

Greater Community^{MBC} Church Articles of Constitution

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Constitution Defined: The Constitution contains the fundamental principles and guidelines that govern the church's affairs. Among other things, it sets forth the requirements for membership, establishes leadership standards, and describes the form of church government.

Greater Community is a Christian church entrusted with promoting and projecting the mandates of Christ (Matt. 28:18-19), to include embracing the lifestyle and mindset of the Christian worldview, with emphasis on the spiritual care of the members. Greater Community has adopted this constitution in order to enable the church to operate in complete obedience to the scriptural mandates and guidance given to the early church as seen in the book of Acts. Proposed and discussed throughout 2018-19, and adopted in December 2019, this constitution will serve us well as an effective guideline in handling the affairs of our church.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this church shall be Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church (GCMBC). The church is affectionately coined in abbreviated form as “Greater Community”. In official correspondence to outside agencies and organizations, the title is displayed as follows: “Greater Community^{MBC}”.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:19-20) by maintaining and promoting His worship both individually and corporately, across all denominational lines, thus unifying the faith through evangelism and the edification of His saints. Therefore, we are committed to the proclamation of God’s perfect Law and of the glorious Gospel of His grace through all the world, to the defense of that “faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jud. 3 & 1 Pet. 3:15), and to the pure and faithful celebration of the ordinances of the New Covenant.

ARTICLE 3 - NONPROFIT STATUS AND LIQUIDATION

This church is not organized for profit. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be transferred at the direction of the trustees to an agreed upon institution and/or organization.

ARTICLE 4- AFFILIATION

4.1 AUTHORITY. We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23) and who directs the affairs of the church through Pastor/under Shepherd chosen and ordained according to the precepts of Holy Scripture (Acts 14:21-23; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9).

4.2 COOPERATION. The church may and does cooperate with other like-minded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern (2 Cor.1:11; 8:18-24; Phil.4:15-19). We may seek the assistance and counsel (Prov. 11:14; 18:1) of other

churches in matters of special concern to us, but the decision of no other church or group of churches shall at any time be acknowledged as binding on this church (Acts 14:21-23).

4.3 ASSOCIATIONS. Upon the direction of the Pastor/under Shepherd, such affiliations may be entered with the acknowledgment of the congregation (Acts 15:22, 2 Cor. 8:19). Withdrawal from such associations may be affected by the same.

ARTICLE 5 - COVENANT

5.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT. God has graciously entered into a covenant relationship with His believing people (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40; Heb. 8:7-13; 10:16-17; 13:20-21). Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6). His blood is the blood of the New Covenant, which infallibly secures all the benefits of the covenant for all of God's people (Matt. 26:26-28; Heb. 13:20-21). God has in this New Covenant made us members one of another (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph.4:25). Therefore, we have covenant responsibilities to each other, as well as to God. God has promised in this covenant to write His laws in our hearts and to cause us to walk in His ways (that is, to enable us to keep our covenant responsibilities). The motivation and ability to obey God's laws spring from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who, by His death, satisfied the holy wrath of God that was against us due to our sins, and by His resurrection has begotten us again to a living hope (1 Pet.1:3). It is by the enablement of the Holy Spirit that we obey, in loving gratitude for Christ's righteousness before God. We obey with the confidence that the end of Christ's death will be realized in us (that is, "that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" [Rom. 8:4a], and that we should be a people "zealous for good works" [Tit. 2:14]).

The following paragraphs are a summary of what we believe to be our covenant responsibilities toward God and toward one another. This summary forms the basis for our giving and receiving instruction for ourselves and for our families.

5.2 SUMMARY OF OUR COVENANT RESPONSIBILITIES (THE LAWS WRITTEN IN OUR HEARTS)

5.2.1 We agree to worship only the one true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We will declare His glory to the nations. We will have no other gods before Him. (Exod. 20:1-7; Isa. 43:10; Isa. 44:8; Isa. 45:21-22)

5.2.2 We agree to worship God in His appointed way and to exclude from our worship anything that He has not appointed. (Jhn. 4:23-24)

5.2.3 We agree not to use the name of our God emptily or to take it upon ourselves carelessly, but to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. (Exod. 20:7)

5.2.4 We agree to cease from our own works on the Lord's Day, if they are not works of piety or necessity, and to positively sanctify the day by special exercises of public and private worship. (Exod. 20:8-11)

5.2.5 We agree to honor and obey, within the bounds of Scripture, all our superiors, whether in family, church, state, or business; and, if we are superiors, to deal reasonably and lovingly with our subordinates and thus to teach them by word and example to fear God and keep His commandments. (Heb. 13:17; Rom. 13)

5.2.6 We agree to avoid whatever tends to destroy us or our neighbors and to engage vigorously in all lawful endeavors to preserve our own lives and the lives of others, especially by ready reconciliation and faithful exhortation in the church. (Rom. 12:18)

5.2.7 We agree to possess our bodies in holiness as vessels joined to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit and to avoid all uncleanness of thought, speech, or action. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20)

5.2.8 We agree to be diligent in our vocations, that we may provide for our own households, avoid theft of time, money, or goods, and that we may have to give to him who has need. (Col. 3:23)

5.2.9 We agree to earnestly promote truth among men and to avoid anything that would prejudice the truth or injure our neighbor's good name. (Exod. 20:16; Matt. 5:37)

5.2.10 We agree to be fully content with our own condition in life, to rejoice in the advancement of our neighbor, and to avoid envying him or coveting anything that is his. (Exod. 20:17; Phil. 4:11-13; Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-8 Matt. 6:31-33)

ARTICLE 6 - ARTICLES OF FAITH

6.1 Introduction. Articles of faith are the summary statements of foundational beliefs held by our church. They set forth the essential truths which guide every area of our belief and practice. Believers throughout the ages have crafted these statements which have often been memorized in the form of creeds. One of the earliest articles of faith found in holy writ we aspire to do was set forth in Deut. 6:4-7:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

We embrace and live out our articles of faith to ensure education and understanding against the doctrines of false teachers. This process is seen in Acts 15:1-29 when some teachers said that Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. The apostles and Pastor/under Shepherd in Jerusalem met to discuss the issue and wrote a letter to inform the churches that keeping the Mosaic Law was not necessary for salvation. The Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and others were created in response to similar challenges to orthodox beliefs. Church history has taught us that the more open and general the articles of faith, the more likely that false teaching will appear and gain a foothold. History has also taught us that no matter what the articles of faith say, they are essentially useless unless they are known and followed by churches and individuals. In the past, it was common for believers to memorize catechisms and creeds, giving them a solid foundation from which to examine new ideas. Today, the prevailing trend seems to be openness or ignorance regarding doctrine. Most Christians would be hard-pressed to express what they believe in any depth, and the result is a patchwork of beliefs that are sometimes contradictory. The Word of God tells us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). This means to examine things for soundness, in order to know whether to receive or reject them. This is what led to the great creeds and articles of faith in the past, and it is what will help us know what we believe and why we believe it today.

6.2 The Holy Scriptures. We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired (2 Pet. 1:16-21), that it has God for its author (2 Tim. 3:16), salvation for its end (Gen. 3:15), and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. The Scriptures reveal the principles by which God will judge us (Rom. 2:6-8); and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world (Matt. 24:35), the true center of Christian unity, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. It is without error and should be taken literally until it can no longer be taken literally (e.g. if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off IAW Matt. 5:30).

6.3 The One True God. We believe that there is only one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption (Isa. 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 14, 18, 21, 22; 46:9; 47:8; Jhn. 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:5-6; Gal. 4:8-9). There is only one living God who is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah (the self-existing One), the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven, earth, and the entire Cosmos (Rev. 4:8; Isa. 57:15; Jer. 32:17; 27; Ps. 139:7-12; 1 Jhn. 3:20)

6.4 Jesus Christ. God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. He is fully God and fully Man (Jhn. 1:1, 14). We believe He died in our place to atone for our sins (1 Jhn. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:24), in His bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, continual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth (Jhn. 2:19-21; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; 24:47; Rom. 12: 3-8; Phil. 2:5-11; Eph. 4:7-16). Upon His triumphant return for His bride, the church, and deliver her up to God the Father (Eph. 2:10; Gen. 1:28; Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 15:24).

6.5 The Holy Spirit. Sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ (Jhn. 14:26; Acts 2). He enlightens the minds of sinners (Jhn. 16:9, 14), awakens in them a recognition of their need for a Savior and regenerates them (Tit. 3:5). At the point of salvation, He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength, and wisdom, and uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ (Rom. 15:16; Eph. 1:13-14, 30). The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the believer to lead a life of Christ-like character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father (Rom. 8:2, 14).

