

Constitution & Bylaws



Preamble

Being fully persuaded from Holy Scripture that the Word of God is the final authority for all faith and practice and the ultimate constitution for His church, we, the members of Five Points Community Church, joyfully pursue the exaltation of Christ in the life of the church through the constitution set forth in these pages. In doing so, we humbly submit to Him who is the only head of His body [Eph 1:22-23] and the only lawgiver for His church [Jas 4:12] that in all things Christ might have first place [Col 1:18].

The Constitution of Five Points Community Church consists of its Covenant of Membership, Confession of Faith, and Bylaws. The Covenant of Membership acknowledges that the law of Christ is the standard by which we love and serve one another [John 13:34-35]. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith [1833] is a summary of the more exhaustive London Confession of 1689 and articulates the legacy of our spiritual forefathers who contended for the faith once delivered to the saints [Jude 1:3]. Historic evangelicalism was confessional in that it embraced the essential truths of Christianity as these were defined by the great councils of the church. Today the light of the gospel has been significantly dimmed. Because of this crisis and because of our love for Christ, His gospel and His church, we are committed to the inerrancy, infallibility, sufficiency, and authority of the Scripture. We affirm the essential truths of historical evangelicalism because we believe that they are central to the Bible and commend ourselves to the propagation and defense of the Gospel articulated in our Confession believing that the Gospel is the ground on which the church stands or falls.

In the Bylaws we seek to conform ourselves to the principles of government set forth in the New Testament. Although the policies and procedures contained in these Bylaws are the present best understanding of a sincere people, they are neither sacred nor infallible. They are subject to change by the church in accordance with due process described herein. We do not depend on these Bylaws for the ultimate security of our fellowship, but commit ourselves to Him who is the Great Shepherd and Guardian of our souls [I Pet 2:25]. Within the guidelines of Scripture, the church is at liberty to establish policies and procedures for the purpose of doing all things properly and in an orderly manner [I Cor 14:40]. While we do not regard the work of the Lord as secular in any sense, we acknowledge our responsibility to do all things in a way that is honest in the sight of all men [Rom 12:17 KJV] and render all that is properly due to the civil authority which God has ordained for our good [Rom 13:1-7].

Therefore, we, the members of Five Points Community Church, solemnly and sincerely set forth the following constitution by which we willingly and joyfully agree to be governed by its constituent Parts.

Part I: Covenant Of Membership

Having been, as we trust, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other, to walk together in Him, with brotherly love, to His glory, as our common Lord. We do, therefore, in His strength, engage....

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish each other as occasion may require [Col 1:28].

That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God, and the ordinances of His house [Heb 10:25]

That we will not omit personal and family devotions at home, nor neglect the great duty of religiously training our children, and those under our care, for the service of Christ and the enjoyment of heaven [Eph 6:4].

That, as we are the light of the world, and salt of the earth, we will seek divine aid to enable us to deny ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to walk circumspectly in the world, that we may win the souls of men [Titus 2:12].

That we will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations according as God has prospered us [1 Cor 16:2; 1 Tim 5:17-18].

That we will appreciate those who diligently labor among us, and have charge over us in the Lord and give us instruction, and esteem them very highly in love because of their work [1 Thess 5:12-13].

That we will humbly obey our leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over our souls as those who will give an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for us [Heb 13:17].

That we will in all conditions, even till death, strive to live to the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light [1 Pet 2:9].

"And may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory, forever and ever. Amen."

[Heb 13:20]

Part II: Confession Of Faith

Five Points Community Church is a confessional church in that we embrace the essential truths of Christianity as these were defined by the great councils of the church and continued in the heritage of historical evangelicalism birthed in the Reformation. We believe the faith once delivered to the saints is articulated in the New Hampshire Confession of 1833. Although we do not view this Confession as having equal authority with Scripture, nor do we wish to restrict the freedom of conscience of the believer in matters of faith, this Confession shall be the doctrinal foundation for all preaching and teaching in this church.

Living and ministering in the world [Jn 15:18-25; 17:11-20; 1 Jn 2:15-17] amidst false teaching and ungodly philosophies [Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20], it is necessary to preserve the doctrinal integrity of our Confession of Faith by further definition. To this end the church assents to the following documents: The London Confession [1689], The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration, and The Cambridge Declaration. We believe these affirmations and denials provide an authoritative interpretation of the essential doctrines of our Confession. [See the Appendices for the New Hampshire Confession of Faith and its supporting documents]

Part III: Bylaws

ARTICLE I: NAME AND LOCATION OF THE CHURCH

The name of this congregation shall be Five Points Community Church. The church was established in 1943 and derived its name from the neighborhood surrounding the intersection of five roads in Oakland County, Michigan, known as Five Points. The property which presently houses the church is located in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

To pursue the glory of God in all things for the joy of all peoples, we join God the Father in magnifying the supremacy of His glory through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit by treasuring all that God is, loving all whom He loves, praying for all His purposes, meditating on all His Word, sustained by all His grace.

The mission of Five Points Community Church is a passionate pursuit of the ultimate purpose for which the world was created and God's people were redeemed: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. To this end our Mission Statement articulates the commonly held vision of the church and its leaders. Our common vision conforms to the same values to which the church was devoted in the age of the Apostles; namely, to sound doctrine as articulated in our Confession of Faith, to fellowship together in those Christ-centered relationships that differ from other forms of

socialization, to remember the atoning work of Christ memorialized in the ordinances of the church, and to prayer as God's means of accomplishing his purposes among men [Acts 2:41-42]. Furthermore, we seek to praise the Christ that we love among all peoples of the earth [1 Pet 2:9] and serve as a missionary outpost in our own culture proclaiming the gospel of His redeeming grace to all nations [Acts 1:8].

