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# **Constitution of The Gathering Community Church**

## **Preamble**

We, the members of "Community Church Ministries" also known as "The Gathering Community Church (GCC)", in order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to define our responsibilities, and to ascertain that our church will be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the teaching of God's Holy Word, voluntarily submit ourselves to this constitution.

## **Article I – Name and Location**

This church shall be known as "Community Church Ministries" or as "The Gathering Community Church" (hereinafter in this constitution also referred to as "CCM" or "the church"), located in the City of Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio, USA.

## **Article II - Purpose**

It shall be the purpose of this church to bring glory to our God, to be a source of strength and encouragement, to train and equip believers, and to spread the Gospel of His saving grace to the entire world by all Scriptural means.

## **Article III – Statement of Faith**

### **What we believe:**

#### **1. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.  
(2 Timothy 3:15-17)

#### **2. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. God is all-powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

God is Spirit (*John 4:24*), in and of himself infinite in being (*Exodus 3:14*), glory (*Acts 7:1*), eternal (*Psalms 90:2*), unchangeable (*Malachi 3:6*), incomprehensible (1

*Kings 8:27*), every where present (*Psalms 139:1-13*), almighty (*Revelation 4:8*), knowing all things (*Hebrews 4:13*), most wise (*Romans 16:27*), most holy (*Isaiah 6:3*), most just (*Deuteronomy 32:4*), most merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth (*Exodus 34:6*)

**A. God the Father.** God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all mankind.

*(John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 1:17)*

**B. God the Son.** Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God. He was fully man, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitution death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

*(Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Timothy 2:5)*

**C. The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and therefore is fully God and as such fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination, He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*(Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; I Corinthians 12)*

### **3. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning, man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby inheriting a sin nature at the moment of conception. Therefore, as

transgressors of God's righteousness, man is under condemnation and completely incapable of pleasing God. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*(Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; Ephesians 2:1-22)*

#### **4. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith alone in Jesus Christ as Lord.

*(Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14.)*

**A. Regeneration**, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby sinners (non-believers) become new creatures in Christ Jesus, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It is a change of spiritual identity wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner compelled by the Holy Spirit is brought to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.  
*(Galatians 2:20)*

**B. Justification** is how God looks at sinners after they become believers by receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. By virtue of Jesus' death and resurrection, God looks upon believers as if they had never sinned and as if they never will. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.  
*(Romans 3:24; 5:9; 4:25; Acts 13:39)*

**C. Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

**D. Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

#### **5. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is completely consistent with the free agency of man. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, His infinite

wisdom, His holiness, and His unchangeable plan. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers are secure to the end. Those whom God has adopted in Christ, and sealed by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their blessings and comforts and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet, they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

(*Romans 5:9-10; 8:1; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14*)

## **6. The Church and Its Leadership**

A New Testament, *local church*<sup>(1)</sup> of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous, self-governing, local congregation of believers, interdependently accountable, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth operating under the Lordship of Christ. In such a congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are Elders who exercise spiritual oversight and lead with a shepherd's heart the flock entrusted to them. The office of Elder is limited to men who fit the qualifications laid out in the Holy Scriptures of *1 Timothy 3:1-7; II Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 5:17-19; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; and James 5:14*. Attributes in conjunction with scriptural qualifications are men who present a picture of a Godly man that is passionately in love with Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, who is broken-hearted for humanity, who exercises great faith when logic fails, and who is fearless of Godly vision concerning the totality of His Kingdom.

The New Testament speaks also of the *universal church* as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

(*1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3*)

<sup>(1)</sup>**A New Testament, Local Church** - A local assembly of believers as well as the redeemed of all the ages who follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When the church general is implied, church refers to all who follow Christ, without respect to locality or time. Because the church general will not become a tangible reality until after Christ's return, the greatest emphasis in the New Testament is placed upon the idea of the local church. The local church is the visible operation of the church general in a given time and place.

## **7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Believer's baptism is an outward symbol of an inner commitment. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It should not be regarded as a means for imparting grace or salvation.

