



CONSTITUTION

Name of Church

Whatever Town, State

PREAMBLE

In gratefulness to God for His faithful provision for this local church, we the members of **Name of Church** do hereby establish this Constitution as an expression of that which we believe and that to which we voluntarily submit ourselves on **this ??th day of Month, Year**. This document sets aside and supersedes any previous Constitutions and By-laws under which this church has operated.

ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION

A. NAME

The name of this church shall be **Name of Church**

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) through: 1) the local, regional, national and worldwide proclamation of the Gospel of Christ so that souls might be saved, 2) the edification and equipping for ministry of Christians through the teaching of God's Word, 3) the promotion of biblical worship and, 4) participation in the establishment of additional local churches with similar purposes.

C. INDEPENDENCE

This church shall be an independent church. It shall never enter into nor cause the establishment of any alliance or connection, officially or unofficially, that shall in any way be construed to endanger or encroach upon its independence.

D. AFFILIATION

This church shall maintain membership in IFCA International as long as said Fellowship maintains doctrinal positions that are not inconsistent with, nor contradictory to, those stated in ARTICLE II - DOCTRINE of this document.

ARTICLE II – DOCTRINE

While this statement does not exhaust the extent of our doctrinal beliefs, it accurately represents the teaching of the Bible. All official members of this church and anyone representing this church by virtue of a teaching or leadership ministry must subscribe to these truths without reservation and must affirm them in all ministries related to the work of this church.

(1) The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13).

(2) The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

(3) The Person and Work of Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that he might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1-2,14; Luke 1:35).
- b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in him is assured by his literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24-25; 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 2:24; 1:3-5; and 2 Peter 2:1).

c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our high priest, he fulfills the ministry of representative, intercessor, and advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:24; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

(4) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that he is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).

b. We believe that he is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18).

(5) The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3,12).

(6) Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

(7) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).

b. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

(8) The Two Natures of the Believer

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:13; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

(9) Separation

a. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; John 2:15-17; 1:9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

b. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marriage (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

(10) Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Matthew 28:19-20).

(11) The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all his gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).

b. We believe that the biblical offices of pastor and elder in the church, or their equivalents, are restricted to biblically qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

c. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with his own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15).

(12) The Church

- a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
- c. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9,16; 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- d. We believe in the ordinances of believer's water baptism by immersion and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church age (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

(13) Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to his purpose. Three of these - the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the millennial kingdom - are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (John 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6).

(14) The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

(15) The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for his redeemed ones; and in his subsequent return to earth, with his saints, to establish his millennial kingdom (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

(16) The Eternal State

- a. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12-13).
- b. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15).

(17) Creation

- a. We believe that God spoke the universe into existence and that man was created, by a direct act of God, from the dust of the earth (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Nehemiah 9:6).
- b. We believe the Genesis account of creation is both literal and historical in nature.
- c. We believe that God completed His creative work at the close of the sixth day and that "all was good" (Genesis 1:31).
- d. We believe that the six days of creation were six literal, consecutive, twenty-four hour days with no gaps of time before, between or after.
- e. We believe that any belief regarding creation that contradicts the statements above are serious errors that strike at the person and glory of God.

(18) Civil Government

- a. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: (1) the home, (2) the Church, and (3) the State.
- b. We believe that every person is to be subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and are to be governed by His Word.
- c. We believe that God has given each institution specific biblical responsibilities with the intent that no institution has the right to infringe upon the respective responsibilities of the other.

d. We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the welfare of human society to promote and protect the good, and to restrain and punish evil. Therefore, we consider it the duty of Christians to pray for those that are in authority over them, and to give due loyalty, respect, and obedience to them. However, if the demands of civil law would militate against the supreme law and will of God, Christians should obey God rather than man. (Daniel 4:17; Matthew 22:17-21; Acts 4:1; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-4; Acts 23:5; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13,14).

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS

Persons who have reached 18 years of age, and who meet the following requirements, may apply for church membership:

1. They must give a clear testimony of salvation through faith alone, in Christ alone.
2. They must have been baptized by immersion subsequent to salvation.
3. They must affirm agreement with the doctrinal position of this church (ARTICLE II - DOCTRINE).
4. They must express a willingness to submit to the provisions of this constitution and the spiritual authority and oversight of this church's leadership.

B. TYPES

1. Active Membership

Active membership shall consist of those who have been admitted into membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution; are not members of any other church; and are regularly participating in the life and ministry of this church.