The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship [John 4:23], strengthen the vision in nurture and education [1 Cor 14:26; 2 Pet 3:18], and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds [1 Pet 2:9; 3:15; Matt 28:18-20; 5:16].

ARTICLE III: GOVERNMENT

The governance of Five Points Community Church is vested in the body of believers who compose its official membership. We covenant to govern ourselves in conformity to Christ who exercises His sovereignty over His church by his Word and Spirit. The governance of this church is to be autonomous and congregational: autonomous in that it is governed by no human authority outside of its own membership and congregational in that it admits or dismisses its own members, selects its own leaders, approves and supports its own budget with its tithes and offerings, Participates in significant decisions affecting the church, and codifies procedures for its governance in its Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Requirements for Membership

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who:

- a. Gives a credible profession of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ supported by evidence of a transformed life.
- b. Has been baptized by immersion subsequent to his conversion as specified in the Great Commission [Matt 28:19] as a visible sign of the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ [Rom 6:3-11; Gal 3:27].
- c. Freely enters into its Covenant of Membership.
- d. Shall be in agreement with its Confession of Faith.
- e. Willingly submits to the governance and discipline expressed in its Bylaws.

Section 2: Reception into Membership

Any person may be received into membership by consent of the church who:

- a. Has informed the Elders of his desire for membership.
- b. Meets the requirements set forth in Article IV, Section 1.
- c. Has been instructed in matters set forth in this constitution.
- d. And is recommended to the church by the Elders for admission to membership.
- e. Whenever possible, a candidate for church membership shall be sponsored by other members sufficiently acquainted with the person to recommend the candidate for membership.

Section 3: Termination of Membership

The membership of any person may be terminated who:

- a. Submits a written request to be released from his covenant obligations.
- b. Unites in membership with another church.
- c. In the opinion of the Elders, neglects his covenant obligations by habitually forsaking the assembly of himself with the church, unless providentially hindered.
- d. Persists in his breach of the Covenant of Membership, but only after the due process contained in Article IV, Section 4.
- e. Is deceased.

Section 4: Church Discipline

The obligation of members to walk together in harmony and holiness both in doctrine and deportment is specifically expressed in the Covenant of Membership and freely entered into as a condition of membership.

- a. The immediate purpose of all church discipline is to restore a negligent member to his covenant obligations [Gal 6:1]. Its ultimate purpose is to guard the integrity of the gospel and the church's witness in the community [Eph 4:1-3; Col 4:5-6] while ministering grace and truth to the member under discipline [Rom 12:9-21; 1 Cor 13; Gal 5:14-15; 6:1-2; Eph 4:25, 29-32; Phil 2:1-8; 1 Jn 4:7-12].
- b. The church shall consistently and without Partiality apply these biblical standards in disciplining those whose conduct is unbecoming to saints [Eph 5:3]; such as, unresolved personal conflicts between members [Matt 18:15-22], immorality [1 Cor 5:1-2], public scandal [1 Cor 6:1-10], persistence in doctrinal error [Rom 16:17], disorderly conduct [2 Thess 3:14-15], and divisiveness, [Titus 3:10-11].

- c. Those who are unwilling to abide by the conditions for membership in this church as specified in its Covenant of Membership may be classified as inactive members by the Elders and forfeit the privileges of membership contained in this Constitution pending their repentance and restoration.
- d. A member who has been placed under discipline by the Elders is no longer classified as "a member in good standing" for purposes of these Bylaws [Article VI, Section 6; Article IX, Section 3; Article X, Section 4].
- e. Those who continue in unrepentant sin may be referred to the church by the Elders for dismissal from membership, and exclusion from the services and fellowship of the church [1 Cor 5:2,11-13; Titus 3:10-11].
- f. Anyone under the discipline of the church may be restored to fellowship who gives evidence of genuine repentance and is recommended by the Elders for restoration [1 Cor 2:5 -11].
- g. All Elders and Deacons, as well as Staff and Appointees, are subject to the same church discipline as other members as described in Article IV, Section 4. Those who are unrepentant may be removed from office and or membership in the church.
- h. The procedure for discipline of Elders is specific [1 Tim 5:19-20]; the church may not receive an accusation of misconduct against an Elder except on the confirmation of two or three witnesses to the alleged offense. Those Elders who are guilty of sin and continue in it shall be publicly rebuked [1 Tim 5:20] and may be removed from office in accordance with Article VI, Section 10.

ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP

Section 1: The Composition of the Church

The New Testament church is composed of saints, including overseers [elsewhere known as Elders], and Deacons [Phil 1:1 NASV]. The epistles paint the portrait of the church in word pictures. The bride depicts the love bond between Christ and his people [Eph 5:25-33]. The church is a chaste virgin espoused to Christ [2 Cor 11:2]. Any flirtation with the world is condemned as spiritual adultery [Jas 4:4]. The body of Christ is a vivid image of the interdependence of the people of God [Rom 12:3-8]. No member of Christ's body is without the means of grace to benefit the whole [1 Cor 12:11-31]. The metaphor of the church as the flock of God is the only one that identifies leaders within the body of saints, the shepherds that oversee the flock [Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4].