6.6 The Fall of Man. Man was created in the image of God, he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical but also spiritual death which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are guilty sinners in thought, word, and deed. Due to Man's fallen nature, he is a "child of wrath by nature" and incapable to choose God in and of himself, for nothing good dwells in his flesh, (Gen. 6:5; 19: 4-5; Deu. 32:15; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1-3; Eph. 2:1-3). Therefore God must send His Holy Spirit to give Man the ability to call on the name of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:11; Acts 13:24; 20:28).

6.7 The Way of Salvation. We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is entirely by God's grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9). Thus by grace alone through faith in Christ alone (Rom. 5:1, 10:4; Gal. 2:16, 3:24; Phil. 3:9) Man is saved.

6.8 The Church. The church is dependent upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit for a correct interpretation of Scripture, and only as each member is responsive to the Spirit speaking in the Word and humbly submissive to His instruction can we hope for a common confession of the truth (Pslm. 119:18, 26; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Jhn. 2:27).

6.9 Justification. We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing, which Christ secures to such as believe in him, is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness (Rom. 3:24, 4:11, 5:18; Phil. 3:9).

6.10 Repentance and Faith. We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (1 Chr. 7:14; Heb. 11:6).

6.11 Sanctification. We believe the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness. The Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous through Christ's work (Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:4-5).

6.12 Perseverance of Saints. We believe the Scriptures teach such that real believers endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark, which distinguishes them from superficial "partial believing persons" or professors (Phil. 3:12-14; 2 Tim. 3:1-7).

6.13 Marriage. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is that between a man and a woman, in accordance with God's Word in Gen. 2:22-24 and Rom. 1:24-26.

6.14 The Christian Sabbath. We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday) is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath. The Christian Sabbath is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular

labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest for the people of God. (Pslm. 95:1-7; 122:1; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 2:42; Exod. 20:8-11; Rev. 1:10; Isa. 58:13-14)

6.15 The World to Come. We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness. (Jhn. 14:1-4; Matt 13:41-42)

6.16 Civil Government and Authorities. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society. (1) Government and magistrates are to be prayed for, (2) conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. (3) We believe Jesus is the only Lord of the conscience and the King of the kings of the earth. (Rom. 13)

6.17 Gender and sexual formation. We believe a person's gender is sacred as ordained by God in the book of Genesis, and must not be modified, adjusted, and/or tampered with for any reason. Nor should sexual orientation for the same gender be encouraged or promoted at any time, for any reason (Gen. 2).

6.18 Court and Pursuits of Lawsuits. In accordance with 1Cor. 6:1-8, We believe that Christians should not take each other to court over church matters. We believe that Christians should not take each other to court over civil matters. By all means, legal matters should be resolved without legal court proceedings, and lawsuits avoided. We believe that Christians should not take non-Christians to court over civil matters if it can be avoided. However, in some instances, such as the protection of our own rights as in the example of the apostle Paul in Acts 21 and 22; it may be appropriate to pursue a legal solution.

ARTICLE 7 - MEMBERSHIP

7.1 WARRANT FOR MEMBERSHIP. The New Testament demands of all Christians, formal, open, solemn, voluntary and enduring commitment to Jesus Christ, to His truth and to His people (Acts 2:42). A true Christian's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ must include and is inseparable from his commitment to Christ's truth and to Christ's people (Jhn. 17:17).

7.2 The Great Commission. Fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission requires church membership. According to the Great Commission of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20), there is an inseparable connection between making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them. The Apostles implemented this commission by gathering baptized disciples into local churches. It was therefore in local churches that baptized disciples were taught all that Christ commanded (Acts 2:38-47, 1 Cor.4:17). With the uncertain exception of the Ethiopian eunuch, the New Testament knows nothing of believing men and women who are not members of local churches.

7.3 The Biblical Pattern. The New Testament presents the local church as a distinct group of individuals which could be counted (Acts 2:41-42; 4:4); be added to or excluded from (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 9:26); be called upon to select leaders and representatives from among itself (Acts 6:1-6; 2 Cor. 8:19, 23; Acts 15:22); be officially gathered together (Acts 14:27; 15:22); carry out church discipline by common consent (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor.5:4, 13; 2 Cor. 2:6); and observe the Lord's Table as wholly present corporate assembly (1 Cor. 11:17-20, 33-34). There is therefore clear biblical warrant for the existence and careful maintenance of local church membership involving formal, open, solemn, voluntary and enduring commitment. This biblical warrant compels us to use great care in maintaining a biblically-ordered church membership.

7.4 Pastor/under Shepherd Oversight. It is only in the context of the local church with identifiable members and leadership that the Biblical commands regarding the relationship of Pastor/under Shepherd and people can be fulfilled (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17).

7.5 REQUISITES FOR MEMBERSHIP. General Requirements. To be eligible for membership, a man or woman (Acts 5:14; 8:3, 12) must demonstrate repentance toward God and the fruits thereof (Acts 26:20), as well as that faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21) which produces Godly works (Eph.2:8-10; Jas. 2:18, 22). He/She must be baptized as a believer; and to the satisfaction of the Pastor/under Shepherd's express substantial agreement with the purpose (as stated in Article 2), Covenant (as stated in Article 4), Faith Doctrines (as stated in Article 5), and government of this church (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-8).

7.5.1 Conformity of Doctrine and Institution. Mastery of church doctrines is not required of any disciple before he is admitted to church membership. Such a requirement would violate the order of Matt. 28:19-20, which instructs us to disciple, to baptize, and then to teach the baptized disciple to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. It is necessary, however, that any disciple applying for membership manifest a willingness to be taught and substantial agreement with what he already knows concerning the church's doctrine and government. Church members must be in submission to the ordained rule of the church to which they belong (Heb. 13:17). He who cannot intelligently and freely submit to a church's government should not belong to that church. Anyone who is in substantial disagreement with the constitution or confessions of the church could not be consistently submissive to the church's teaching ministry. Therefore, to admit such a person to membership in this church would be unwise and unscriptural (Eph. 4:3). If one who is already a member of the church at any time concludes that he/she no longer satisfies the requirements for membership, he/she is under obligation to inform the Pastor/under Shepherd of that fact.

7.6 ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS. Candidates for membership need to attend a series of new member's classes to learn and understand the privileges, and responsibilities of members to God and the church. After successful completion of new member's classes, members are free and encouraged to engage in ministry activities. (Acts 2:42-47)

7.7 TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

7.7.1 Regular Members. All who are received into the membership of the church according to the procedures set forth in this constitution, who continue in regular attendance at the stated meetings of the church, and who do not come under the corrective discipline of the church as set forth in this constitution, shall be considered regular members in good standing and entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the church (Acts 2:37-47).

7.7.2 Transient Members. Persons who come to live in our area for a limited period of time (e.g., students, military personnel, persons on special work assignments) may be received into or removed from the membership of the church on the same basis and in the same manner as persons who have permanent residence in our area. If such a person is already a member of a church in his place of permanent residence, he/she need not be released from the membership of his/her home church, but will be regarded as a temporary member while in our midst, enjoying the rights and privileges and subject to all the responsibilities, liabilities, and disciplines of regular membership. Transient members may or may not be able to vote on critical matters of the church due to their lack of longevity; consequently, the Pastor/under Shepherd will make the determination regarding their right to vote. When such a person terminates their period of temporary residence in good standing they will be released to the fellowship of their home church and no longer be regarded as a member of this church (compare: Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 3:1ff; Col. 4:10; 3 Jhn. 5-10).

7.7.3 Associate Members. Regular members who move away from our area and who cannot find another local church with which they can conscientiously unite will, at their request, be retained as associate members of this church. Such persons must retain regular communication with the church, and its leadership when all possible, in order to maintain their associate membership. Nevertheless, they are urged to seek diligently a church with which they can unite

elsewhere. An associate member shall not be allowed to vote in any business meeting of the church. At the discretion of the Pastor/under Shepherd, associate membership may be granted to invalids, Christian workers, and others whose relationship to the church involves unusual circumstances. (Heb. 10:25)

7.8 MEMBERSHIP STANDINGS (Heb. 13:17)

7.8.1 When a member consistently, habitually, and deliberately conducts himself or herself in accordance with the mandates of this constitution and submits to the governance of church leadership, they are considered a member in "Good Standing".