2. Associate Membership (Optional Feature)

Associate membership is available to those who are temporarily residing in the area. Associate members must meet the qualifications in ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP, Section A, and shall be given privileges of ministry and participation in the business meetings of the church but they shall not be eligible to vote.

3. Inactive Membership

- a. Members shall be placed on Inactive status for any of the following reasons:
 - i. They no longer reside in the area, but desire to hold membership.
 - ii. They are absent from the services of the church for a period of three months without giving a satisfactory explanation to the Elders.
 - iii. They have been placed under church discipline.
- b. Inactive members are ineligible to vote or hold office in the church.
- c. After two years of inactive status, the Elders shall remove inactive members from the roll and inform the congregation of such action in the next regularly scheduled congregational meeting. Exceptions, for reasonable causes, may be made at the discretion of the Elders.
- d. Inactive members can be reinstated to active status by the following procedure:
 - i. Request for active status shall be made to the Elders.
 - ii. The Elders upon satisfactory review shall effect reinstatement to active status.

C. PROCESS

All requests for membership shall be made to an Elder. Those making such requests shall be given an application for membership along with a copy of this constitution. Upon receipt of the completed application, designated elders shall meet with the applicant regarding his/her Christian experience, assurance of salvation and doctrinal belief. Upon recommendation and subsequent action by the Elders, applicants shall be admitted into membership.

D. ADMISSION

New members shall be publicly admitted on the first convenient Sunday after their approval. Any pastoral staff members and their wives shall automatically become active members upon assuming the duties of the office to which they have been called.

E. DUTIES

Members are expected to consistently live according to the truth of God's Word, to develop and use their spiritual gifts in service to the Lord, and to wholeheartedly endorse and support the doctrine, constitution, services, finances, and activities of this church.

F. DISCIPLINE

1. Purpose

The purpose of church discipline shall always be to restore the sinner, purify the church and protect the church from decay (1 Corinthians 5:5,6; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15).

2. Responsibility and Cause

The Elders are responsible to seek the restoration of those among the church membership who are living in such a way as to require the application of biblical discipline; e.g., immorality (1 Corinthians 5:2,5); doctrinal heresy (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:18); repeated divisiveness (Titus 3:10); open sin (1 Corinthians 5:11).

3. Process

When the Elders are made aware of a situation that appears to warrant corrective action as defined in Sections 1, 2, the Elders shall make inquiries with those involved to establish the facts. When the facts have been established to their satisfaction the following procedures shall be encouraged and/or implemented.

1) Matters Not Necessitating Formal Church Action

a) Personal Offenses Between Individuals

In matters involving personal offenses occurring between individual believers associated with this church, the offended parties shall be expected to follow the process outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

- Step One: Go to the offending brother and tell him his fault with the purpose of exhorting to repentance and achieving reconciliation
- Step Two: If repentance and reconciliation are not achieved through step one, take one or two witnesses and go to the offending brother a second time with the purpose of exhorting to repentance and achieving reconciliation.
- Step Three: If repentance and reconciliation are still not achieved, tell the matter to the church, providing opportunity for the assembly of believers to exhort the offender to repentance and to seek reconciliation
- Step Four: If the offending party does not respond to the church, the offended party is to regard the offender as an unbeliever.

b) Observable Momentary Personal Sins

In circumstances involving an individual believer who is suddenly overtaken by sin, it is the responsibility of “those who are spiritual” to “restore such a one” (Galatians 6.1). This action is to be done privately, in a spirit of gentleness with care given to oneself in the process, lest he too be tempted with pride, harshness or an otherwise inappropriate attitude or spirit.

2) Matters Involving Formal Church Action

The Scriptures prescribe formal church disciplinary action in response to, 1) those who threaten the doctrinal purity of the church through the promotion of doctrinal heresy, 2) those who threaten the unity of the church by being divisive and, 3) those involved in sinful behavior deemed by the spiritual leadership of the church as being that which brings public reproach to the name of Christ and the testimony of the church.

When the exercise of formal action is required, the Elders shall then arrange for a special informational meeting of the membership, the purpose of which shall be to communicate their actions, answer questions, and to instruct the membership regarding their responsibilities and response toward the one who has been disciplined.

a) Maintaining Doctrinal Purity

Galatians 1.7-9; 5.10-12; Titus 1.10-13 address the biblical response to those who are present in the assembly who are guilty of teaching false doctrine and perverting the Gospel. When this is discovered, it is the responsibility of the church leadership (Acts 20) to protect the church by strong rebuke and refusal to allow them to participate in the life of the church.

b) Maintaining Unity in the Body

Titus 3.9-11 and 1 Timothy 6.3-5 provide instruction regarding the required response to the divisive man. The divisive man is the one who, out of self will, sets himself in opposition to the teaching or practice of the church and who seeks draw others after him, thus threatening the unity of the church.