In addition to the saints and Elders in the church at Philippi, we are introduced to Deacons whose office is derived from the common verb "to serve." Biblically, all ministry is service; Saints serve, Elders serve, and Deacons serve. The majority of saints serve unofficially and spontaneously.

Comparatively few serve the church officially as Elders or Deacons. Those who serve officially must be qualified to do so by the same virtues; spiritual maturity, moral integrity, good family management, and living above reproach [1 Tim 3:1-13].

The difference between them is their giftedness. All serve the body of Christ using the gifts given by the Spirit [1 Cor 12:7]. But those who oversee the church must be apt to teach [1 Tim 3:2] so that they may lead through the persuasive power of the Word of God rather than worldly wisdom or humanistic pragmatism. Furthermore, gentle and patient teaching is the means by which the Elders seek to reclaim those who are unwilling to acknowledge the truth from the snare in which Satan has entrapped them [2 Tim 2:24-26].

When the church at Jerusalem looked for leaders, it selected from among its own company men "...of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom..." [Acts 6:3]. It is the intention of this church to maintain a credible leadership by appointing to office only those who have a good reputation among us, evidence the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and are guided by that wisdom which comes from above [Jas 3:17-18], rather than the wisdom of this world [Jas 3:13-14] which God denounces as foolishness [1 Cor 3:19].

Section 2: A Charge to Elders

Therefore, we, the church, hereby charge our Elders:

- a. To govern us by teaching the Word of God and tending this flock in order that our Mission, articulated in Article II of these Bylaws, might be implemented with diligence.
- b. To keep us focused Godward in all our ministries, Christ centered in our message, and passionate in our affection for God and His glory.
- c. To maintain a biblical system of checks and balances that guards their integrity as our leaders. They shall be accountable to one another, watching over and encouraging each other in pursuit of personal holiness and diligence in ministry [Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:19-20].
- d. To systematically educate us [1 Thes 5:12-13] in all that Christ has commanded as mandated in the Great Commission, [Matt 28:20] to the end that we will be equipped to do the work of the ministry and edify ourselves in love [Eph 4:12-16].
- e. To provide us with leaders we may safely follow by nominating only those whom they have prayerfully considered to be qualified to lead us by the example of their faith [Heb 13:7].
- f. To maintain consistency in what we are taught throughout our various ministries by appointing only such teachers who are conversant with and in agreement with our Confession of Faith.

- g. To maintain the unity of the Spirit among us [Eph 4:3] by applying the biblical procedures for church discipline we have affirmed in these Bylaws to those who are in violation of their Covenant of Membership.

Section 3: A Charge to Deacons

Furthermore, we, the church, charge our Deacons to serve us by assisting the Elders as Partners in implementing the common vision of the church articulated in our Mission Statement in a spirit of mutual respect and brotherly love.

ARTICLE VI: ELDERS

Section 1: Definition

- a. Oversight of the church is vested in the office of Elder [Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4], which is a synonym for “pastor” [Eph 4: 11], “overseer” [1 Tim 3:1], or, in the KJV, “bishop”.
- b. For the purpose of these Bylaws, an Elder is a man who is ordained to the office of Elder of Five Points Community Church according to the process contained in Article VI, Sections 5 for vocational Elders, or Article VI, Sections 6 and 7 for non-vocational Elders.
- c. The office of Elder shall be occupied by a plurality of men of equal authority [Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23].
- d. This plurality of equals shall be referred to in this Constitution as “the Council of Elders”, “the Council”, or “the Elders”.
- e. For purpose of this constitution, Elders who receive compensation for their service are referred to as “Vocational Elders”. “Non-vocational Elders” are those who are not compensated by the church for their service.
- f. No difference in authority is implied in the distinction between vocational and non-vocational Elders.

Section 2: Qualifications

- a. Elders shall be qualified for office according to biblical standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9.
- b. An Elder must demonstrate a desire to do the work of spiritual oversight by the evidence of his ministry to others [1 Tim 3:1].
- c. Elders must evidence good moral character, spiritual maturity, marital fidelity [1 Tim 3:2-3], and a credible testimony in the community [1 Tim 3:7].
- d. The management of their families shall determine their fitness to care for the church [1 Tim 3:4-5].

- e. For their own protection, immature believers may not serve in the office of Elder [1 Tim 3:6].
- f. Elders must evidence that the Spirit has gifted them to teach [1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24; Titus 1:9].
- g. They must be gifted by the Spirit to lead [Rom 12:6-8]; that is, to rule [1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:7, 17], or take care of the church [1 Tim 3:4-5].
- h. Each Elder must annually affirm in writing that he is, without reservation, in support of the Constitution of Five Points Community Church as articulated in its constituent Parts: The Covenant of Membership, Confession of Faith, and Bylaws.

Section 3: Duties

- a. The Council of Elders shall implement the mandate given by the church in Article V, Section 2.
- b. They shall maintain the pulpit ministry as the primary means by which the church is nurtured with sound doctrine consistent with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- c. They shall lead the church diligently [Rom 12:8], being watchful for the spiritual welfare of each member [Heb 13:17].
- d. Although the Elders have a common calling and are equal in authority, they may be specialized in function. The emphasis of their individual labors shall be determined by their respective giftedness.
- e. While all Elders share equally in the responsibility of leading the church, some may devote the greater portion of their time to laboring in preaching and teaching. Others may give greater attention to administrative duties [1 Tim 5:17].
- f. The duties of individual Elders shall be delegated by the Council of Elders.
- g. The Council shall make decisions based on unanimous consent. If the exceptional occasion arises when this is not possible, issues before the Council shall be decided by a majority of the total number of existing Elders.
- h. Any Elder who, in the opinion of the Council, abuses the budgetary process for personal gain shall be subject to discipline by the Council and/or the church.