7.8.2 Those members whose behavior and mindset run contrary to this constitution (6.4) will be considered members "Not in Good Standing". All members "Not in Good Standing" will be determined by the Pastor/under Shepherd and reviewed by his/her designated leaders. Those "Not in Good Standing" will be notified when deemed appropriate, and told in a discrete manner. Finally, those identified as members "Not in Good Standing" can be reinstated as members in "Good Standing" once their actions and behavior line up with the guidance given within this section.

7.8.2.1 While members not in "Good Standing" cannot vote, they are still considered members of the ministry. Such members in this category still have rights and privileges as members (i.e. attend special events, receive resources [if applicable], and burial rights). The Pastor/under Shepherd is the only one with the authority to determine those not in "Good Standing"; this decision is made only with confirmed facts.

7.9 MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

7.9.1 Members in "Good Standing" will be entitled to one vote on any issue that is presented to the church for consideration during General Assembly Meetings, and special call meetings as deemed necessary by the Pastor/under Shepherd or designated Ministry Leadership. "Good Standing" means that the member does those things conducive to ministry and kingdom building: (1) they habitually give their tithes, talents, and resources; (2) they come to church regularly as much as possible; (3) and they are obedient to the leadership and governance of the ministry. The voting standards will be enforced during all voting proceedings in accordance with the church's Constitution and established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Only those present can vote, and only those in "Good Standing" can vote. Special consideration and accommodations may be made for those absent due to emergencies and unforeseen situations.

7.9.2 Age. The member must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older to have official voting privileges. Church members under 18 years of age must be sanctioned by the Pastor/under Shepherd to vote.

7.9.3 Participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26);

7.9.4 Attendance at, appropriate participation in, and voting during church business meetings (Acts 6:11-6 [cf. Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:13-14]; 1 Cor.5:4-7 [cf. 1 Cor. 1:2]);

7.9.5 Laboring to extend God's Kingdom in ministries of the church (as one's gifts, graces, and calling make appropriate) (Rom. 12:3-21; Eph. 4:7; 11-12; 16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11);

7.9.6 Reception of the committed oversight and care of the Pastor/under Shepherd of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3);

7.9.7 Reception of the committed care and discipline (as needed) of the membership of the church (Acts 6:1-2 [cf Acts 2:41; 5:13-14; 9:26]; 1 Cor. 5: 4-5 [cf. 1 Cor. 1:2]; Gal. 6:10).

7.10 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

7.10.1 Membership in the church shall be terminated when a member:

7.10.1.1 When a person requests a letter of transfer to join another church of like faith.

7.10.1.2 When a person is dropped from the roll of membership when he or she self-admittedly joins another church.

7.10.1.3 When a person requests for membership termination; a member requests removal from church roster.

7.10.1.4 When a person exhibits prolonged absence of (180-days or more), and non-responsive to communication from the church (i.e. telephone contacts, person to person, letter, email, or text messages). Termination will not take place prior to 180-days. A member, who responds to the church's correspondence anytime during this process, attends briefly but then exhibits prolonged absence again, may be terminated in accordance with the original terminate timeline; in other words, the 180-days. However, if contacted and the member still states that they are a member of the church; they will be retained, but considered a member "Not in Good Standing".

7.10.1.5 A person dies (i.e. death of a member).

7.10.1.6 For reasons and circumstances regarding church discipline. In the event of discipline:

7.10.1.6.1 The Pastor/under Shepherd and/or designated church leaders and/or members will do all they can to counsel the member for restoration prior to termination action.

7.10.1.6.2. Even though a previous member is terminated as a member they are still permitted and encouraged to attend church, and they are welcome to rejoin the ministry at any time. It is implied that any persons that have left the ministry and then to return must go through the new member's orientation again.

7.11 THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS

7.11.1 Members in "Good Standing". Respect and dignity, all rights and privileges IAW governing documents as a faithful member; wants which are reasonable and not in violation of the governing document.

7.11.2 Members not in "Good Standing" (determined by the Pastor/under Shepherd). Respect, dignity; needs that are reasonable as deemed by leadership.

7.11.3 Nonmembers. Respect and Dignity needs which are reasonable to God's creation, but the church is under no obligation to cater to their wants and/or desires.

7.11.4 Third parties who want to act on behalf of a member. That which is respectful, honorable, and in good conscience with the spirit of the house.

7.12 MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES (Acts 2:42, Acts 12:5, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Cor.11:18, 20, 1 Cor.12:12-27; Gen. 14:19-20 with Heb. 7:4; Mal. 3:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)

7.12.1 All members have the responsibility to financially support the ministry through their tithes and offering. Because it is clearly taught in the Scriptures that Christians should financially support the work of the Lord by systematic and proportionate giving through the local church (Gen. 14:19-20 with Heb. 7:4; Mal. 3:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8,9), all the members of this church are expected to conform to this rule of Scripture. The tithe (ten percent of one's gross personal income) is strongly urged upon each member as an expression of worship and the biblical norm for basic giving, to which should be added gifts and offerings according to one's ability and the willingness of one's heart (Gen. 14:19-20 with Heb. 7:4; Exod. 36:2-7; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 1 Tim. 6:17-19). All those serving in any leadership capacity will tithe in accordance with this guidance to remain in "Good Standing" and to remain qualified to lead.

7.12.2 All members are required to attend all services in which the church doors are open as much as humanly possible. Since all members believe in the sanctity of the Lord's Day and the special duty and privilege of corporate worship, and

since the church is a body which of necessity must have its members present in order to function; the members of this church shall seek to come together on the Lord's Day at the times appointed for worship, prayer, teaching and preaching from the Scriptures, and the observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Table. Providence may occasionally hinder some from participation; however, generally, this would be the exception and not the rule. (Acts 2:42, Acts 12:5, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Cor.11:18, 20, 1 Cor.12:12-27). Additionally, the Pastor/under Shepherd may call special meetings on occasion when they believe necessity requires it. Members should seek to participate in the life of the body by being present at these meetings. (Matthew 18:17, Acts 14:27)

7.12.3 All members must strive to serve in the church in some capacity as much as humanly possible.

7.12.4 All members must grow in faith, spiritual strength, and grace with the intent to positively impact, the Kingdom of God, their community, and the ministry.

7.12.5 All members must behave in a manner which aligned with the Holy Scriptures, the church's governing documents (i.e. the Constitution, AND various Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs], etc.), and Pastor/under Shepherd guidance and mandates.

7.12.6 Promotion of Edification and Peace. Inasmuch as the church is represented in Scripture as a body having many members, each of the members having its own particular function and yet having a concern for the health and protection of the whole (1 Cor.12:12-27; Eph. 4:4, 11-16), this church expects that each of its members will strive for the good of the entire body. As members of this church we must actively seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another and maintain mutual transparency and honesty so that we may be better able to pray for one another; love, comfort and encourage one another; and help one another materially as necessity may require (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:25; 1 John 3:16-18). In addition, we must discreetly confess our faults one to another (James 5:16), faithfully admonish and encourage one another (1 Thess.5:14; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25), and refrain from all backbiting and gossip (Prov. 10:31-32; 26:20-22). The Pastor/under Shepherd may determine that some matters of congregational business are so sensitive that the members may be expected to keep such matters confidential (Prov. 11:13).

7.12.7 Support of and Submission to the Leadership. All who come into the membership of this church are expected to recognize and submit to the overseers, or Pastor/under Shepherd, of the church. Supporting God's servants necessitates praying for them and their labors (Eph. 6:18-19); cultivating personal acquaintances with them, loving and esteeming them highly for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5:12-13); standing by them and not forsaking them in their afflictions and in all good causes (2 Tim. 1:15-18); and defending rather than prejudicing or damaging their good name (Acts 23:5; 1 Tim. 5:19). Submitting to God's servants necessitates imitating their Christian graces, faith and godly principles as they also imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3); receiving their teaching with all readiness of mind and "teachableness" of spirit, yet with ultimate allegiance to the Word of God (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 2:13); humbly heeding their Scriptural rebukes and warnings as from those appointed to watch for the souls entrusted to them and committed to labor to present them complete and mature in Christ (Col. 1:28); seeking and carefully considering their counsel as being from those counted faithful by the Lord (1 Cor. 7:10, 25); and lovingly embracing and abiding by their decisions regarding corporate policy in God's house, which is His church (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:5, Heb. 13:17) without creating division even when personally differing from their judgment.

