and discipline by the Elders, as spiritual overseers, before the results of discipline and continued un-repentance are disclosed to the church fellowship. If there is still no evidence of repentance, the individual and his/her unrepentant sin should be publicly communicated in the church, as directed by the Elder Board.

**Step 4:** V. 17b– *“and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”*

Finally, the individual should be removed from the church fellowship, losing all membership privileges and responsibilities, until there is genuine repentance.

**Additional Considerations:** If the individual leaves the fellowship at any point during the disciplinary process, the process ends. Further communication to the church family will be considered by the Elder Board. If the individual returns to the church, the process resumes until repentance and restoration occur. Upon repentance, the process of discipline ends.

## **Article 2 - Discipline of Elders and Pastoral Staff**

Corrective discipline for church leaders will also follow the principles found in Matthew 18. Yet Scripture teaches that God has higher expectations for all who serve as leaders in the local church (*I Timothy 3:2; 4:12*). Additional principles for disciplining Elders and pastoral staff are found in *I Timothy 5:19-21*:

*“Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.”*

Accusations must never be made or considered unless more than one person has witnessed the unrepentant pattern of sin or any sin that violates the biblical criteria for leadership (see especially *I Timothy 3:1-7* and *Titus 1:5-9*). Leaders who “persist in sin” are to be “rebuked publicly.” This fulfills scriptural guidance and serves as a warning to all that unrepentant sin is completely unacceptable in the Body of Christ. The public rebuke of leaders will also assure the local church congregation that the integrity of its leadership is of

the utmost importance. Disclosure of the nature of the unrepentant sin will serve to underscore the seriousness of the offense, as well as protect both the church and the leader from misinformation that may interfere with the process of repentance and restoration. By being acquainted with the nature of the leader's sin, the church will be able to witness more clearly how the restoration power of Christ can heal the leader when genuine repentance occurs. Speculation will be displaced by truth.

## **Section 7: Conflict Resolution**

Process to be added when completed

## **Section 8: Church Leadership**

### **Article 1 - General**

The River Church shall be led by a Board of Elders, of which the Lead Pastor/Elder is automatically a member. The Chairman of the Board of Elders will be a non-staff Elder. The Chairman has additional duties; however, all Elders possess equal responsibility for oversight of the church and possess equal voting rights. Additionally, there will be a Ministry Leadership Team who will function as Deacons and Deaconesses, as well as a Board of Trustees and a Finance Team.

### **Article 2 - Elder Board**

There will be a minimum of three Elders. We expect the number of Elders to fluctuate to meet the needs of The River Church. In the event that the Elder Board has less than three members, the Ministry Leadership Team will appoint male member(s) of the Ministry Leadership Team to participate in Elder board meetings, with voting power. If the Elder Board consists of 2 members, the Ministry Leadership Team will appoint 1 member. If the Elder Board has 1 member, the Ministry Leadership Team will appoint 2 members. This approach is included only to address extreme circumstances; under normal circumstances, the Elder Board will consist of at least 3 members.

#### **Roles:**

The Elder Board's purpose is to provide spiritual oversight for the body of Christ at The River Church.

It is the collective responsibility of the Elders to shepherd the church in these areas:

- Teaching Biblical truth (*Titus 1:9*)
- Modeling Christ-like behavior
- Guard the church from false teachers (*Acts 20:29*)
- Be alert to the constant threat of false doctrine (*Acts 20:31*)
- Administering church discipline (*Matthew 18:17*)
- Accountable for financial matters
- Praying for those who are ill (*James 5:14*)
- Prayer for the church, including intercessory and corporate prayer times
- Shepherding the flock (*Acts 20:28-31*)
- Discipling and coaching present and future leaders (*2 Timothy 2:2*)
- A current Elder Board Member may not serve concurrently as a Ministry Leadership Team member on a permanent basis.

The Elders' activities should be tempered according to the following exhortations:

- Do not be too authoritative (*1 Peter 5:3*)
- Be humble (*1 Peter 5:5*)
- Live at peace with the congregation (*1 Thessalonians 5:13*)
- Remain impartial (*1 Timothy 5:21*)

The Board of Elders may delegate specific authority and responsibility to other groups or individuals within the fellowship. Delegation may be expressed in the By-Laws of the church or in other written form. All functions, ministries, agencies, committees, and other boards of the church shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Board of Elders.

The Elder Board will also perform the following duties:

- Hire and review the performance of the Lead Pastor/Elder
- Review and approve church membership candidates
- Have one-on-one personal accountability
- Overseeing the adherence to and interpretation of this constitution
- Hold legal title to all real and personal property of the church

**Qualifications:**

Elders must be current male members of The River Church in good standing.