Section 4: Organization

- a. The Council of Elders shall organize themselves into such committees, appoint such leadership, and adopt such procedures as necessary to carry out their responsibilities.
- b. The various ministries of the church shall be divided among the Elders so that each area of ministry will come under the oversight of at least one of the Elders.
- c. Each Elder will be assigned a sufficient number of Deacons to assist him in his ministry.
- d. A high priority for each Elder shall be to shepherd those Deacons who labor under his direction and set an example of faith for them to follow.
- e. The Council shall appoint from among its non-vocational Elders a chairman, vice chairman and secretary.
- f. The officers (chairman, vice chairman, and secretary) appointed by the Council shall constitute the legal representatives of the ecclesiastical corporation not for profit known to the State of Michigan as Five Points Community Church.
- g. The Council of Elders shall constitute the trustees of the church, and have oversight of the properties and funds of the church, and be accountable to the church according to these Bylaws.
- h. The Council may grant durative power of attorney to others to act as its legal representatives in matters dealing with specific projects approved by the church.
- i. A majority of the Elders shall constitute a quorum.
- j. The number of Elders needed to care for the church shall be determined by the Council of Elders.

Section 5: Selection of Vocational Elders

- a. The Council of Elders shall determine the need for calling a vocational Elder and constitute a search committee to recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for the office.
- b. The Council shall inform the congregation of candidates being considered to allow for prayerful and informed consideration of the candidate.
- c. The candidate shall be interviewed by the Council, or a committee thereof, to determine his qualification and giftedness for office according to the criteria of Scripture [1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4].

- d. If approved by the Council, the candidate will be recommended to the congregation for calling into office.
- e. A candidate will be called into office by a two-thirds vote of the membership present and voting.
- f. If a vocational Elder has not been duly ordained prior to his call by the church, he shall have one year to complete the requirements for ordination in order to remain in office.
- g. Pending his ordination, the Elder shall serve as an ex officio member of the Council.
- h. A vocational Elder who does not complete the requirements for ordination within one year may be granted a limited extension or removed from the Eldership at the discretion of the Council.
- i. For those who complete the requirements for ordination, a service shall be held at a time specified by the Council to install the Elder in office.

Section 6: Selection of Non-Vocational Elders

- a. Any adult male member in good standing of Five Points Community Church may be considered as a candidate for Eldership who has applied or recommended by a member of the church or the Council.
- b. The Council of Elders, or a committee thereof, shall interview each candidate to determine his qualification and giftedness for office as a Non-Vocational Elder according to the criteria of Scripture [1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4].
- c. The Council shall inform the congregation of any candidate being considered and the members of the congregation shall have 30 days to submit in writing to the Council any pertinent information or questions for the Council's consideration in discussion with the candidate.
- d. A candidate who is not approved as the result of the interview process may be counseled by the Elders, or representative thereof, concerning the reasons for their decision if the candidate so desires.
- e. If the candidate is approved by unanimous consent of the Council, the church shall permit him to function as an ex officio member of the Council for a period not to exceed one year. During this year, members of the church shall have the opportunity to become acquainted with his life and ministry as a spiritual leader so they can give prayerful and informed consideration before being asked to vote on his recommendation by the Council.

Section 7: Ordination of Non-Vocational Elders

- a. An ex officio member of the Council shall prepare for ordination through a course of study designated by the Council to enable him to articulate Bible knowledge incumbent upon the office [1 Tim 1:3-7; 3:2; 4:1-6; 6:1-6, 20-21; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:1-18, 23-26; 3:14-4:5; Titus 1:9-11; 2:1, 15] and defend the New Hampshire Confession.
- b. An ex officio member of the Council who does not complete the requirements for ordination within one year may be granted a limited extension or removed from further consideration for Eldership at the discretion of the Council.
- c. When the Council is satisfied that the candidate is sufficiently prepared, they shall examine his qualifications for ordination by whatever means they deem to be appropriate.
- d. If, after examining a candidate, the Council is unanimous in their opinion that he is suitable for ordination, they shall recommend that the church ordain the candidate as an Elder of Five Points Community Church.
- e. The candidate shall be ordained to office upon the unanimous recommendation of the Council of Elders and ratified by a two-thirds of the church membership present and voting at a meeting of the church called for that purpose.
- f. Those who are ordained to the office share in all the rights and responsibilities of a minister of the gospel.
- g. An ordination service shall be scheduled to install the Elder in office.

Section 8: Term of Office

- a. An Elder may serve for an indefinite term as long as the Council deems him to be spiritually qualified for office and fulfilling his responsibilities, or until such time as he requests to be relieved of his office.
- b. An Elder who has asked to be relieved of his responsibilities may be returned to office upon the unanimous recommendation of the Council and ratification by two thirds of the membership present and voting at a meeting of the church called for that purpose.

Section 9: Financial Support

- a. The responsibility of the church for the financial support of its Elders is a matter of biblical principle [1 Cor 9:7-18, Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:18]. All Elders who rule well are worthy of the honor due their office and also the honorarium or compensation for their ministry to the church [1 Tim 5:17].