7.12.8 A Godly Christian Life. All who come into the membership of this church are expected to walk worthily of the Lord (Eph.4:1ff). Therefore, every member is expected to practice and cultivate godliness in the following areas:

7.12.9 Personal Devotion. Each member is expected to make use of the various private means of grace such as daily private prayer (Ps. 55:17; Dan. 6:10; Matt 6:6-13); daily and habitual reading and meditating on God's Word (Ps 1:2; 119:11, 97); and careful and spiritual observance of the Lord's Day (Gen.2:1-3; Ex.20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Lk. 2:27; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

7.12.10 Family Life. The church expects its members to obey the teachings of Scripture with respect to the life and government of the home. As the God-appointed head of the family, the husband must rule over his household with gentleness and love, but also with wisdom and firmness (Eph. 5:25ff; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; 1 Pet. 3:7). The wife must be in subjection to her husband in all things according to the rule of Scripture (Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). The Bible clearly teaches that man and woman are equal in created dignity, and redemptive privileges. The functional subordination of the Christian wife does not imply inferiority. The leadership of the husband in the home should be such that it allows for the full development of the wife's gifts and graces (Prov. 31:10-31). The husband and wife must bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). This includes setting a godly example before them, consistently instructing them from the Scriptures (Deut. 6:4-9), and by wise, firm and loving discipline, including corporal punishment and verbal reproof when necessary (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Heb. 12:7-8).

7.12.11 Personal Evangelism. It is the duty of every Christian, as an individual and as a member of a local church, to labor by prayer, word, and deed for the extension of the kingdom of God in ever widening circles, beginning at home and stretching forth to the ends of the earth (Isa. 54:1-3; Acts 1:8). Therefore, every member of this church is expected prayerfully to recognize and seize every opportunity to bear witness to his/her faith in Christ, both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of his/her lips (Col. 4:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:14-15).

7.12.12 Christian Liberty. Each member of the church is required to render in his/her daily life loyal obedience to all the moral precepts established by the Word of God (Rom. 8:3,4). If God has not condemned or forbidden a practice in His Word, a Christian is at liberty to participate in it. The exercise of Christian liberty, however, must at all times be governed by an earnest desire to walk in the fear of God and to glorify Him in all things (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 1:15-19), a loving regard for the consciences of weaker brethren (Rom. 15:1-31; 1 Cor. 8:7-12), a compassion for the lost (1 Cor. 9:19-22), and a zealous regard for the health of one's own soul (Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:24-27; Gal. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 2:16).

7.12.13 Separation from the World. God never intended the glorious blessing of Christian liberty which we enjoy to become an excuse and covering for worldliness (Gal 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). To the contrary, we have been liberated from bondage to our former sins in order that we might be a people distinct from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4) and set apart unto God (Lev. 18:1-30; Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:14-16). Accordingly, we are called upon to identify and abhor the attitudes and practices of this age that are contrary to the will of God (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 4:17-22; 5:7-12; 1 Thess. 5:21-22; Tit. 2:12; 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:3-4). We are also called upon personally to resist the molding influence of a godless society (Prov. 1:10-19; Rom. 12:1-2; James 1:27). Therefore, all the members of this church are expected to separate from the wicked practices and attitudes of such society while still living in and ministering to it (1 Cor. 5:9-11).

7.12.13.1 The Things of this Life. We are expected to resist the worldly attitude that deems the things of this life to be of primary importance (1 John 2:15-17). This means that we are not to become so absorbed with work, material possessions, politics, recreations, or any other person or thing, that it rivals our primary attachment to Christ (Matt. 6:24).

7.12.13.2 Values and Relativism. We are not to adopt the distorted values of this world, such as: considering self-worth to be rooted in attainments, social standing, heritage, or usefulness to society. It means, too, that we are not to adopt the moral relativism of the world, especially respecting the sanctity of life and truth.

7.12.13.3 Gender Roles. We are expected to resist a worldly attitude about masculinity and femininity. This means that we must reject the carnal notions that male and female roles are arbitrary and reversible; that sexual orientation is a matter of preference rather than morality, and that marriage is oppressive unless it is egalitarian. This also means that we must regard a wife's primary role to be that of a helper to her husband (Gen. 2:18), her basic (but not necessarily exclusive) sphere of labor to be domestic (Prov. 31:10-31; 1 Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:4-5), and her estate as wife and mother to

be noble and honorable, rather than degrading and unfulfilling. It means too that we must regard a husband's role not only to be that of provider and protector (Eph. 5:23, 28; 1 Tim. 5:8), but also to be that of giving personal nurture to his children (Eph. 6:4; 1 Thess.2:11; Heb. 12:9) and considerate nurture to his wife (1 Pet. 3:7; Gen. 18:6-8).

7.12.13.4 Vices. We are expected not to indulge in any of those vices which surround us: drunkenness, drug abuse, gluttony, viewing pornographic materials, fornication, homosexuality and other such sins (Gal. 5:19).

7.12.13.5 Relationships. Respecting the world's influence, we are expected to refrain from all entangling relationships with the ungodly, such as intimate, frequent companionship with them (Prov. 12:26; Jas. 4:4), pursuing romantic interest in them (Judg. 16:4-5; 1 Kgs. 11:1-4, 9; Prov. 2:16-17; 6:23-25), and contracting marriages with them (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 7:39). Similarly, we are expected carefully to seek to discern and resist any wicked influence of this godless society upon our souls and our families, whether it is exerted by means of television, video tapes, movies, music, literature, schools, or any other means (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:11-12).

ARTICLE 8 - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

8.1 FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE. Every disciple of Christ is disciplined by Him personally and without intervening mediators (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:29-32; 1 Thess. 4:6; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:22-23); and through the church (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Thess. 5:12-15; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25). Mutual submission to one another and to the overseers whom the Lord has set over His church (1 Pet. 5:5) will result in the sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively. There are occasions, however, when informal discipline alone is insufficient and formal corrective discipline becomes necessary.

8.2 CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE

8.2.1 General Statement. Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly, immoral, or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church. As a general rule and whenever feasible, an effort must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more serious steps are taken (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20). The principles given in Matt. 18:15-20, Rom. 16:17-20, 1 Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Thess. 3:6-15, 1 Tim. 5:19-22, 6:3-5, and Tit. 3:10 must be carefully followed and applied to each case of corrective discipline as appropriate. In some cases, public admonition and/or public repentance may be warranted (Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20). In other cases, some of the privileges of membership may need to be suspended and appropriate stricture imposed (Rom. 16:17-20; 2 Thess. 3:14-15). In the most extreme cases excommunication from the membership of the church may be necessary (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 1 Tim. 1:20; Tit. 3:10). All the members of the church are obliged to submit to and enforce as appropriate the decision of the church in acts of corrective discipline.

Since the church is a spiritual and religious institution, the punishments (2 Cor. 2:6) implemented by the church in corrective discipline are also spiritual. They include public verbal reproof (Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20), social avoidance and withdrawal of distinctively Christian fellowship (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14) and removal from the membership of the church (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13). They are intended to affect repentance through a sense of sorrow and shame (2 Cor. 2:7; 2 Thess. 3:14). The church has no right, however, to confiscate goods, revoke conjugal rights, or inflict corporal punishment of any kind. Nevertheless, a member guilty of criminal actions may be delivered to the civil authorities according to the rule of Scripture (Rom. 12:17b; 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 4:15).

The goals of corrective discipline are always the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6; 1 Tim. 5:20) and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender (1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 1:20).

8.2.2 Public Reproof or Censure. Public reproof consists of a Pastor/under Shepherd effort, before the gathered church, to call an unremorseful church member to repentance for sin too serious to be covered with a blanket of love; or to deal with serious sin even where there may have been repentance. The Pastor/under Shepherd may administer public

censure whenever, in their judgment, either public misconduct (Gal. 2:11-14; 1 Tim. 5:20), patterns of sin (Tit. 1:12-13), or serious doctrinal error (Tit. 1:10-13) pose a significant threat to the godliness, unity or testimony of the congregation. Those who humbly receive the word of public reproof, own and confess their sin, and manifest a transformed life (Prov. 28:13) shall afterward be publicly commended for their godly repentance (2 Cor. 7:7-11). If the reproof is not heeded, further discipline may be imposed.