(*Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:7; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12*)

The Lord's Supper, or *communion*, is to be observed in obedience of the Lord's command during this present age. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act whereby

members of the universal church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. It should not be regarded as a means for imparting grace or salvation.  
(*Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29*)

## **8. Prophetic Truth**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead in Christ will be raised first; after that, the living believers will join them; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.  
(*1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1-11; Revelation 20:1-15*)

## **Article IV – Biblical Affirmations**

In light of the broad and diverse interpretation of the Holy Scriptures within the Christian Community, we set forth the following affirmations to give clear definition to what we believe the Word of God teaches regarding the following areas:

### **We Affirm:**

#### **1. The Sanctity of Human Life**

Human life is a gift from God to be cherished from the time of conception until natural death. All humans have the God-given right and responsibility to enjoy the length of life willed by their Creator.

God is sovereign over the giving and taking of life. Human life begins at conception – each soul an immediate creation of God – and continues until the soul is separated from the body in death.  
(*Genesis 1:27; Job 10: 8-10; Psalms 139:13-16; Ecclesiastes 12:7*)

#### **2. Human Sexuality**

*Genesis 1:27 – “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* (New American Standard Bible)  
We recognize that from the beginning God placed order within his creation. Sexual relations between husband and wife are commended by God, solely to be enjoyed within the married estate. Premarital, extramarital, and homosexual relations are prohibited in Holy Scripture.  
(*Genesis 1:27; 2:18-24; Exodus. 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; Hebrews 13:4*)

#### **3. Marriage and Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, protect and lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values. They are to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on Biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.  
(*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*)

#### **4. Corporate Worship**

Scripture teaches that believers should not forsake gathering together. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every believer to commit themselves to intentional, systematic and regular gathering together with other believers for the sake of worship, evangelism, ministry, encouragement and discipleship.  
(*Ephesians 4:1-16; Hebrews 10:25*)

#### **5. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to expose the lost to Christ by a Christian lifestyle, verbally and other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.  
(*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)

#### **6. Cooperation**

Christ's people, as the occasion requires, should organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

## **7. The Christian, Social Order, and Politics**

All Christians should seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality. We should work to provide for the widowed, orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death save where due process of criminal law dictates the sentence of capital punishment.

In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of goodwill in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. The church does not endorse a particular political party, but rather encourages its people to vote for that candidate they feel best exemplifies the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love set forth in the Scriptures. (*Romans 12-14; Romans 13:1-4; James 1:27; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 5:11-17*)

## **8. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Therefore; every believer is urged to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully as an act of worship for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth. (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Mark 12:43-44; Philippians 4:10-19*)

## **Article V – Authority and Government**

### **1. General**

The legislative and governing authority of this church is vested in the Elder Council of CCM chosen from among the membership of this church. This shall be a self-governing body, uniting in mutual effort for the furtherance of the Gospel. The Elder Council will abide by the provisions of the constitution and by-laws of the church and will set forth and regularly update written policies and procedures consistent with the constitution and by-laws of CCM. These policies and procedures will be used as the guide for daily operation and foreseen circumstances that may occur at CCM.

## **2. Qualifications for Membership**

To become a member of CCM each person must meet the following qualifications:

- a. Make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ alone as their Lord and Savior, and
- b. Agree to adhere to the church's constitution & by-laws, and
- c. Accept and affirm the church's Statement of Faith, and
- d. Complete the church's membership class and obtain a satisfactory review by church leadership.

## **3. Government**

The members of the church who are eighteen years of age and older shall exercise their power through duly called business meetings and shall have authority on:

- a. The approval of amendments to the church's constitution and/or bylaws, and
- b. The calling of the Lead Pastor and other members of the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff, and
- c. The termination of the Lead Pastor or other members of the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff, and
- d. The election and confirmation of church Elders and Deacons, and
- e. The acquisition or disposal of real estate, and
- f. The approval of the total annual church budget, and
- g. Other matters not specifically noted herein that necessitate a vote of the eligible voting members.

Items a., b., c. and d. listed above in this section shall require the affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the eligible voting members present at the meeting. A quorum shall be obtained when twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible voting members are present at the meeting. All voting will be done by secret ballot. All items to be voted on will be presented to the membership on a Sunday that is at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the vote for the purpose of prayer and discussion.