- b. In the event that an Elder shall be compensated by the church for his ministry, the Council shall present an agreement to the church for its approval. Such agreement shall include the normal terms of employment, such as, a job description, financial package, benefits, vacation, etc.
- c. Financial support for vocational Elders shall be reviewed as a routine Part of the budgeting process.
- d. Recommendations for adjustments in their compensation shall be initiated by a committee composed of non-vocational Elders.
- e. In the event that a vocational elder is relieved of his office by resignation or dismissal, a severance arrangement shall be made by the Council or a committee thereof.

Section 10: Termination of Office

- a. Any issues regarding the conduct of an Elder shall be brought to the attention of the Council of Elders. [See Article IV, Section 4-h].
- b. The Council may remove an Elder from office by unanimous consent of the other Elders without ratification by the church when they deem the Elder no longer qualified for office [Article VI, Section 2], or habitually fails to perform his duties [Article VI, Section 3].
- c. The church may remove an Elder from office, and possibly church membership, as the result of disciplinary action in accordance with Article IV, Section 4.
- d. A repentant Elder may be restored to fellowship by the church, but shall not be reinstated to office without the unanimous consent of the Council of Elders and congregational approval.

ARTICLE VII: DEACONS

Section 1: Definition

- a. For the purpose of these Bylaws, a Deacon is a person who is installed in the office of Deacon according to the process contained in these Bylaws [Article VII, Section 6].
- b. The office of Deacon is composed of the official servants of the church [1 Tim 3:8].
- c. The office may be occupied by qualified men, referred to as Deacons [1 Tim 3:8-10, 12-13].
- d. The office may also be occupied by qualified women, referred to as Deaconesses [1 Tim 3:11; Rom 16:1-2].

Section 2: Qualifications

- a. Deacons shall be qualified for office according to the biblical standards of 1 Timothy 3:8-12.
- b. Their qualifications differ little from Elders regarding moral character, spiritual maturity, motivation, marital fidelity, and family management.
- c. They must hold firmly the great doctrines of the faith with a pure heart.
- d. Their reputation in the church must be above reproach.
- e. They must be gifted by the Spirit to serve [Rom 12:6-7].
- f. As Part of installation to office, a Deacon must affirm in writing that he/she is, without reservation, in support of the Constitution of Five Points Community Church as articulated in its constituent Parts: The Covenant of Membership, Confession of Faith, and Bylaws.

Section 3: Duties

- a. The duties of the Deacons shall consist of assistance and advice and administration.
- b. They shall assist the Elders with the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, care for the spiritual needs of the congregation, and advance the ministries of the church.
- c. They shall advise the Elders on matters of policy and procedure that will facilitate the Mission Statement of the church.
- d. Unless otherwise specified, they shall administrate the committees of the church, and maintain its property and funds under the policies and procedures established by the Council of Elders.

Section 4: Organization

- a. Deacons shall be organized in a manner best suited to fulfill their designated duties.
- b. Each Deacon will be assigned to assist an Elder in the area of ministry for which the Elder has oversight.
- c. Some Deacons shall be associated in committees dealing with, for example, matters of finance, budget, property, building, and missions.
- d. It is preferable that each Deacon shall serve in only one area of ministry.

- e. A Deaconess shall not function in such a manner as to exercise undelegated authority over a man.

Section 5: Number

- a. The number of Deacons shall be as many as are needed to care for the various ministries of the church. Members of the church may submit in writing to the Elders the name of anyone they desire the Council to consider.
- b. As additional Deacons are required, they shall be presented to the church for ratification at any regular or special business meeting of the church.

Section 6: Selection

- a. The Council of Elders shall nominate candidates for the office of Deacon at the Annual Meeting of the church.
- b. The Council shall nominate as many persons as are needed to fulfill the ministry for the coming year.
- c. A nominee must be ratified by a majority of the church members present and voting.

Section 7: Term of Office

- a. Deacons shall serve until the end of the fiscal year.
- b. They may succeed themselves in office as long as they remain spiritually qualified and duly selected by the procedure specified in Section 6.

Section 8: Termination from Office

The Council reserves the right to remove any Deacon from office who in the opinion of the Council is no longer qualified for office [Article VII, Section 2], or habitually fails to perform the duties of his office. [Article VII, Section 3].

ARTICLE VIII: STAFF MEMBERS

Section 1:

By definition, a staff member is a person who is compensated for his or her assistance to one or more Elders.

Section 2:

Staff positions shall be allocated in the annual budget.

Section 3:

It shall be the responsibility of the Council of Elders to hire and/or dismiss staff members.

Section 4:

Adjustments in compensation for staff members shall be initiated by the Elders whom they serve and included as Part of the normal budgeting process.

Section 5:

Recommendations for compensation will be presented by the Council of Elders to the church for its approval if an amendment to the budget is necessary.

ARTICLE IX: MINISTRIES, COMMITTEES, AND APPOINTEES

The Council of Elders may at its discretion create additional ministries, committees and appointees to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council may dissolve any of these discretionary ministries, committees, or positions that are no longer needed

Section 1: Ministries

No ministry, committee or group may function in the name of the church apart from the oversight of the Council of Elders as authorized in these laws.

Section 2: Committees

- a. Standing Committees are defined as those appointed by the Elders each year; for example, committees for Missions, Benevolence, Membership, Finances, Property, Deaconesses, etc.
- b. Temporary Committees are defined as those appointed to serve a special purpose for a specific period; for example, a building program, or special project.
- c. Unless stated otherwise, all committees shall serve until the end of the fiscal year.