8.2.3 Suspension of Privileges. Some misconduct on the part of a member is so detrimental to the unity, holiness and testimony of the church that the Lord required public reproof to be accompanied with the suspension of some of the privileges of membership according to the nature and gravity of the offense (Rom. 16:17-20; 2 Thess. 3:6-15). In all cases of suspension, the offending person is still regarded as a brother/sister in Christ and as a member of the church. Severe reproof is to be expressed (Matt. 18:17) and the suspension is to be enforced (Rom. 16:17-20; 2 Thess. 3:6-15) by the entire church, and not merely by the Pastor/under Shepherd representing the church. Therefore, when appropriate, the Pastor/under Shepherd shall, at a duly convened business meeting of the church, recommend that the offending member be suspended. The Pastor/under Shepherd shall specify the grounds of the discipline, the privileges to be revoked, and the stricture to be imposed. To be valid, an act of suspension must have the approval of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting. In the interest of maintaining a climate of holiness and peace, the Pastor/under Shepherd shall have the right, at their sole discretion, to impose a temporary suspension upon a member during the brief interval between their determination to recommend suspension and the congregational vote. A member under suspension shall be treated by the congregation according to the specific applications of the general principle of social avoidance (Rom. 16:17-20; 2 Thess. 3:14-15) determined by the Pastor/under Shepherd. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterwards be forgiven, have their privileges restored, and be publicly received back into the full fellowship of the church (Matt. 18:15; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).

The general categories of sin which require suspension are as follows:

8.2.3.1 A Stubborn Private Offender (Matt. 18:15-17). When a private offense remains unresolved even after the method prescribed by our Lord in Matt. 18:15-16 has been graciously and prayerfully followed, it is considered an aggravated offense. The members involved shall bring the matter to the Pastor/under Shepherd who, if they judge the matter to be serious and cannot persuade the brother/sister to repent, shall report the situation to the church, and recommend that the stubborn brother/sister be suspended (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17). If even after a period of suspension, the person remains adamant in their sin, excommunication may be enacted according to the procedure outlined in Section 7.2.4. (Matt. 18:17b).

8.2.3.2 Divisive Teachings or Behavior (Rom. 16:17-20; Tit. 3:10). When a member deliberately persists in the propagation of serious doctrinal error contrary to the Scripture or our Confession or attempts to sow discord among the membership contrary to the Scripture or this Constitution, he/she may be suspended as a factious member. Since every member is responsible to help preserve the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1ff), no one is to conceal such divisive behavior, but rather to reprove it, and disclose it to the Pastor/under Shepherd (Deut. 13:6f; 1 Cor. 1:10,11). Whenever the Pastor/under Shepherd becomes aware of such divisive behavior, they are to confront it meekly and patiently according to the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:10ff; Tit. 3:10). If even after receiving repeated admonition from the Pastor/under Shepherd, a member persists in such behavior, the Pastor/under Shepherd shall report the situation to the church and recommend that the divisive brother/sister be suspended. If even after a period of suspension, the person remains impenitent, excommunication may be enacted according to the procedure outlined in Section 7.2.4.

8.2.3.3 Disorderly Behavior (2 Thess. 3:6-16; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; 5:14). Some kinds of conduct and doctrine are categorized as disorderly. If a member deliberately persists in conduct which displays a flagrant or public disregard for the order appointed by God for all mankind in the creation ordinances, namely: work, Sabbath and marriage (Gen. 2:1-3, 15, 18-24; Exod. 20:8-11; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:1-17, 39; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:8; Tit. 2:5), he/she may be suspended as a

disorderly member (2 Thess. 3:6). Similarly, a member may be suspended as a disorderly member if he/she deliberately persists in conduct contrary to the order established by Christ for His church in Scripture (1 Cor. 11:17-34; 14:37-40; 1 Tim. 3:14, 15) as recognized by our church in this Constitution. Whenever the Pastor/under Shepherd becomes aware that, in spite of the admonitions of formative discipline (1 Thess. 5:14), a member is behaving disorderly, they are to confront him/her meekly and patiently according to the Word of God (2 Thess. 3:14-15). Disorderly conduct is to be distinguished from traitorous conduct. A disorderly member is not immediately to be excommunicated. Rather he/she is to be suspended in accordance with the directions of 2 Thess. 3:6-15 and not regarded as an enemy but admonished as a brother/sister. However, if even after receiving such admonition from the Pastor/under Shepherd, a member persists in this behavior, the Pastor/under Shepherd shall report the situation to the church and recommend that the disorderly brother/sister be suspended (2 Thess. 3:14-15). If even after the period of suspension, the person remains impenitent, excommunication may be enacted according to the procedure outlined in Section 7.2.4.

8.2.3.4 A Scandalous Sin. If a member has sinned scandalously but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the Pastor/under Shepherd, excommunication would be unwarranted. However, it may still be prudent to suspend him/her for a time so that he/she may realize the gravity of the offense and clearly manifest repentance (Matt. 3:8), so that reproach not be brought upon the Name of Christ and the church (Isa. 52:5; Ezk. 36:20-21; Rom. 2:24), and so that others may not be emboldened to sin (1 Tim. 5:20). If fruits worthy of repentance are not forthcoming, the Pastor/under Shepherd may recommend to the church at a later date that this person be excommunicated according to the procedure outlined in Section 7.2.4.

8.2.3.5 Contempt of Church Discipline. If a person is accused or suspected of an offense requiring corrective discipline, yet absents themselves from the meetings of the church, or refuses to meet with the Pastor/under Shepherd, such a person may be suspended (Matt. 18:17; Num. 16:1-12, 23-27).

8.2.4 Restoration. The purposes of church discipline are to restore a fallen brother or sister and to keep the church pure. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to forgive and to restore to full membership a suspended or excommunicated member who gives satisfactory evidence of his/her repentance (2 Cor. 2:6-8; Matt. 18:18-20). This shall be done in a duly convened business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority of the members "in Good Standing" present and voting.

ARTICLE 9 – ORDINANCES

9.1 GENERAL STATEMENT. There are two ordinances of special significance that our Lord has commanded us to observe, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of baptism or through the bread and the cup of the supper. These ordinances are not means of "special grace," but they are special "means of grace" and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

9.2 BAPTISM

9.2.1 The Candidates. Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism, and all such persons should be baptized and joined to the church (Matt. 28:19-21; Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 5:13, 14).

9.2.2 Its Necessity for Membership. Believing that baptism in water is the God-ordained sign of one's personal union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and the door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God, normally we shall receive into the membership of the church only those who have been baptized as believers "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

9.2.3 Its Mode. Immersion in water is the biblical mode of baptism, is necessary for its due administration, and is the only mode to be administered by this church.

9.2.3 Modifications. While Baptism is paramount regarding the command of our Lord, there may be instances in which someone cannot be baptized (e.g. those sick and elderly, and/or unable to hold their breath, etc). Special concessions can be made by the Pastor/under Shepherd such as a "christening" type of baptism. This modified action keeps in the Spirit of Christ's command (2 Cor 3:6).

9.3 THE LORD'S SUPPER. Whereas baptism is the initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church and should be observed only once by each believer, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church (1 Cor. 11:26). While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with solemnity and dignity, the bread and the cup of the supper are and remain only symbols of the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to maintain the purity of this ordinance, the Pastor/under Shepherd will faithfully seek to ensure that only true believers are admitted to the table.

ARTICLE 10 – OFFICERS & CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF

10.1 GENERAL STATEMENT

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church (Col. 1:18). He has ordained that individual churches should be governed by Himself through officers whom He appoints, who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. Christ has ordained that local churches are to be administered by Pastor/under Shepherds/Elders/Overseers. In addition to this group of leaders, Christ also provided supplemental leadership found in Eph 4:11-13...Prophets, Evangelist, and Apostles and Deacons/Deaconess. All of these leaders have a role in the equipping and edification of the body of Christ until His return.

10.2 All church officers and leaders must be members of the church in good standing. A member in "Good Standing" is defined as habitually prompt and present for the majority of all church functions; a tither; and continually displays the fruit of the Spirit in their actions and disposition, and the fullness of Spirit which is measured by their mastery over their flesh, obedience, and willingness to serve in lieu of their emotional state, internal struggles, and external circumstances.