Such a person is to be warned and told to stop. If he persists, he is to be warned and told to stop a second time. If he still persists he is to be rejected. His behavior at that point has become an issue of fellowship and believers ought to have nothing to do with him until that behavior changes.

c) Maintaining the Honor of Christ and the Testimony of the Church

1 Corinthians 5.1-13 addresses situations in which unrepentant believers are engaged in sinful behavior that brings public reproach to the name of Christ and to the testimony of the church. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the church to separate themselves from the offenders by putting them out of the fellowship and denying them the benefits of fellowship with the local assembly.

4. Ramifications

The practical result of formal church discipline shall include the following:

a. Minimally

In every instance of formal church discipline, exclusion from participation in the Lord's Table and immediate removal from any position of ministry/service in the church shall be enacted. Generally, continued attendance in the services of the church shall be encouraged in order that the ministry of the Word might be used of God to bring the offender to repentance. It shall be within the prerogative of the church leadership, however, to deny that privilege to those under discipline if they deem such denial to be in the best interest of the church.

b. Potentially

In cases where formal discipline has been exercised to preserve the doctrinal purity of the church, or the honor of Christ and the testimony of the church, expulsion from the fellowship and denial of the privilege of attendance shall be enacted.

5. Record Keeping

In every instance where formal discipline is exercised, it is the responsibility of those exercising such discipline to file a report of that action, along with any relevant documentation, in a secure place, together with other official church documents.

6. Restoration

The act of restoration is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 2.6-8: *"This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, let perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him."*

Repentance and confession are singled out as conditions to forgiveness in the New Testament as well (Luke 17.3,4; 1 John 1.9). When confession is made and repentance is seen, forgiveness and restoration to fellowship should be dispensed freely.

Restoration to leadership and positions of service in the fellowship are another matter, however, and may require a time of proving. Such matters shall be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the leadership of the church.

G. TERMINATION

Termination of membership in this church may be effected in any of the following ways:

Midwest Church Extension – www.ifcamce.org – PO Box 337 Remington IN 47977
Plant Food – www.mccmedia.org/plantfood

1. Written request by the member to the Elders. Such requests will be granted unless the member is in the process of church discipline.
2. Death
3. Discipline (as outlined in ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP, Section F)
4. Inactive membership action taken (as outlined in Article III – INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP, c).

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNMENT

A. PASTORAL STAFF

1. Qualifications

Members of the pastoral staff must:

- a. Be men who have the qualities of godliness set forth in: Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; and Titus 1:6-9.
- b. Be consistently and actively supportive of this church's affiliation and involvement with IFCA International and the IFCA *Name of Regional*.

2. Appointment

The Search Committee shall be comprised of the Elders and shall observe the following procedures:

- a. The Search and Presentation of Pastoral Staff Candidates
 - i. They shall seek counsel from the IFCA International Executive Director or his representative, the IFCA *Name of Regional* Regional President, the Executive Director of Midwest Church Extension, and one additional IFCA Pastor from *Name of State*.
 - ii. They shall place high priority on seeking men as candidates who are active members of IFCA International.
 - iii. They shall inform the church membership as to the progress of the search on at least a monthly basis.
 - iv. They shall personally interview any potential candidate and his wife (if applicable) prior to presenting him to the membership.
 - v. They shall present only one candidate at a time, providing in the schedule opportunities for preaching, teaching, and interaction with the membership.
- b. The Call of Pastoral Candidates
 - i. Within ten days of a man's candidacy, the membership shall meet to decide whether or not to issue a call. An affirmative vote by at least 80% of the members present and voting shall be required to issue a call.
 - ii. Members of the Pastoral Staff are appointed for an unlimited term.
 - iii. In the event that the position of Senior Pastor is vacant, the church shall refrain from adding other Pastoral Staff until the position of Senior Pastor is filled, and his involvement in the search for additional staff can be incorporated.