Section 3: Appointees

- a. Teachers - The Council of Elders shall appoint teachers who are members in good standing of Five Points Community Church. Teachers must be conversant with our Confession of Faith, and in agreement with the doctrines it affirms.
- b. Pastor Emeritus - The Council of Elders shall have the right from time to time to bestow the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus on men who have given their lives to ministry in the church. Their role will involve being spiritual advisors to the Elders and Deacons, encouraging the staff in the spiritual disciplines, and participating in ministry where their giftedness directs. They shall also serve as special counsel to the Elder overseeing theology.
- c. Treasurer

1) The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Council for the proper receipt, deposit and distribution of funds necessary to pay the expenses of the church designated in the annual budget approved by the church.

2) The Treasurer will administrate those financial policies established by the Elders for proper stewardship of all church funds.

3) The Treasurer shall prepare regular financial reports to keep the Elders and the church apprised of the financial condition of the church.

4) The Treasurer's report shall be available to the church at its regular quarterly business meetings.

d. Financial Secretary

1) The Financial Secretary shall be responsible to the Council for keeping an accurate and confidential record of all individual giving to support the ministries of the church.

2) The Financial Secretary shall supply a set of offering envelopes.

3) The Financial Secretary shall annually supply a receipt of giving to each individual.

4) The Financial Secretary shall be responsible to provide for the audit of the church books in accordance with the procedure approved by the Council.

e. Church Clerk

1) The Church Clerk shall be responsible to the Council for maintaining a record of members of the church, including those who have been placed on inactive membership status.

2) The eligibility of a person to vote shall be based on the Clerk's record.

3) The Clerk shall keep the minutes of actions taken at the business meetings of the church.

ARTICLE X: MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH**Section 1: Ministry Meetings**

The church shall assemble regularly in accordance with its Mission Statement for worship, instruction, prayer, fellowship, and observance of the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. The times of these meetings shall be at the discretion of the Council of Elders.

Section 2: Regular Business Meetings

- a. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held some time during the last quarter of the fiscal year for the purpose of ratifying nominees for office, reviewing proposed budgets and other business.
- b. Officers ratified at the Annual Meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- c. Quarterly Meetings of the church shall be held within the first two months of each quarter of the fiscal year and pertinent documents made available to the membership two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- d. All meetings of the church shall be presided over by an Elder appointed by the Council.

Section 3: Special Business Meetings

- a. The Council of Elders may call for a special meeting of the church at their discretion.
- b. Notice of the meeting and its purpose shall be given at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- c. Business meetings of the Church shall generally be conducted in accord with Robert's Rules of Order.
- d. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through prayer shall be a Part of every meeting.
- e. Members may submit a written request for a Special Business Meeting stating the purpose thereof to the Council for its consideration and final disposition.

Section 4: Voting

- a. Any member of the church of legal age and in good standing is eligible to vote on any matter presented to the church.
- b. A member in good standing is one that is not under church discipline [Article IV, Section 4-d].
- c. Unless otherwise specified, a simple majority vote of the members present and voting shall be sufficient for adoption of the motion.
- d. Substantive matters shall be voted on by secret ballot.
- e. On any matter that the church is asked to vote, a secret ballot may be requested by motion from the floor and adopted by the church.

Section 5: Quorum

The presence of twenty percent of the total members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum at any business meeting of the church unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

Section 6: Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots shall be available to members upon request under the following circumstances:

- a. The Council of Elders shall determine which issues are available for absentee ballots.
- b. The issue being voted on is such that the member may be informed on the issue without being present at the meeting to hear the discussion.
- c. An absentee ballot may be obtained from the church office prior to the business meeting.
- d. The absentee ballot must be returned to the church office prior to the business meeting at which the church votes on the matter at hand.

ARTICLE XI: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1: Supplemental Policies and Procedures

- a. The Elders shall institute such additional policies and procedures as implement the goals and objectives of this church.
- b. Such policies and procedures shall be consistent with New Testament church principles as well as the spirit and specifics of the Bylaws of this church.
- c. The church may review and amend these policies and procedures at any regular business meeting of the church.

Section 2: Budget

- a. The purpose of the budget of Five Points Community Church is to reflect and implement the ministry values and objectives incorporated in the Mission Statement of the church.
- b. The Elders and Deacons shall work together closely in administering the budget so that the various ministries of the church are adequately funded.
- c. The Elders shall present to the church for its review, revision, and adoption, a unified budget incorporating the estimated operating expense for all the ministries of the church for the fiscal year.

- d. A line item in the budget may only be used for its stated purpose. Expenditures shall not exceed the approved budget in any major category [i.e. Operations, Christian Education, Missions, etc.] without the approval of the church.
- e. The Council shall exercise diligence to assure that the budget process is not abused for personal gain by any officer of the church.
- f. Staff salaries shall be stated in general terms in the budget rather than in specific line items in order to preserve the privacy of the staff member.

Section 3: Benevolence Fund

- a. A benevolence fund shall be maintained for the purpose of aiding those who are in financial need.
- b. It shall be funded as the Lord provides through a special offering received at the discretion of the Council.
- c. Distribution from this fund shall be held in strict confidence other than being reported regularly to the Elders.

Section 4: Encumbrance

- a. No Council, committee, or person shall be authorized to borrow money, or place a mortgage or lien on the property of the church without the express prior approval of the church.
- b. Upon approval of the church, the officers of the Council of Elders listed in Article VI, Section 4, paragraphs "e" and "f", shall have the power to execute and deliver in the name of the church and on its behalf such notes, bonds, mortgages, or other instruments of indebtedness as shall be required to secure a loan authorized by the church.