Elder qualifications are summarized in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9

<i>Above reproach</i>	Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
<i>Husband of one wife</i>	Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
<i>Temperate</i>	Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
<i>Prudent</i>	Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
<i>Respectable</i>	Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
<i>Hospitable</i>	Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
<i>Able to teach</i>	Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
<i>Not addicted to wine</i>	Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
<i>Not pugnacious or quick tempered</i>	Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self control in difficult situations.

<i>Uncontentious</i>	Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
<i>Free from the love of money</i>	Elders must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or pre-occupied with amassing material things.
<i>Manage own household</i>	Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
<i>Not a new convert</i>	Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.
<i>Good reputation with outsiders</i>	Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
<i>Not self-willed</i>	Elders must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others or abuse authority. They must be servants.
<i>Loving what is Good</i>	Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
<i>Just</i>	Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principle.
<i>Devout</i>	Elders must be devoted followers seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own walk.
<i>Holding fast the faithful word</i>	Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

### **Appointment:**

The Elder Board will oversee the process of determining the need for Elders, and for communicating the above listed qualifications of an Elder Board candidate to the church members, and the process for Elder Candidate nomination.

1. Elders will determine the need for more Elders, either to expand the number of Elders or replace departing Elders.
2. The congregation shall be notified of the Elder Board vacancy/opening. The Elder Board should communicate and teach about the elder appointment process to the congregation.
3. Elder nominations shall be via self nomination. If a man feels called to be an elder, and aspires to perform that fine work (1 Tim 3:1), and believes through prayer and introspection that he meets the qualifications, then he should nominate himself. Members who believe that a man may be called to be an elder should communicate directly with him. The congregation shall have 30 days to submit self nominations.
4. Elders shall evaluate nominees with respect to each of the above listed qualifications, should include but not limited to interviewing:
  - a. Spouses, adult children and family members
  - b. Current and former co-workers/supervisors
  - c. Former church members (if applicable)

- d. Others outside the congregation
5. The names of the prospective Elders shall be brought before the church members, who will be given 30 days to show cause to the Elder Board chairman why any one of the prospective Elders would not be qualified to serve. If just cause is shown regarding qualifications, the Elders shall pursue and resolve the issue or remove the candidate from consideration.
6. The candidate is ordained as an Elder.

**Term of Service:**

- The Lead Pastor/Elder serves on the Elder Board on a permanent basis, subject to meeting Elder qualifications
- Other Elders shall serve a three-year term.
- Other Elders may serve multiple terms by going through the normal appointment process.
- Elders, including the Lead Pastor/Elder, are strongly encouraged to take a sabbatical leave (6-10 weeks) away from the church and its ministries after two successive terms (6 years), for a time of prayer, fasting, study, and seeking direction from God on his ministry direction.

**Termination of Service:**

The Elder may leave the Elder Board by:

- Resignation.
- By a simple majority vote of the church membership in a valid special business meeting.
- Elder completes his term and is not re-appointed.

**Elders Emeritus:**

Ordination to the position of an elder is perpetual, granted that the qualifications are continually met. Thus, after release from the duties of active service on the Board of Elders, he may at his request and with the approval of the Board of Elders be appointed Elder Emeritus. When so designated, he is no longer required to perform the regular duties of the office of Elder, and has no voting status, but may continue to perform a portion of these duties on a voluntary basis, if requested by the Board of Elders.

**Article 3 - Chairman of the Board of Elders**

The Elder Board will elect one non-staff Elder as chairman to a 1 year renewable term, with duties as follows:

- He will chair all Elder meetings.
- Chair all business meetings.
- Handle discipline within the Elder Board.
- Supervise and monitor the progress and procedure for adding Elders, Ministry Leadership Team members, Finance Team members etc.
- Oversight of adherence to the Constitution and Bylaws.
- Oversight of Lead Pastor/Elder Performance Review.

**Article 4 – Lead Pastor/Elder**

It shall be the duty of the Lead Pastor/Elder to lead the church family into deeper communion with God through teaching, prayer, love, and servant leadership. He will focus his efforts and gifts to the ultimate purpose of connecting people with God in a way that will change their lives forever.

**Role:**

Under the oversight of the Elder Board, the Lead Pastor/Elder shall:

1. Watch over the spiritual welfare of the church.
2. Provide vision, leadership, and direction to the church.
3. Be responsible for the public worship services.
4. Preach the Word.
5. Pray for the church.
6. Live an exemplary Christian life.
7. Provide oversight over all staff.
8. Be a permanent member of the Elder Board, subject to meeting Elder qualifications.
9. Be a spiritual shepherd to the congregation.