3. Responsibilities

- a. The primary responsibility of the Senior Pastor, as the leading elder of the church, is to preach and teach the Word of God and equip the membership to do the work of ministry. In addition he is entrusted with the oversight of the entire ministry of the church.
- b. He is to vigorously uphold and defend the doctrine and constitution of this church.
- c. As an ex-officio member of all church groups and committees, he may attend meetings at his discretion.
- d. Those who minister from the church's pulpit may only do so at his invitation and/or with his approval.
- e. The responsibilities of additional Pastoral Staff members shall be determined by the Senior Pastor and the Elders.

4. Termination

- a. Voluntary
 - i. Should he choose to discontinue his service as a member of the Pastoral Staff, the staff member shall submit his resignation, in writing, to the Elders.
 - ii. The duration of time between the submission of the man's resignation and the concluding date of his term shall be negotiated between the staff member and the Elders.
 - iii. A minimum of one month's salary and benefits after departure shall be provided by the church. Anything in excess of that is subject to negotiation.
 - iv. In the case of an unannounced and/or immediate resignation, the church has no obligation to provide additional salary or benefits.

- v. The Elders shall determine the most appropriate way to share the resignation and the details of any arrangements with the church membership.
- b. Involuntary
 - i. A member of the Pastoral Staff may be removed from his ministry in this church because of a consistently poor testimony, moral failure or other open sin, or variance with the doctrinal position of the church (Article II - DOCTRINE). In all cases, the disciplinary process outlined in Article III - MEMBERSHIP, Section F, must be followed. While this process is underway, the pastoral staff member shall be absent with pay from his duties.

In verifiable cases of physical or mental incapacity which prevents a pastoral staff member from fulfilling his duties, the Elders shall exercise proper respect and discretion in an attempt to address that situation. In every way reasonable, the Elders shall be generous and gracious to him and his family while also seeking the welfare of the church in calling a new pastoral staff member.
 - ii. The President of the *Name of Regional* Regional of IFCA International, his designated representative, or a representative from the IFCA International home office is to be requested to advise and assist the Elders to process any situation involving an involuntary termination.
 - iii. Upon termination, a minimum of one month's salary and benefits shall be provided by the church. Anything in excess of that is subject to the discretion of the Elders.

B. ELDERS

1. Qualifications

Any man considered for the office of Elder must display in his life the qualities of godliness set forth in Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; and Titus 1:6-9. In addition to these biblical qualifications, service in the office of Elder shall be limited to men who have been active members involved in regular attendance and ministry in the church for a period of at least twelve months prior to assuming the office of Elder.

2. Appointment

Believing that God is sovereign in the provision of leadership for the local church, this church will operate, at any given time, with however many Elders He provides.

- a. It shall be the prerogative of any active member of this church to submit (at any time by using the appropriate form) for consideration to the Elders the name of any man who has been an active member of the church for at least one year and who is willing to have his name submitted for consideration as a possible candidate for the office of Elder.
- b. Men whose names are submitted in this manner shall be prayerfully considered by the Elders. Appropriate interviews shall be conducted for the purpose of determining whether the man meets the qualifications of Elder as set forth in ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT, Section B1.
- c. The names of those unanimously approved by the Elders shall be presented to the congregation for their prayerful consideration at least ten days prior to a congregational meeting.
- d. A vote of affirmation shall be conducted by secret ballot at that congregational meeting. Those men receiving affirmation of at least eighty percent (80%) of those voting shall be recognized as Elders.
- e. Individuals receiving the affirmation of the congregation in this manner shall assume the office of Elder immediately.

3. Responsibilities

a. General

- i. The Elders have the responsibility of assisting the Senior Pastor in the oversight and shepherding of the ministry of the church, both spiritual and temporal, in accordance with biblical guidelines and this constitution (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Titus 1:9; James 5:13-15; 1 Timothy 3:5).
- ii. The Elders shall be responsive to the concerns and desires of God's people in carrying out their responsibilities, and must seek to truly represent the congregation to whom they are accountable.

b. Specific

The specific responsibilities of the Elders shall include, but not be limited to:

- i. Participate in the teaching and preaching ministry when they are gifted for such, under the guidance and leadership of the Senior Pastor.
- ii. Promote and oversee the educational, missions and outreach ministries of the church, including the approval of teachers and ministry helpers.
- iii. Provide spiritual care and counseling for the church family.