Section 5: Sale Of Church Property

No property belonging to the church shall be sold without the authorization from the church granted at a business meeting of the church.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1: Procedure

- a. This Constitution may be amended at a special business meeting of the church called for that purpose.
- b. Notice of the meeting and the wording of said amendment must be presented to the congregation at least two Sundays preceding the meeting.

- c. The amendment shall be adopted by affirmation of two-thirds of the members present and voting.
- d. At least twenty percent of the total members of the Church eligible to vote must be present at the meeting to constitute a quorum.

Section 2: Stipulation

The Mission Statement of the church in Article II and the New Hampshire Confession may not be repealed, amended, nor interpreted in a manner inconsistent with the supporting documents listed in the appendices of this constitution.

ARTICLE XIII: DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION

If in the providence of God it becomes necessary for this church to be dissolved as an incorporated entity, the Council of Elders, with the consent of the church, shall cause the assets of the church to be transferred to another nonprofit corporation with purposes compatible with those identified in the Mission Statement of Five Points Community Church.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESION [1833]

I. Of The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction [2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Sam 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psalm 119:11; Rom 3:1-2]; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end [2 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39], and truth without any mixture of error for its matter [Prov 30:5-6; John 17:17; Rev 22:18-19; Rom 3:4]; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us [Rom 2:12; John 12:47-48; 1 Cor 4:3-4; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47-48]; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union [Phil 3:16; Eph 4:3-6; Phil 2:1-2; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Pet 4:11], and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried [1 John 4:1; Isa 8:20; 1 Thess 5:21; 2 Cor 8:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 1:3-5; Eph 6:17; Psalm 119:59-60; Phil 1:9-11].

II. Of The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth [John 4:24; Psalm 147:5; 83:18; Heb 3:4; Rom 1:20; Jer 10:10; Acts 17:22-31]; inexpressibly glorious in holiness [Ex 15:11; Isa 6:3; 1 Pet 1:15-16; Rev 4:6-8], and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love [Mark 12:30; Rev 4:11; Matt 10:37; Jer 2:12-13]; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost [Matt 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7]; equal in every divine perfection [John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor 2:10-11; Phil 2:5-6], and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption [Eph 2:18; 2 Cor 13:14; Rev 1:4-5].

III. Of The Fall Of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker [Gen 1:27, 31; Eccl 7:29; Acts 16:26; Gen 2:16]; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state [Gen 3:6-24; Rom 5:12]; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners [Rom 5:19; John 3:6; Psalm 51:5; Rom 5:15-19; 87], not by constraint, but choice [Isa 53:6; Gen 6:12; Rom 3:9-18]; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin [Eph 2:1-3; Rom 1:18, 32; 2:1-16; Gal 3:10; Matt 20:15], without defense or excuse [Ezek 18:19-20; Rom 1:20; 3:19; Gal 3:22].

IV. Of The Way Of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace [Eph 2:5; Matt 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor 3:5-7; Acts 15:11], through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God [John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb 4:14; 12:24]; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin [Phil 2:6-7;

Heb 2:9, 14; 2 Cor 5:21]; honored the divine law by his personal obedience [Isa 42:21; Phil 2:8; Gal 4:4-5; Rom 3:21], and by his death made a full atonement for our sins [Isa 53:4-5; Matt 20:28; Rom 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor 15:1-3; Heb 9:13-15]; that having risen from the death, he is now enthroned in heaven [Heb 1:3, 8; 8:1; Col 3:1-4]; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour [Heb 7:25; Col 2:9; Heb 2:18; 7:26; Psalm 89:19; Psalm 14].

V. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ [John 1:16; Eph 3:8] secures to such as believe in him is justification [Acts 13:39; Isa 3:11-12; Rom 8:1]; that justification includes the pardon of sin [Rom 5:9; Zech 13:1; Matt 9:6; Acts 10:43], and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness [Rom 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Rom 5:21]; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood [Rom 4:4-5; 5:21; 6:28; Phil 3:7-9]; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God [Rom 5:19; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 1 John 2:12]; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity [Rom 5:1-3, 11; 1 Cor 1:30-31; Matt 6:33; 1 Tim 4:8].

VI. Of The Freeness Of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel [Isa 55:1; Rev 22:17; Luke 14:17]; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith [Rom 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom 1:15-17]; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel [John 5:40; Matt 23:37; Rom 9:32; Prov 1:24; Acts 13:46]; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation [John 3:19; Matt 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess 1:8].

VII. Of Grace In Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again [John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor 1:14; Rev 8:7-9; 21:27]; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind [2 Cor 5:17; Ezek 36:26; Deut 30:6; Rom 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7]; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth [John 3:8; 1:13; Jas 1:16-18; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 2:13], so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel [1 Pet 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:9-11]; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life [Eph 5:9; Rom 8:9; Gal 5:16-23; Eph 3:14-21; Matt 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18].

VIII. Of Repentance And Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God [Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph 2:8; 1 John 5:1]; whereby being deeply convinced

of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ [John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31], we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy [Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; Jas 4:7-10; 2 Cor 7:11; Rom 10:12-13; Psalm 51]; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour [Rom 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb 4:14; Psalm 2:6; Heb 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim 1:12].