Items e., f. and g. listed above in this section shall require the affirmative vote of over fifty percent (50%) of the eligible voting members present at the meeting. A quorum shall be obtained when twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible voting members are present at the meeting. All voting will be done by secret ballot. All items to be voted on will be presented to the membership on a Sunday that is at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the vote for the purpose of prayer and discussion.

All other corporeal and spiritual affairs are entrusted by the assembly to the Elder Council except as specifically limited by the constitution and by-laws.

#### **Article VI – Property**

All debts for the church shall be held in the name of the church. The personal and private property of the officers or members of this church shall not be used in the payment of the corporate debt.

In case of a division of the church, the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by its constitution and by-laws.

In case of dissolution of the church organization, the property shall be assigned to a similar ministry or ministries of like-minded principles and values. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the affirmative vote of over fifty percent (50%) of all of the eligible voting members, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three (3) years, or when less than six (6) members remain. All voting will be done by secret ballot.

#### **Article VII – Ratification of Original Constitution, By-Laws and Amendments**

The original constitution and by-laws shall be ratified and adopted by affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the eligible voting members present at the meeting. A quorum shall be obtained when twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible voting members are present at the meeting. All voting will be done by secret ballot. By their approval, this constitution and by-laws will suspend or supersede all leadership structural documents previously approved by vote or acceptance of the membership.

This constitution and by-laws may be amended. Any proposed amendments(s) must be submitted in writing to the Elder Council. Upon approval by the Elder Council, the amendment(s) shall be presented publicly and in writing to the membership. The Elder Council shall then call a business meeting in accordance with the by-laws to act upon the amendment(s). Amendments to the constitution and by-laws shall be ratified and adopted by affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the eligible voting members present at the meeting. A quorum shall be obtained when twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible voting members are present at the meeting. All voting will be done by secret ballot.

# By-Laws of Community Church Ministries

## Article I – Membership

### **1. Responsibilities of Membership**

In becoming a member of “Community Church Ministries” also known as “Community Church” (hereinafter in these By-laws also referred to as “CCM” or “the church”), a person commits himself/herself to the following responsibilities of membership:

- a. To have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and agree with the principles detailed in the Statement of Faith in the constitution of CCM, and
- b. To make it his or her habit to participate regularly in the services and meetings of the CCM as health permits, and
- c. To be actively involved in ministry as health permits, and
- d. To contribute of one’s means to the financial support of the ministries of CCM in an intentional and consistent manner.

### **2. Removal from Membership**

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

- a. Transfer of membership to another church,
- b. The request of the member who desires to be removed from membership,
- c. The death of the member,
- d. If a member is not actively involved in the church for an extended period (approximately one year) he or she may be removed from the church membership at the next review of the church membership roles. Revocation of membership is at the discretion of the Elder Council. The Elder Council, when not aware of the reasoning for an individual’s inactivity, will make reasonable effort to contact the inactive member prior to removing his/her name from the membership rolls.
- e. The discipline of the member in accordance with *Matthew 18:15-17* and *1 Corinthians 5:1-13* for the following reasons:
  - Holding a false and heretical doctrine, or
  - Living a sinful and unrepentant lifestyle which may cause a potential disruption to the church body, or
  - Being divisive<sup>(2)</sup> and not submitting<sup>(3)</sup> to the Elder Council.  
(1 *Peter 5:1-3*)

<sup>(2)</sup>**Divisiveness** is defined as a deliberate attempt or repeated attempts to create dissention or discord in the unity of the body. A member or regular attendee voicing disagreement is not analogous to divisiveness.

<sup>(3)</sup>**Submission** is defined as yielding in servant obedience to the jurisdiction of authority. The authority in an Elder Lead church is the Elder Council.

### **3. Administration of Membership**

The members have entrusted the Elder Council with insuring that prospective members have met the qualifications of membership. The Elder Council is responsible to maintain the church's membership role in accordance with the parameters outlined in the constitution and by-laws. Removal of a person from membership shall only be applied in strict accordance with scripture and this constitution.

*(Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)*

## **Article II – Officers**

### **1. General**

The officers of the church shall be Elders and Deacons. The number of elders shall be determined by the Elder Council but shall be no less than three. Any member or regular attendee of CCM can identify and recommend in writing qualified individuals to the Nominating Committee as potential candidates for offices in the church during the nomination process. Regular Attendees are individuals who consider CCM to be their primary place of worship and have been attending consistently.