- iv. Oversee all financial matters of the church, including the appointment of a Church Treasurer and a Financial Secretary, both of who shall appointed to consecutive three-year terms, at the discretion of the Elders.
- v. Present an annual budget for adoption by the membership.
- vi. Maintain a current membership list and provide for the interviewing of applicants for membership.
- vii. Maintain open and regular communication with the congregation.
- viii. Assist in the administration of the ordinances.
- ix. Exercise biblical church discipline within the congregation.
- x. Approve church policies and maintain the Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

4. Term of Office

As long as an Elder continues to meet the biblical qualifications for the office, and desires to do so, he has the privilege of serving an unlimited number of consecutive three year terms.

Should an Elder decline to serve a consecutive term at the end of a three year term he may be placed back in office at a later date according to the procedure outlined in Article IV - GOVERNMENT, Sections B1 and B2.

If at any time there is reason to question the ministry of an Elder because of a poor testimony, open sin, variance with the doctrinal position of the church, or an inability to carry on an effective ministry due to verifiable physical or mental incapacity, the Elders shall exhaust every possible approach to remedy the situation (Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1 and Matthew 18). If the situation cannot be remedied, and the Elder in question refuses to resign his office, his removal shall be effected by a vote of the Elders. In such a case the Elder in question shall have no vote and a simple majority vote of the remaining Elders shall be sufficient for dismissal.

5. Meetings

- a. The Elders shall meet at least monthly.
- b. At the first meeting of the calendar year they shall appoint from among themselves a Chairman and a Secretary. The Secretary shall also serve as the Clerk and Recording Secretary of the church.

C. DEACONS

1. Qualifications

Any man considered for the office of Deacon must display in his life the qualities of godliness set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In addition to these biblical qualifications, service in the office of Deacon shall be limited to men who have been active members involved in regular attendance and ministry in the church for a period of at least 12 months prior to assuming the office of Deacon.

2. Appointment

The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Elders, in accord with the needs of the ministry at any given time, provided such men can be found who are qualified and recognized as such according to the following process:

Deacons shall be selected in one of two ways:

- a. They shall be appointed to that position, by the Elders, from among the Elders.
- b. They shall be appointed from among the church membership as follows:
 - i. Upon determining that there is a need for the appointment of a Deacon, the Elders shall inform the congregation, providing a description of the particular ministry for which that Deacon will have responsibility.
 - ii. Active members of the church shall have a period of time, as determined and announced by the Elders when the need is communicated to the congregation, to submit (by means of the appropriate form) the names of men who have been active members of the church for at least one year and who are willing to have their name submitted for consideration as a possible candidate for that particular position.
 - iii. Men whose names are submitted in this manner shall be prayerfully considered by the Elders. Appropriate interviews shall be conducted for the purpose of determining whether the man meets the qualifications of Deacon as set forth in ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT, Section C1.
 - iv. The name of one man, who has been unanimously approved by the Elders for a particular ministry responsibility, shall be presented to the congregation, for their prayerful consideration, at least ten days prior to a congregational meeting.

- v. A vote of affirmation shall be conducted by secret ballot at that congregational meeting. Any man receiving affirmation of at least eighty percent (80%) of those voting shall be recognized as a Deacon.
- vi. Individuals receiving the affirmation of the congregation in this manner shall assume the office of Deacon immediately.

3. Responsibilities

The Deacons shall (under the oversight of the Elders) develop and manage the various aspects of the ministry for which they have been given responsibility.

4. Term of Office

As long as a Deacon continues to meet the biblical qualifications for the office, and desires to do so, and provided there is a continuing need for the aspect of the ministry over which he has been given responsibility, he has the privilege of serving an unlimited number of consecutive three year terms.

Should a Deacon decline to serve a consecutive term at the end of a three year term he may be placed back in office at a later date according to the procedure outlined in Article IV - GOVERNMENT, Sections C1 AND C2.

If at any time there is reason to question the ministry of an Deacon because of a poor testimony, open sin, variance with the doctrinal position of the church, or an inability to carry on an effective ministry due to verifiable physical or mental incapacity, the Elders shall exhaust every possible approach to remedy the situation (Cf. 1 Timothy 5:1 and Matthew 18). If the situation cannot be remedied, and the Deacon in question refuses to resign his office, his removal shall be effected by a vote of the Elders.