10.3 Gender. We acknowledge the valuable gifts which God has given Women and the valuable assistance they may render to the officers of the church (Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:11). We also acknowledge that the Bible does not promote women having authority over men (1 Cor. 14:33b-35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:1-7). We also acknowledge that God has used Women in prominent positions of authority throughout the course of Mankind (Miriam: Micah 6:4; Debra: Judges Chp 4-5; Huldah the prophetess: 2 Chr 34:19-33; Ester; even Anna, an elderly prophetess in Luke 2:36). In the presence of our holy writ, we must never succumb to societal norms to appease men; but rather obey the sacred mandates of God. Therefore women in this ministry can serve, and be ordained, in the capacity of Prophetess, Evangelists, and Deaconess (Phebe – Rom 16:1...servant [*diakonia*] in the Greek is the same word used in Acts Chp 6, 7 for Deacon). Female Minsters, or those who serve the ministry in numerous capacities, and proclaim the gospel with homiletically and hermeneutically correct boldness, will be sanctioned to teach and preach to the congregation. The justification is that only those trusted agents of the Pastor/under Shepherd will be able to present his thoughts to the people. Therefore, whether male or female, the directives, are from the church under Shepherd, which means that the people are being exposed to a recapitulation of the under Shepherd's thoughts, and not their own. Finally, we must never allow the world to warp, confuse, or marginalize God's order for His people. Nor should we ever lord God's mandates over anyone, for we are one body in Christ. (Rom 12:5).

10.3.1 In the event that a woman filled with the Holy Spirit is compelled and thoroughly persuaded by the conviction of the Lord to fill a scripturally man mandated office (i.e. Pastor/under Shepherd, Elder, and Apostle), the following must be physically observed: anointed and confirming signs accompanying her ministerial impact in the church and community (Mk 16:17-18). When confirmed, the Pastor/under Shepherd must prayerfully consider God's sovereignty

and providence regarding this exceptional pivotal and weighty matter at hand. If he grants licensing and ordination, he must wholeheartedly support the decision made as if she were a male, to include his endorsement and sanctioning as directed by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3:6). If he does not sanction this action, and she decides to leave the ministry, he will allow her to depart with his blessings (Gen 13:8-9; Acts 15:36-41). If she stays in the ministry, he will continue to lead and guide her as the Spirit leads him, ensuring that spiritual wounds are healed and relationships are reconciled; if applicable.

10.4 The Pastor/under Shepherd:

10.4.1 Terminology. Those who have been called of God to rule and teach in the church are called, Pastor/under Shepherds, Elders, or Overseers (sometimes translated “bishops”). These three titles are interchangeable and designate one and the same office in a New Testament church (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 4:11-12; Tit. 1:5, 7).

10.4.2 Qualifications. Anyone desiring the office of a Pastor/under Shepherd must show evidence to God’s people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications that are set forth in the Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9).

10.4.3 His responsibilities:

10.4.3.1 These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, Pastor/under Shepherd counseling, administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.

10.4.3.2 He shall lead the church, the organizations, and all leaders of the church in performing their tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.

10.4.3.3 He shall be the corporate executive member of all church standing committees.

10.4.3.4 He shall be responsible for the day-to-day decisions and shall run the affairs of the church.

10.4.3.5 He shall appoint and anoint his successor, or waive that right to a designated Pastor/under Shepherd selection ministry team.

10.4.3.6 If the Pastor/under Shepherd should be overtaken in a sin, in accordance with Gal 6:1, he will sit himself down for a season of reflection, repentance, cleansing, and healing; he will only be reaffirmed after complete deliverance has taken place. If deliverance cannot be attained in a timely manner (i.e. 90-180 days), the Pastor/under Shepherd will submit his resignation, waive his right to name and anoint his successor, and the church Pastor/under Shepherd selection ministry team will collaborate for the purpose of establishing a forum to seek a new Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.4.4 The Call:

10.4.4.1 When the current Pastor/under Shepherd waives his right to name his successor, or as a result of his premature death, and/or incapability to name his successor, a Pastor/under Shepherd shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.

10.4.4.2 A Pastor/under Shepherd Selection Committee shall be appointed by those senior members in “Good Standing” who make up the ordained leadership found in Eph 4:11. This list will also include the ordained Elders and licensed Ministers. The Pastor/under Shepherd Selection Committee will be comprised of no less than 3 and no more than 9 members. The number of this team must always be odd to mitigate any ties regarding nominees.

10.4.4.3 The Pastor/under Shepherd Committee will recommend only one candidate at a time.

10.4.4.4 The Pastor/under Shepherd election shall take place at a general assembly meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two-weeks’ notice shall be given to the members.

10.4.4.5 An affirmative vote of 80% of the members in "Good Standing", with 75% of those voting in favor of the candidate is necessary for a choice.

10.4.5 Terms of Service and Removal:

10.4.5.1 The Pastor/under Shepherd shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the church in the case of the Pastor/under Shepherd overtaken in sin. In either case, at least sixty (60) days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed upon. Cause of termination and removal by the church must be:

10.4.5.1.1 validated and confirmed by the Pastor/under Shepherd's self-admission;

10.4.5.1.2 or two to three creditable witnesses;

10.4.5.1.3 or by self-incriminating evidence (i.e. documents, pictures, video, etc.)

10.4.5.2 After confirmation, he can be removed if at least 80% of the members in "Good Standing" vote for his removal, with no less than 75% of those who voted in agreement regarding the Pastor/under Shepherd removal. This vote will be executed without deviations and/or modifications.

10.4.5.3 There shall be a written mutual contract/agreement made between the Pastor/under Shepherd and the church. This contract/agreement will be reevaluated each year.

10.5 Elder

10.5.1 Qualifications. Anyone desiring the office of an Elder must show evidence to God's people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications that are set forth in the Scripture (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). All Elders must be ordained for service in the ministry.

10.5.2 His responsibilities:

10.5.2.1 These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, counseling as deemed appropriate by the under the ruling Pastor/under Shepherd. To include assisting in the administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.

10.6 The Assistant Pastor/under Shepherd

10.6.1 Must be an Elder in accordance with the Elder requirement (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). In the absence of the Pastor/under Shepherd, shall serve as the lead Elder, and provide oversight of all routine actions, as deemed appropriate by the Pastor/under Shepherd. The Assistance Pastor/under Shepherd shall actively execute all Pastor/under Shepherd duties and responsibilities when deemed appropriate by the Pastor/under Shepherd, or in the event of a long-term (over 90-days) Pastor/under Shepherd vacancy.

10.7 The Assistant to the Pastor/under Shepherd (Phil 4:3; Col 4:14); Rom, 16). The Assistant to the Pastor/under Shepherd is a leader in the ministry and responsible to assist the Pastor/under Shepherd with ministerial and support needs as they arise. The Assistant to the Pastor/under Shepherd may be assigned specific tasks to oversee:

10.7.1. Receive his ministerial phone calls, represent and lead staff meetings, oversee and lead worship services, and other ministerial duties.