Nominations may be submitted to the Nominating Committee beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> and ending March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

### **2. Elders and Elder Council**

Men who are members in good standing of CCM will serve as the Elders of the church and are responsible for the collective and individual oversight and encouragement of the spiritual life, the general welfare and equipping of the flock entrusted to them for ministry. Potential candidates for eldership may be nominated by a member or regular attendee of CCM. Elder nominees will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee and presented for advancement to the Elder Council. The sitting Elder Council will examine each nominee according to: *I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9*, and evidence of having the spiritual giftedness for shepherding God's flock. The Elder Council will then determine nominees to be presented to the church body for approval.

Each Elder shall serve a three (3) year term, not to exceed two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms, as long as he is faithful to his calling and has the confidence of his fellow Elders. Following a three (3) year leave from the Elder Council, a former Elder shall again be eligible to be nominated for the office of Elder. An Elder may resign his office at any time and for any reason.

Biblically we are instructed to not receive an accusation against an Elder except for when there are two or three witnesses. Charges against Elders are to be factual and not based on opinion, or rumor. An Elder can be disciplined and/or removed from the Elder Council in accordance *with I Timothy 5:19, Matthew 18:15-17, and 1 Corinthians 5:1-13* for the following reasons:

- Holding a false and heretical doctrine, or

- Living a sinful and unrepentant lifestyle which may cause a potential disruption to the church body, or
- Being divisive<sup>(2)</sup> and not submitting<sup>(3)</sup> to the rest of the Elder Council.

<sup>(2)</sup>**Divisiveness** is defined as a deliberate attempt or repeated attempts to create dissention or discord in the unity of the body. A member or regular attendee voicing disagreement is not analogous to divisiveness.

<sup>(3)</sup>**Submission** is defined as yielding in servant obedience to the jurisdiction of authority. The authority in an Elder Lead church is the Elder Council.

The ministry of eldership is significant and is accomplished while continuing the care of family and upholding of work responsibilities. Therefore, Elders may need to request leave from some of the tasks of eldership for a period of time. Such sabbatical times will be arranged through the mutual consent of the Elders.

The Elder Council shall elect a Chairman of the Elder Council from amongst them who shall preside over the meetings of the Elder Council. The Chairman of the Elder Council shall also serve as the moderator of the church, serves as President and presides over meetings of the Board of Directors of "Community Church Ministries, Inc. an Ohio non-profit corporation" (hereinafter in these By-Laws referred to as "CCM, Inc."), and presides over business meetings of the church. In his absence or at his discretion, he may designate another Elder as acting moderator for a particular meeting. The term of Chairman shall be no more than two (2) years, coinciding with the church year. The Chairman of the Elder Council has the sole authority to sign legal documents and contracts for the church as ordered by the membership of the church and/or the Elder Council. As President of CCM, Inc. the Chairman has the sole authority to sign legal documents and contracts for CCM, Inc. as directed by the Elder Council and Board of Directors.

The Elder Council shall also elect from amongst the non-vocational Elders a Secretary and Treasurer of the Elder Council. The Secretary and Treasurer of the Elder Council are also elected to serve in these same officer capacities on the Board of Directors of the CCM, Inc. The Secretary shall record and maintain minutes of all meetings of the Elder Council and of all meetings of the Board of Directors of the CCM, Inc. The Treasurer shall oversee and direct the filing of all tax and legal forms for the church and for the CCM, Inc. to the appropriate governing agencies.

The Lead Pastor may not be elected as the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of the Elder Council and may not be elected as an officer on the Board of Directors of CCM, Inc. The Lead Pastor shall be the only permanent Elder on the Elder Council of the church.

Additional members of the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff may serve on the Elder Council if nominated and elected in the same way any church member is nominated and elected into this office but will be considered a *vocational Elder*. In number, there must always be at least two more *non-vocational* Elders than there are *vocational Elders* serving on the Elder Council at any given time. The *vocational Elder* will serve a three (3) year term, not to exceed two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms. Following a three (3) year leave from the Elder Council, *vocational Elders* shall again be eligible to be nominated for the office of Elder. *Vocational Elders* may not be elected to serve as Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of the Elder Council and may not be elected as an officer on the Board of Directors of CCM, Inc.