**Qualifications:**

- Believe that he is called to pastor The River Church
- Agree with the doctrinal statement of The River Church
- Meet the qualifications for being an Elder as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, as stated in Section 8, Article 2 of this constitution
- Meet the education and experience requirements as determined by the Elder Board

**Selection:**

Upon a vacancy in the Lead Pastor/Elder position, the following process shall be followed:

- The Elder Board selects a pastoral search committee.
- The committee searches for and presents qualified candidates to the Elder Board.
- Until the Elders confirm a candidate, the search committee continues the search. Once a candidate is approved by the Elders, he is presented to the full congregation.
- A three-fourths majority vote is required for selecting the Lead Pastor/Elder.

**Termination of Service:**

The Lead Pastor/Elder's ministry may be terminated by:

- Resignation
- Through a process by which:
  - The Elders review issues regarding the Lead Pastor/Elder's current performance and/or behavior
  - If the issues are not resolved, the Elders shall call a special business meeting for a vote of confidence/no confidence in the Lead Pastor/Elder
  - The Elder Board must provide notice of the meeting according to the rules of Section 9, Article 3
  - If a simple majority vote of no confidence is made by the membership at the business meeting, the Lead Pastor/Elder is removed
  - Otherwise, the issue is considered closed, and the Lead Pastor/Elder is retained
- The membership can call a special meeting to ask for a vote of confidence/no confidence as defined in the rules for calling special meetings

**Article 5 - Ministry Leadership Team****Roles:**

It shall be the duty of the Ministry Leadership Team to look out for needs in the church and community to ensure that the church is meeting those needs whenever possible. Both men and women can serve on the Ministry Leadership Team, with no distinction between their roles. The Ministry Leadership Team shall function as servants in order to allow the Elder

Board and Lead Pastor/Elder to focus on prayer and ministry through the Word of God (Acts 6:1-7). (The Ministry Leadership Team is performing the role of deacons.) In comparison, Elders set spiritual and ministry direction, and the Ministry Leadership Team executes the vision. Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Implement the ministries of the church.
- Oversee ongoing ministry activities at the direction of the Elder Board.
- Be a committed resource for the Elder Board.
- Be available for special projects as directed by the Elder Board
- Help develop new ministries in conjunction with the Elder Board
- Oversee the maintenance of church property and assets

**Qualifications:**

Must be a current member of The River Church in good standing.  
Ministry Leadership Team qualifications are summarized in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:8-12.

<i>Above reproach</i>	Must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
<i>Faithful spouse</i>	If married, must be a devout spouse.
<i>Respectable</i>	Must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
<i>Not double-tongued</i>	Must be a person who can be trusted to keep their word, sincere in what they say - yes means yes and no means no.
<i>Not addicted to wine</i>	Must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
<i>Free from the love of money</i>	Must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.
<i>Manage own household</i>	Must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
<i>Not a new convert</i>	Must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.
<i>Holding fast the faithful word</i>	Must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

**Appointment:**

The Ministry Leadership Team Members will oversee the process of determining the qualifications of and need for additional Ministry Leadership Team Members, and for giving account of Ministry Leadership Team candidate qualifications to the Elder Board.

1. The need for additional Ministry Leadership Team Members shall be announced to the congregation by the Ministry Leadership Team.
2. The membership shall be provided with an opportunity to nominate candidates.

3. Ministry Leadership Team screens and evaluates applicants.
4. Ministry Leadership Team submits list of approved applicants to the Elder Board for approval
5. Once approved by the Elder Board, the Ministry Leadership Team announces the list of approved candidates to the church.
6. Church members have 2 weeks to show cause to the Ministry Leadership Team Leader why any one of the prospective Ministry Leadership Team Members would not be qualified to serve.
7. If just cause is shown, the Ministry Leadership Team shall pursue and resolve issue, or remove the candidate from consideration.
8. New Ministry Leadership Team Member is added to the Ministry Leadership Team and announced to the congregation.

**Term of Service:**

- Ministry Leadership Team Members shall serve a two-year term.
- Ministry Leadership Team Members may serve multiple terms by going through the normal appointment process.

**Termination of Service:**

The Ministry Leadership Team members may be removed from the Ministry Leadership Team by:

- Resignation.
- A simple majority vote of the Ministry Leadership Team with concurrence of the Elder Board.
- End of term and did not become re-appointed.

**Ministry Team Leader**

The Elder Board will solicit one member of the Ministry Leadership Team to serve as the leader to a 1-year renewable term, with duties as follows:

- Serve as the primary interface with the Elder Board and pastoral staff.
- Chair all Ministry Leadership Team meetings.
- Oversee all activities associated with the execution of duties placed under the direction of the Ministry Leadership Team by the Elder Board.
- Handle conflicts within the Ministry Leadership Team.
- Supervise and monitor the progress and procedure for adding Ministry Leadership Team members.