D. The Congregation

1. Responsibilities

Although the leadership of the church is vested in the Elders and Deacons, congregational approval is required for the following:

- a. Calling of Pastoral Staff
- b. Affirming Elders and Deacons
- c. Buying, selling or transferring property
- d. Incurring any debt
- e. Approving individual expenditures in excess of 10% of the Annual Budget
- f. Approving the Annual Budget
- g. Adding or removing members from the missionary family
- h. Increasing or decreasing an individual missionary's support
- i. Amending the Constitution

2. Congregational Meetings

- a. The fiscal year of the church shall end on the 31st day of December each year and the Annual Meeting shall be conducted in January or February. The date shall be determined by the Elders and announced to the congregation in the morning worship service on the two successive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.
- b. Quarterly business meetings shall be conducted in April/May, July/August and October/November on dates to be determined by the Elders and announced to the congregation in the morning worship service on the two successive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.
- c. Special congregational business meetings may be scheduled by the Elders at any time, upon notice being given in the morning worship service on the Sunday preceding the date of the meeting. The purposes of such a meeting are to be stated in the announcement.
- d. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Chairman of the Elders shall moderate all congregational meetings.
- e. Unless otherwise stipulated, a quorum will consist of those active members present.
- f. All decisions shall require the approval of eighty percent (80%) of those present and voting.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

A. STANDING COMMITTEES

- 1. Standing Committees are defined as those committees which are established on a long term basis.
- 2. The Elders shall establish Standing Committees as they deem necessary for the efficient operation of the church and its ministries.
- 3. The chairman of each Standing Committee shall be appointed from among the Elders or from among the Deacons.

4. The general composition and responsibilities of each committee shall be determined by the Elders and outlined in the Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

B. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Elders shall have the option of establishing special committees to accomplish special tasks. The leadership, composition, responsibilities and duration of such committees shall be determined by the Elders.

ARTICLE VI – POLICIES

In areas of operation where a pattern of procedure is necessary, a written policy shall be established by those responsible for that part of the ministry. All policies must be approved by the Elders and shall be kept on file in the Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

ARTICLE VII – FINANCES

A. FUNDING

This church will finance its operation by biblical principles (Exodus 35:5,21,22,29; 36:7; Proverbs 3:4,10; Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). This church is committed to the practice of Spirit-led giving resulting from placing full information concerning the needs before the church. Exhortation for prayer regarding the supply of the needs and how God would lead each one to help meet those needs should be given. This practice does allow, however, for participation in God-honoring projects by various church ministry groups, for the purpose of raising funds for their respective ministries when such has been approved by the Elders in accordance with established policy.

B. DESIGNATED GIVING

Designated gifts for church projects will be accepted only if such projects have been approved by the Elders. If designated funds are given for an unapproved project, the Elders will investigate that project. If it is not accepted as feasible by the Elders, the donor will be notified and may either re-designate to an approved project or else withdraw the donation.

If necessary, the Elders have the authority to use accumulated designated funds in lieu of, or in combination with, the general fund in order to meet the church's financial obligations.

ARTICLE VIII – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In the event of irresolvable conflict amongst the church leadership a mandatory appeal to the leadership of Midwest Church Extension, the **Name of Regional** of IFCA International, or IFCA International shall be made for counsel and help in effecting resolution to that conflict.

In the event that such counsel does not bring resolution and the circumstances indicate the need for on-site mediation, this constitution has a mandatory requirement that all of those in conflict agree to seek such mediation for the sake of the unity and testimony of the church. Following such agreement, by mutual consent and determination of all parties concerned, either the Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Elders shall make the request for mediation services from one of the above mentioned agencies.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

A. Procedure

Any proposed amendment to this document must be approved by the Elders. Upon receiving such approval, the amendment shall be presented to the congregation at a properly called business meeting for a vote. Such a meeting shall require a quorum of sixty percent (60%) of the active membership. Approval by eighty percent (80%) of those present and voting is required for any amendment to this constitution.

B. Restriction

Article I, Sections C (INDEPENDENCE) and D (AFFILIATION), Article II (DOCTRINE) and Article IX (AMENDMENTS) of this constitution shall not be subject to amendments under any circumstances in which such amendments are inconsistent with, contradict, diminish or eliminate the content of these cited portions. Any violations of this restriction shall constitute grounds for dissolution of the **Name of Church** under the terms expressed in Article X - DISSOLUTION. It shall be the ethical responsibility of the leadership of the church to enforce this provision.

ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION

No part of the net assets of **Name of Church** shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, director, officer, nor shall any private individual be entitled to share in the distribution of corporate assets. Upon dissolution, after payment of all creditors, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations in total harmony with the doctrinal positions in ARTICLE II – Doctrine, and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as being organized exclusively for religious, charitable, literary, or educational purposes. First consideration for such distribution shall be given to Midwest Church Extension, and then to the **Name of Regional** of IFCA International and/or IFCA International.