### **3. Deacons and Deacon Council**

Men who are members in good standing of CCM will serve as Deacons of the church and are responsible for the corporeal needs of the church. They shall be nominated by members or regular attendees of CCM. Deacon nominees will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee and presented for advancement to the Elder Council. The sitting Elder Council will examine each nominee according to *1 Timothy 3:8-13*. The Elder Council will then determine nominees to be presented to the church body for approval. The Deacons serve at the direction of, and are accountable to, the Elder Council and are also accountable to the other Deacons on the Deacon Council with whom they serve.

Each Deacon shall serve a three (3) year term, not to exceed two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms, as long as he is faithful to his calling and has the confidence of the Elders and other Deacons with whom he serves. Following a three (3) year leave from the Deacon Council, a former Deacon shall again be eligible to be nominated for the office of Deacon. A Deacon may resign his office at any time and for any reason. The Elder Council at any time may require a Deacon to abstain from a particular vote.

A Deacon can be disciplined and/or removed from their office in accordance with *Matthew 18:15-17, and 1 Corinthians 5:1-13* for the following reasons:

- Holding a false and heretical doctrine, or
- Living a sinful and unrepentant lifestyle which may cause a potential disruption to the church body, or
- Being divisive<sup>(2)</sup> and not submitting<sup>(3)</sup> to the rest of the Deacon Council on which he serves or to the Elder Council under whose authority he serves.

### **4. Appointed Church Positions**

Men or women who are members in good standing of CCM may serve in one of the non-vocational, appointed positions of the church as Church Bursar, Financial Secretary, or Church Clerk. These Appointed Church Positions are responsible for: receipt and disbursement of all monies; the record keeping of all church financial transactions; the record keeping of all contributions and donations made to the church; and the recording of business meeting minutes and oversight of the records of official church correspondence.

The Deacon Council, with approval of the Elder Council, appoints these Appointed Church Positions. The Appointed Church Positions serve at the discretion of the Deacon Council via appointments to three (3) year terms without restriction as to successive term limits. These Appointed Church Positions are accountable to the Deacon Council with the following specific responsibilities:

- A. Church Bursar** is responsible for record keeping of all financial transactions of the church. For control purposes, he or she shall not handle any moneys of the church. The Church Bursar shall track and record all expenditures against the church budget, make entries into the church accounting system, and issue a financial statement no less than quarterly. The Church Bursar shall disburse moneys for expenditures

submitted and approved according to the current church policy. The Church Bursar working under the direction of the Treasurer of the church and CCM, Inc. shall be responsible for performing the filing of all tax and legal forms with the appropriate governing agencies.

**B. Financial Secretary** is responsible for making all bank deposits of donations and receipts of moneys. For control purposes, he or she shall handle all moneys, but will not be authorized for entry of receipts and disbursements in the church accounting system. The Financial Secretary shall maintain a confidential itemized record of contributions and donations of each individual and shall provide each donor with a statement of his or her donations annually. Interim statements will also be given upon special request within a reasonable period following receipt of a donor's written request.

**C. Church Clerk** is responsible for the recording and reading of the minutes for the business meetings of the church. The Church Clerk will also maintain a member accessible record of minutes from the business meetings of the church, as well as minutes provided to them by the Secretary of meetings of the Board of Directors of CCM, Inc., and of the minutes provided to him or her of other official meetings of the church leadership. The Church Clerk shall also be responsible for maintaining the records of membership and other significant milestones or progress reports for the church

## **5. Nominating Committee**

Men and women who are members in good standing of CCM will serve as members of the Nominating Committee of the church and are responsible for reviewing personal testimonies and the examination of Biblical qualifications of nominees interested in serving in the office of Elder or Deacon. Following consideration, the Nominating Committee forwards all nominees to the Elder Council with recommendation of individual nominees for advancement. The Elder Council selects candidates for election to office by the body. The Nominating Committee is comprised of one non-vocational Elder, one Deacon, and three at-large members who currently, or have formerly, served faithfully in a church leadership role. The Elder Council will select the three at-large members of the Nominating Committee.