10.7.2. Oversee all ministry counseling needs from the church membership.

10.7.3. Pray with church members and guests who express difficulties in their life.

10.7.4. Teaches regular Bible study classes.

10.7.5. Cooperates with all staff to promote the entire ministry plan of the church.

10.7.6. Serves as an effective liaison to church committees and team ministry efforts.

10.8 Missionaries/Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, (Eph 4:11 offices; 1 Cor 12:27-28)

10.8.1 Apostles. The word apostle comes from the Greek *apostolos* 'messenger,' from *apostellein* 'send forth.'"(3). This word is in keeping with the original 12 apostles that Jesus chose to take the message of salvation to the world (Matthew 10; Luke 11:49; Acts 1-2). Therefore, an apostle is a messenger. According to the Bible, in order to be an apostle there was a certain requirement. The person being considered had to have been an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus Christ from the beginning until He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:15-26). Due to the undeniable impact that Paul had on the church, hence his writing the majority of the New Testament, to include the miracles, signs and wonders which followed him; he too is considered an Apostle like the first twelve. There are no modern-day Apostles of this caliber today, nor is there a need for them; our sacred canon is complete. Therefore modern-day apostles are missionaries (.i.e. like the Apostle Paul was), who seek out those civilizations which have not heard the gospel or have an adamant opinion against it. Consequently, Apostles, must be seminary trained, especially in the discipline of doctrinal defense so that he can apologetically defend the faith (2 Pet 3:15); establish churches, and the leadership therefore. These leaders must have the same qualities and attributes as Elders/Pastors/under Shepherds/Overseers. While serving in the house, the Apostle/missionary is subordinate to the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.8.2 Prophets/Prophetess. The word prophet comes from the Greek *prophētēs* 'spokesman,' from *pro* 'before' + *phētēs* 'speaker' (from *phēnai* 'speak'). "This word is in keeping with the Biblical use of the word of those who speak on behalf of God, both men and women (Gen. 20:7; Exod. 7:1; Exod. 15:20; Judg. 4:4; Lk. 2:36; Acts 21:10). However, the Bible also mentions false prophets as those who do not speak as a spokesperson of God (Acts 13:6; Rev. 2:20). Therefore, a prophet of God is a spokesperson for God. With this mind, it is important to understand that if a person calls themselves a prophet, they speak on behalf of God. This is a dangerous thing to claim for two reasons. First, is that everything a person says as a self-proclaimed prophet is then claimed to be literally equal to Scripture. Second, if we are still receiving prophecies in addition to the Old and New Testament, then the 66 books of the Old and New Testament are not the completed Bible and this makes Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Proverbs 30:5-6; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; 2 Corinthians 3; and Revelation 22:18-19 all lies. God forbid! There are no prophets of this caliber today, nor is a need for them, because our sacred canon is complete. The Prophets of old, recorded in our Bible, spoke and wrote those instructions, judgments, principles, and precepts directly from the mind of God. Consequently, there are no "new" revelations from God today, therefor modern-day prophets can only spoke and/or pray what has already been written in our Bible. The office of prophet today is one being "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21) in prophetic utterance and prayer which can be: Predictive (Acts 21:10-11; 11:27-28); Directive (Acts 13:1-3); and Corrective (Acts 15:22-23,27,32). Prophecies should be time-tested (Acts 11:28). The words of a prophet are judged by church leadership (1 Cor.14:29). Any prophecy should be confirmed independently (2 Cor 13:1). All prophecy will line up completely with Scripture, "the sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet 1:19-21) without exception. While serving in the house, the Prophet/Prophetess is subordinate to the ruling Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.8.3 Evangelists. The word evangelist comes from the Greek *euangelistēs*, from *euangelizesthai* 'evangelize.' This word is translated as a person who seeks to convert others to the Christian faith by sharing the good news or gospel of Jesus Christ. The message of an evangelist is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, until the Lord comes there is still a need for evangelists to preach the way of salvation through Christ. However, an evangelist must be someone who understands the true gospel and has trusted Christ as their savior in order to preach a gospel that results in fruit that remains unto Christ (Jhn. 15; 2 Tim. 2:1-7). Evangelist have a burden for the lost, they are seldom in the house of God, are when they are there, it is for rest, refit, spiritual filling, and resources. While serving in the house, the evangelist is subordinate to the ruling Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.8.4 Ministers. One who serves the church in numerous capacities (Rom. 12:7; 16), primarily assisting and serving the Pastor/under Shepherd. They continue in the doctrine, learning growing, and serving faithfully, until the Lord illuminates and confirms their ultimate calling in accordance with Ephesians 4:11. Ministers can be male or female.

10.8.4.1 Roles. Ministers roles are solely sanction by the Pastor/under Shepherd, and are limited in their scope:

10.8.4.1.1 Represents and facilitate staff meetings and worship services

10.8.4.1.2 Pray with church members and guests who express difficulties in their life on a limited basis.

10.8.4.1.3 Teach Bible study classes.

10.8.4.1.4 Cooperates with all staff to promote the entire ministry plan of the church.

10.8.4.1.5 Preach the gospel on the occasion to strengthen the Pastor/under Shepherd's hands, hone their hermeneutic and homiletic skills, and edify the congregation.

10.9 Deacons/Deaconess: The word deacon is derived from the Greek word *diákonos*, which is a standard ancient Greek word meaning "servant", "waiting-man", or "messenger". The office of deacon originated in the selection of seven men by the apostles, among them Stephen, to assist with the charitable work of the early church as recorded in Acts 6. The title deaconess (*diakónissa*) is not found in the Bible. However, one woman, Phoebe, is mentioned at Romans 16:1–2 as a deacon (*diákonos*) of the church in Cenchreae. Deacons and Deaconess shall be appointed to serve in the respective ministries after completed of an approved one-year training plan by the Pastor/under Shepherd

10.9.1. Qualifications:

10.9.1.1 A deacon/deaconess must meet the qualifications listed in 1Timothy 3:8-13. Moreover, be full and filled with the Spirit of the Living God, as displayed by his/her behavior in all matters of life.

10.9.1.2 A deacon/deaconess shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the Pastor/under Shepherd; supporter and promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

10.9.2 Ordination:

10.9.2.1 Selection, election, and ordination of deacons/deaconess are a privilege of the local church.

10.9.2.2 When ordination of deacons/deaconess is planned by the church, the Pastor/under Shepherd will examine the candidates concerning their fit to serve as such.

10.9.2.3 The Pastor/under Shepherd may direct that a separate council to examine the deacons/deaconess composed of the ordained Elders, Prophet/Prophetess, Evangelist, and Apostle's within the ministry.

10.9.2.4. When the council recommends the ordination of deacons/deaconess, the ordination service shall be scheduled as led by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.9.3 Duties:

10.9.3.1 Appointed deacons/deaconess shall recommend to the Pastor/under Shepherd the chairman of their ministry. The Pastor/under Shepherd will confirm the appropriate selection.

10.9.3.2 Deacons/Deaconess serves as a committee of counsel to assist the Pastor/under Shepherd concerning the progress and welfare of the church.

10.9.3.3 Assist the Pastor/under Shepherd in ministering to the members of the church by implementing the Deacon/Deaconess Ministry functions, and or Pastor/under Shepherd guided initiatives and tasks.

10.9.3.4 Seek to solve any fellowship problems of the church.

10.9.3.5 Assist the Pastor/under Shepherd in administering the church ordinances.

10.9.3.6 Serve on any advisory committee as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.10 Church hierarchal structure and order (1 Cor. 14:40): Greater Community is the "Church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15). In its worship, it worships the Eternal and Majestic El Elyon (The Most High God). It is the depository of His truth. It is the visible "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16). Our Lord states that it is "My Church" (Matt. 16:18). Our church is redeemed by His blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19); His body (1 Cor. 12:27); identified with Him by the world; and the chief means by which his Name is made known in the earth. It is light derived from him shining in a dark place; the abiding place of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 3:16). Finally, the great instrument for the conversion of the ungodly.

10.10.1 Greater Community's order of spiritual leadership, administrative and ministerial service is as follows: The Pastor/under Shepherd, The Assistant Pastor, Elders, Those of the Eph 4:11 offices, Ministers of the Gospel, Deacons, and then the laity. Of special note, the Assistant to the Pastor/under Shepherd can be given the authority to execute and direct special projects as sanction by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.11 Licensing and Ordaining

10.11.1 Licensing (Acts 21:40; 25:16; Jud. 1:4): Licensing is defined as the authority and/or liberty given to do or forbear any act; especially, a formal permission from the proper authorities to perform certain acts or to carry on a certain business, which without such permission would be illegal (*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*). Licensing is a traditional church practice, which serves to credential a member to serve in various ministry capacities. Licensing is the first step to fulfilling God's mandate for the vocation of His chosen vessel of honor (Eph. 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:20-22). Regardless of the need or protocol, this process will be approved by the Pastor/under Shepherd. Any member of the church who is in "Good Standing", and has shown by a life conducive to the gospel, may be licensed by the Pastor/under Shepherd to execute ministry/services as needed. Transient members who have licensing credentials from a like-minded, Christ centered, and faith-based church may seek licensing from the Pastor/under Shepherd. After training and supervision, and after having served in an observable capacity of ministry, the Pastor/under Shepherd will deliberate with the church leadership, and then present the candidate before the church at a scheduled General Assembly. Due to the transient nature of the church, members who will not be able to serve at least one full year in this ministry after training and supervision, will not be licensed, but the Pastor/under Shepherd may provide the member with a letter of endorsement, character, and training upon departure. The Deacon/Deaconess ministry does not need a license to proceed to ordination.

10.11.2 Ordinations (Acts 13:1-5; Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6). Ordination is an exceptionally important, spiritual, and supernatural activity of commissioning, which must only be done for an intended purpose and for a particular need. After a licensed leader has spent time in training, testing, service, and consecration; ordination may be warranted based on the need of those services to the body, community, region, etc.

The Pastor/under Shepherd will oversee and approve all Ephesians 4:11 ministry ordinations (i.e. Pastor/under Shepherd, Evangelists, Prophets, and Apostles/Missionaries,); to include all Elder and Deacon/Deaconess Ordinations. When a need arises, the Pastor/under Shepherd will: deliberate with the potential candidate regarding the commission; train and supervise persons in accordance with the scriptures, mission, vocation, and geography; and plan a timeline to ordination. Due to the transient nature of the church, members who will not be able, to serve at least one full year in

this ministry will not be ordained, but the Pastor/under Shepherd will provide the member with a letter of endorsement, character, and training.