IX. Of God's Purposes Of Grace

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners [2 Tim 1:8-9; Eph 1:3-14; 1 Pet 1:1-2; Rom 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos 12:9]; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end [2 Thess 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt 20:16; Acts 15:14]; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable [Ex 33:18-19; Matt 20:15; Eph 1:11; Rom 9:23-24; Jer 31:3; Rom 11:28-29; Jas 1:17-18; 2 Tim 1:9; Rom 11:32-36]; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active initiation of his free mercy [1 Cor 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom 3:27; 4:16; Col 3:12; 1 Cor 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph 1:16; 1 Thess 2:12]; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree [2 Tim 2:10; 1 Cor 9:22; Rom 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet 1:10]; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel [1 Thess 1:4-10]; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance [Rom 8:28-32; Isa 42:16; Rom 11:29]; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence [2 Pet 1:10-11; Phil 3:12; Heb 6:11].

X. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness [1 Thess 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor 7:1; 13:9; Eph 1:4]; that it is a progressive work [Prov 4:18; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 6:1; 2 Pet 1:5-8; Phil 3:12-16]; that it is begun in regeneration [John 2:29; Rom 8:5; John 3:6; Phil 1:9-11; Eph 1:13-14]; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means--especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer [Phil 2:12-13; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; 2 Cor 13:5; Luke 11:35; 9:23; Matt 26:41; Eph 6:18; 4:30].

XI. Of The Perseverance Of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end [John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18]; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors [1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9]; that a special Providence watches over their welfare [Rom 8:28; Matt 6:30-33; Jer 32:40; Psalm 121:3; 91:11-12]; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation [Phil 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4].

XII. Of The Harmony Of The Law And The Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government [Rom 3:31; Matt 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom 3:20; 4:15]; that it is holy, just, and good [Rom 7:7, 12, 14, 22; Gal 3:21; Psalm 119]; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin [Rom 8:7-8; Josh 24:19; Jer 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44]; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church [Rom 8:2, 4; 10:4; 1 Tim 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21; Heb. 12:14; Matt 16:17-18; 1 Cor 12:28].

XIII. Of A Gospel Church

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers [1 Cor 1:1-13; Matt 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Cor 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim 3:5], associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel [Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor 5:12-13]; observing the ordinances of Christ [1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 3:6; Rom 16:17-20; 1 Cor 11:23; Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor 2:7; 1 Cor 4:17]; governed by his laws [Matt 28:20; John 14:15; 15:12; 1 John 4:21; John 14:21; 1 Thess 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal 6:2; all the Epistles], and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word [Eph 4:7; 1 Cor 14:12; Phil 1:27; 1 Cor 12:14]; that its only scriptural offices are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons [Phil 1:1; Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim 3; Titus 1], whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XIV. Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer [Acts 8:36-39; Matt 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8], into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost [Matt 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal 3:27-28]; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life [Rom 6:4; Col 2:12; 1 Pet 3:20-21; Acts 22:16]; that it is prerequisite to the privilege of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper [Acts 2:41-42; Matt 28:19-20; Acts and Epistles], in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ [1 Cor 11:26; Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20]; preceded always by solemn self-examination [1 Cor 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71].

XV. Of The Christian Sabbath

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath [Acts 20:7; Gen 2:3; Col 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; 1 Cor 16:1-2]; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes [Ex 20:8; Rev 1:10; Psalm 118:24], by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations [Isa 58:13-14; 56:2-8]; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private [Psalm 119:15] and public [Heb 10:24-25; Acts 11:26; 13:44; Lev 19:30; Ex 46:3; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2-3; Psalm 26:8; 87:3]; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God [Heb 4:3-11].

XVI. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society [Rom 13:1-7; Deut 16:18; 1 Sam 23:3; Ex 18:23; Jer 30:21]; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed [Matt 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13; 1 Tim 2:1-8]; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ [Acts 5:29; Matt 10:28; Dan 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20] who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth [Matt 23:10; Rom 14:4; Rev 19:16; Psalm 72:11; Psalm 2; Rom 14:9-13].

XVII. Of The Righteous And The Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked [Mal 3:18; Prov 12:26; Isa 5:20; Gen 18:23; Jer 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom 6:16]; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem [Rom 1:17; 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rom 6:18, 22; 1 Cor 11:32; Prov 11:31; 1 Pet 4:17-18]; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse [1 John 5:19; Gal 3:10; John 3:36; Isa 57:21; Psalm 10:4; Isa 55:6-7]; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death [Prov 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Prov 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; 9:23-26; John 12:25-26; Eccl 3:17; Matt 7:13-14].

XVIII. Of The World To Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching [1 Pet 4:7; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt 28:20; 13:39-40; 2 Pet 3:3-13]; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven [Acts 1:11; Rev 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Act 3:21; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-11], and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution [Acts 24:15; 1 Cor 15:12-59; Luke 14:14; Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:40; 11:25-26; 2 Tim 1:10; Acts 10:42]; that a solemn separation will then take place [Matt 13:37-49; 24:30-31; 25:31-33]; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy [Matt 25:35-41; Rev 22:11; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet 2:9; Jude 7; Phil 3:19; Rom 6:32; 2 Cor 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor 4:18]; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness [Rom 3:5-6; 2 Thess 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2-16; Rev 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17].

APPENDIX B: LONDON CONFESION [1689]

APPENDIX C: THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

APPENDIX D: THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST: AN EVANGELICAL CELEBRATION

APPENDIX E: THE CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION



Pursuing Joy In Christ Alone
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