## **6. Family Council**

Men and women who are members in good standing of CCM will serve as members of the Family Council of the church and are responsible for: advancing the spiritual health and programs of the church; the church missions involvement; hospitality and the church event calendar. The Family Council meets on a scheduled basis but not less than quarterly.

The Family Council is comprised of Elders, Deacons, Church Bursar, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff, non-vocational Ministry Department Directors, Chair of the Nominating Committee, Chairs of other ministry teams and committees, and other church Members and Regular Attendees as deemed appropriate. The Family Council is accountable to the Elder Council.

The Elder Council may also establish standing or temporary ministry teams and committees to perform specific tasks to meet the needs of the church. These temporary servant leadership groups may be appointed by the Elder Council at any time they determine there is a need. Temporary ministry teams and committees shall be dissolved when no longer needed, or at the discretion of the Elder Council.

### **Article III – Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff**

#### **1. Duties**

The Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff shall be vocational staff, other than the Lead Pastor, who are called in a ministerial role to serve at CCM. The Lead Pastor along with the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff perform the following church duties:

- a. Give themselves to prayer and the study of the Word of God,
- b. Expound the Word of God and give oversight of others called to do the same,
- c. Administer the Ordinances in accordance with the Word of God,
- d. Share in the pastoral care of the congregation along with the members of the Elder Council,
- e. Perform marriage ceremonies at their discretion in accordance with the laws of God and the State,
- f. Officiate at funerals of members of the church and non-members at their discretion,
- g. Together with the Elder Council, administer church discipline,
- h. Participate in the installation of newly designated officers of the church,
- i. The Lead Pastor or his designee shall act as a non-elected member of all councils and leadership teams of the church,
- j. The Lead Pastor or his designee shall give leadership to and oversee the personal and team development of the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff,
- k. Perform other constitutional, Scriptural, and general pastoral duties.

The Lead Pastor and Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff shall be free to accept invitations to preach the Word of God to other groups or organizations, provided such engagements do not interfere with the work of the church and are in accordance with the personnel policies established by the Elder Council. Before accepting invitations to speak for other groups, which require absence from the church and its activities, a pastor or staff member shall consult with the Elder Council and obtain its permission.

## **2. Calling and Removing of Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff**

The Elder Council, under the guidance of the Lead Pastor, will decide when it is time to add additional Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff. At such time, the Elder Council will accept recommendations by either an appointed search committee and/or the Lead Pastor. The Elder Council will then seek and accept recommendations and/or nominations of individuals to be called for an available ministerial position. Upon such recommendation or nomination, the above bodies will convene and attempt to determine, through prayer and discussion, whether God's will shall be served by the appointment of any of the individuals so recommended or nominated. Upon agreement by the above bodies as to a potential candidate, such candidate will be asked to come to the church and interview with current staff, the Elder Council, and any other group the Elder Council deems necessary. If these bodies are in majority agreement, and the potential candidate senses God's calling to the church, the Elder Council will assemble a salary and benefits package with input from the Church Bursar of the church and the call will be extended to the candidate.

Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff are called to service by vote of the eligible voting members of CCM by the process defined within the church's constitution and by-laws. The Ministerial Staff serve at the direction of and are accountable directly to the Lead Pastor. Ministerial Staff members shall serve until removed, either by the vote process of the eligible voting members defined herein or by resignation.

The Lead Pastor or a member of the Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff can be disciplined and/or removed from his/her office in accordance with *1 Timothy 5:19*, *Matthew 18:15-17*, and *1 Corinthians 5:1-13* for the following reasons:

- Holding a false and heretical doctrine, or
- Living a sinful and unrepentant lifestyle which may cause a potential disruption to the church body, or
- Being divisive<sup>(2)</sup> and not submitting<sup>(3)</sup> to the lead Pastor or the Elder Council under whose authority he/she serves.

## **3. Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff Resignation**

When a Ministerial and Associate Pastoral Staff member resigns to accept another call, or for reasons of his or her own choosing, he or she shall give the church at least one month notice in writing of his/her intentions to do so.

### **Article IV – Administrative Staff**

The necessity and number of administrative staff shall be determined by the Elder Council and serve under the direction of the Lead Pastor or his designee.