**Article 6. - Board of Trustees**

**Definition:** The Board of Trustees exists to carry out specific functions (typically, financial in nature) that may be needed by the church.

**Roles:**

They Board of Trustees shall be empowered to convey and/or encumber title to all church property, but only under the following conditions:

- The congregation has held a valid business meeting and voted to obtain, sell, or incur debt for the property.
- The Elder Board has authorized the current Trustees by granting them Power of Attorney for each transaction. The Elder Board is not authorized to grant a Power of Attorney that extends beyond a single transaction.

**Qualifications:**

All Trustees must be members in good standing

**Appointment:**

The Trustees shall be appointed by the Elders

**Term of Service:**

No pre-defined limit on length of service

**Termination of Service:**

- Resignation
- Termination by the Elder Board

**Article 7 - Employed Staff****Roles:**

The church staff shall fulfill their duties as defined by the Lead Pastor/Elder and Elder Board.

**Qualifications:**

All staff must meet position-specific qualifications as appropriate. Additionally, pastoral staff must also meet the same biblical qualifications as a member of the Ministry Leadership Team.

**Appointment:**

With approval of the Elder Board, the Lead Pastor/Elder may pursue the hiring of staff as deemed necessary to meet the needs of the church.

**Employee Performance Evaluation:**

Performance Evaluations shall occur according to the guidelines established within the Employee Handbook.

**Term of Service:**

No pre-defined limit on length of service

**Termination of Service:**

- Resignation
- Termination by Lead Pastor/Elder with approval of Elder Board

**Article 8 - Finance Team and Treasurer**

The Finance Team shall be comprised of the Treasurer and at least 2 others, all of whom are appointed by the Elder Board. The Finance Team shall appoint a chairperson.

**Role:**

The Finance Team and Treasurer shall fulfill the following duties, as well as other duties as defined by the Elder Board.

1. Define operating procedures for managing church finances
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2. Provide regular financial reports to the Elder Board
3. Pay all bills
4. Maintain detailed records for all financial contributions and expenditures; typically, only one Finance Team member will have knowledge of individual contribution records
5. Provide annual contribution statements per IRS guidelines
6. Develop church budget
7. Conduct internal financial audit annually
8. Contract for external financial audit as directed by the Elder Board
9. Provide financial information requested by any church member (with the exception of individual giving records)
10. Other duties as requested by the Elder Board or as needed for maintaining proper financial status with federal, state, and local governments

Note: multiple Finance Team Members will process cash contributions in order to maintain accountability; however, only one Finance Team Member will have knowledge of the amounts donated by any individual.

**Qualifications:**

- Qualifications are determined by the Elder Board
- Must be a church member
- May be on the Elder Board and/or leading other ministries while serving on the Finance Team

**Appointment:**

- Appointed by the Elder Board
- The Elder Board will appoint the church treasurer from among the Finance Team members annually

**Term of Service:**

No pre-defined limit on length of service

**Termination of Service:**

- Resignation
- Action by the Elder Board

## **Section 9: Business Meetings**

### **Article 1 - General**

The church year shall be from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

The Elder Board will call a minimum of one general business meeting per year, and call others as needed. Preferably, one meeting should be held early in the year to approve the annual budget, and to evaluate the Church's adherence to the Constitution. The chairman of the Board of Elders will lead all business meetings. If the chairman of the Board of Elders is unavailable, he shall direct another Elder to chair the meeting.

Voting of absentees will not be a regular procedure. In unusual cases, the Elders may allow such votes on specific issues if a request in writing is received.

All general and special business meetings must be held at the church property.

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## **Article 2 – Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the church membership for business may be called at anytime by the Elders, or by any petition signed by no fewer than ten percent of the membership roll. The meeting can only address a single issue. The petition must include a written description of the single issue to be considered; this description will be included in the required announcements of the meeting.

## **Article 3 - Announcements**

All meetings of the membership (regular or special) shall be announced at least 2 weeks in advance via the weekly Sunday bulletin and from the pulpit. In addition, one written notice will be sent via regular postal mail to the membership approximately two weeks in advance, using the address currently recorded on the membership role.

## **Article 4 - Quorum**

Those members present at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

# **Section 10: Bylaws**

## **Article 1 - Creating and Rescinding Bylaws**

Bylaws for the purpose of establishing church policy on matters not otherwise covered by this Constitution may be enacted by the church at any official business meeting of the church membership. Bylaws may be approved or rescinded at any time by two-thirds majority vote of those members present and voting.

# **Section 11: Amendments**

## **Article 1**

To amend any section of the Constitution and Confession of Faith, excluding Section 10, shall require a majority vote of two-thirds of those present and voting at the business meeting called for the purpose of amending the Constitution and Confession of Faith. Notice of proposed amendments must be submitted in written form to the members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.