### **Article V – Church Year**

For administrative, organizational and fiscal purposes, the church year shall begin on July 1st and end on June 30th of each year.

## **Article VI – Business Meetings**

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held within the last two weeks of April or the first two weeks of May of each year.

Special Business Meetings may also be called by the Elder Council as needed.

Special Business Meetings may also be requested by any member. In the spirit of cooperation, the member is requested to approach and discuss the issue underlying his or her meeting request with the Elder Council. The Elder Council will then: a) attempt to resolve the member's issue without a Special Business Meeting, b) call a Special Business Meeting to address the member's issue, or c) notify the member that the Elder Council disagrees with the member on the issue or need for a Special Business Meeting. In the latter case, the member may still call the Special Business Meeting by obtaining signature approval from twenty-five percent (25%) of the eligible voting members. Upon obtaining the necessary number of signatures, the Elder Council will call a Special Business Meeting to address the member's specific issue.

Notice of church Annual and Special Business Meetings shall outline the meeting agenda and the nature of the business to be discussed and be announced to the church body at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting date.

The Chairman of the Elder Council shall serve as the moderator of the church and preside over meetings of the church. In his absence or at his discretion, he may designate another Elder as acting moderator for a particular meeting.

## **Article VII - Indemnification of Ministers, Pastors, Officers, Directors, Elders, Employees, Church Ministry Volunteers and Agents.**

Subject to the provisions of this Article, Community Church Ministries (hereinafter sometimes referred to as "CCM") shall indemnify any and all its existing and former Ministers, Pastors, Directors, Officers, Elders, Employees, Church Ministry Volunteers and Agents against all expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them and each of them including but not limited to legal fees, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement or compromise which may arise or be incurred, rendered, or levied in any legal action brought or threatened against any of them for or on account of any action or omission alleged to have been committed while acting within the scope of volunteer and/or paid services or employment as minister, pastor, director, officer, elder, employee, church ministry volunteer or agent of the corporation, whether or not any action is or has been filed against them and whether or not any settlement or compromise is approved by a court.

Whenever any existing or former minister, pastor, director, officer, elder, employee, church ministry volunteer or agent shall report in writing to any member of the Elder Council of CCM that he or she has incurred or may incur expenses, including but not limited to legal fees, judgments, penalties, and amounts paid in settlement or compromise in a legal action brought or threatened against him or her for or on account of any action or omission alleged to have been committed by him or her while acting within the scope of his or her volunteer or paid services or employment as a minister, pastor, director, officer, elder, employee, church ministry volunteer or

agent of CCM, the Elder Council shall, at its next regular or at a special meeting held within a reasonable time thereafter, determine in good faith whether, in regard to the matter involved in the action or contemplated action, such person acted, failed to act, or refused to act, either intentionally or willfully or with fraudulent, dishonest or criminal intent.

If the Elder Council determines in good faith that such person did not act, failed to act, or refused to act, either intentionally or willfully or with fraudulent, dishonest or criminal intent in regard to the matter involved in the action or contemplated action, indemnification shall be mandatory and shall be automatically extended as specified herein; provided, however, that no such indemnification shall be available with respect to liabilities arising from income tax laws and provided further that CCM shall have the right to refuse indemnification in any instance in which the person to whom indemnification would otherwise have been applicable shall have unreasonably refused to:

1. Permit CCM at its own expense and through counsel of its own choosing, to defend him or her in the action, or
2. Refuses to exercise reasonable effort in cooperation with any investigation by or in defense of CCM in connection with the action or proceeding.

After a determination by the Elder Council as described above which requires mandatory indemnification, the indemnification shall occur as the expenses are incurred and in advance of any final disposition of the action.

Provided further, indemnification shall be required only if such minister, pastor, director, officer, elder, employee, church ministry volunteer or agent of CCM shall give written notice of the threatened or filed action to any member of the Elder Council, within forty-five (45) days of the date that such minister, pastor, director, officer, elder, employee, church ministry volunteer or agent acquires knowledge or notice of the threatened or filed action.

#### Amendments to the By-Laws

Article II, Section VI, Paragraph I:

Amendment I. Last statement of paragraph to read as follows: The Family Council meets whenever scheduled or called by the Lead Pastor, and/or the Elders.  
(amended 6/ /'09)