10.11.3 Revoking of License and/or Ordination. A licensed or ordained leader of the church may have their credentials revoked and/or suspended with proper cause upon the recommendation of the Pastor/under Shepherd, deacons/deaconess, and/or ordained or licensed members when proof of unspiritual, unethical, and unbecoming behavior is supplied. The licensed or ordained member will be counseled, suspended and/or removed from their ministerial duties for a predetermined time by the Pastor/under Shepherd. Reinstatement criterion will be handled on a case-by-case basis. *(See Church Discipline section)*

10.12 Church Staff (Lev. 19:13; Lk. 10:7; Matt. 10:10; 1 Tim. 5:18): This church will employ staff, as the ministry needs are evaluated and reevaluated, the staff can expand or retract in size.

10.12.1 Staff members other than that of the Pastor/under Shepard shall be recommended for employment by the pastoral ministry team or a pastoral designated special committee.

10.12.2 A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

10.12.3 All staff members will be paid in accordance with established protocols. It is the church's responsibility to ensure the staff is paid. All means possible must be exhausted and explored to ensure timely payment in the norm. Once the staff member is paid, it is his/her prerogative to give the money back to the church.

10.12.3.1 Clerk/Secretary

10.12.3.1.1 The church clerk/secretary shall be selected by the Pastor/under Shepherd and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all general assembly's transactions of the church in preparation the annual report to the Pastor/under Shepard. This task may the responsibility of the Church Administrator, if tasked by the Pastor/under Shepard.

10.12.3.1.2 He or she shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the church members, with dates of admission, dismissal, dedication of children, and deaths of members of the church family.

10.12.3.1.3 He or she shall write letters as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd in regards to matters of church membership, prepare written reports of the church, and keep an accurate history of the church events.

10.12.3.1.4 An assistant church clerk may be selected by the Pastor/under Shepherd. Specific office responsibilities may be delegated to a church secretary or other appointed office staff as needed.

10.12.3.1.5 The clerk/secretary will perform those duties and all those applicable to his/her duty description.

10.12.3.2 Financial Director

10.12.3.2.1 The church financial director shall be elected as the custodian of all moneys of the church and shall disburse moneys by checks as authorized by the Pastor/under Shepherd, and established financial institutions and non-profit organizations.

10.12.3.2.2 He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.

10.12.3.2.3 The financial director's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee established by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.12.3.2.4 The financial director shall be responsible for seeing that the offerings are properly received, counted, and deposited in the church's bank account.

10.12.3.2.5 He or she shall properly credit each contributor and his or her offerings.

10.12.3.2.6 He or she shall be responsible for preparing and mailing a quarterly or annual record of contribution to donors.

10.12.3.2.7 Provide a comprehensive itemized financial review upon request of the Pastor/under Shepherd to the church.

10.12.3.2.8 The financial director will perform those duties and all those applicable to his/her duty description.

10.12.4 Administrative Executive Assistant. The Administrative Executive Assistant works collaborative and in support of the Church Office staff and directly for the Pastor/under Shepherd in completing administrative, clerical, office, research, and other delegated tasks. The Administrative Assistant may:

10.12.4.1 Provide administrative assistance to Church Office staff and support administrative initiatives and projects.

10.12.4.1.1 Works on specific assignments as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd for effective administrative functions.

10.12.4.1.2 Assist the Church Secretary as necessary with telephone communications by answering incoming calls to GCMBC in a courteous, friendly and professional manner and direct calls to the recipient politely and quickly.

10.12.4.1.3 Prepare documents or facilitate administrative tasks as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.12.4.1.4 Ensure compliance and implementation of policies put in place by leadership.

10.12.4.1.5 Attend Pastoral Ministry Team meetings and other meetings as required and requested by the Pastor/under Shepherd to record, prepare, and distribute meeting minutes, as necessary.

10.12.4.1.6 Assist GCMBC Ministry Teams with administrative functions and other duties as assigned.

10.13 Additional Support Staff (Pro. 11:14; Isa. 41:10; Phil. 2:4; Lk. 22:26; 1 Pet. 4:10)

10.13.1 Trustees: operate under the guidance of the Pastor/under Shepherd for financial concerns or matters; which is for the sole handling and management of property and financial matters that exceed the amount of \$5000.00 or more.

10.13.1.1 At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to hold trust the property of the church.

10.13.1.2 They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

10.13.1.3 It shall be the function of the trustees to sign any, and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

10.14 Pastoral Ministry Team:

10.14.1 The pastoral ministry team will be designated by the Pastor/under Shepherd. The team will consist of those members actively serving within the ministry.

10.14.2 The pastoral ministry team shall be to recommend to the church objectives and goals; review the coordinated program plans recommended by the Pastor/under Shepherd, church officers, organizations, and committees; to

recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

10.14.3 All matters agreed on by the pastoral ministry team calling for action not already provided for shall be referred to the church for voting.

10.15 Church Ministry Teams: All Ministry Teams will have comprehensive “Ministry Guidelines or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)” to facilitate functional, orderly, and clear guidance for implementing ministries within the church. The Ministry Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures may be modified, addendums, cancelled, or dissolved under the direction and guidance of the Pastor/under Shepherd. Each Ministry Team will be responsible for annual updating of Ministry Guidelines to be submitted to and approved by the Pastor/under Shepherd and the Pastoral Administrative Ministry Team.

This Ministry Team will have a comprehensive “Ministry Handbook” for establishing the ministry guidelines, standard operating procedures, protocol, documentation, organization of the ministry, and functions related specifically to the ministry team.

Greater Community will implement Ministry Teams or committees to address the current issues within the culture of the church and community as being directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd, or evident by church needs or studies. The Pastor/under Shepherd reserves the leadership right and discretion to implement, retain, or dissolve ministry teams or committees.

10.15.1 Leader/Advisor: Ministry Advisors’ will regularly meet with the Pastor/under Shepherd to discuss ministry oversight, development, spiritual growth of their respected ministry areas, and issues. This formation will be referred to as the Pastoral Advisory Ministry Team. Purpose of the Advisor is to inform and advise the Pastor/under Shepherd on issues related to ministry challenges and activities; transmit information from leadership meetings, recommend actions for improvement, support the Pastor/under Shepherd and other duties as directed.

The Ministry Advisors responsibilities are to provide ministry advisement and leadership for and to the ministries teams within their ministry area as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd. Advisors will chair or participate in meetings, assist with planning, implementation of ministry events, work in collaboration with other leaders, facilitate unity, provide a written activities report to the Pastor/under Shepherd, and work with Administration for coordination of ministry.

The Overall Ministry Teams and Advisors hierarchical structure shall be the comprehensive organizational structure, unless ministry needs change, or pastoral discretion to support the church vision, mission, and goals. The crucial operating ministries are briefly defined as follows:

10.15.2 Men’s Ministry Team: established by the Pastor/under Shepherd to provide an opportunity for the men of the church to study and fellowship. Conduct regular meetings for all men to join in the vision of the church, mentor, support, encourage, and empower one another for kingdom victorious living.

10.15.3 Women’s Ministry Team: established by the Pastor/under Shepherd to provide an opportunity for the women of the church to study and fellowship. Conduct regular meetings for all women to join in the vision of the church, mentor, support, encourage, and empower one another for kingdom victorious living.

10.15.4 Deacon/Deaconess Ministry: established and monitored by the Pastor/under Shepherd facilitating all-encompassing membership care and concern to include church building and grounds care, and perform other duties as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd.

10.15.5 Christian Education Ministry Team: This ministry is responsible for planning and coordinating all programs and activities inside and outside of the church. These activities are to be correlated with the activities of the church program organization in attaining objectives set forth by the Pastor/under Shepherd. The Pastor/under Shepherd will designate a leader to implement a comprehensive Christian education plan. All activities and curriculum will correspond at the appropriate level for each age group; to include nursery level, primary, and youth, children up to the age of eighteen (18 years of age) enrolled in high school, and beyond. This ministry shall lead the church in developing and implementing an effective education-training program. Most importantly (foremost) for the following Christian Education Areas:

10.15.6 Sunday Bible Study: The Sunday Bible Study shall be divided into classes and departments as it grows and conducted under the direction of a director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday Bible Study shall be to teach the Bible; lead in reaching all prospects; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

10.15.7 Youth Ministry. The Children's ministry age groups may reflect a sub-grouping to include nursery level through elementary school grades levels. A curriculum grid would support level groups such as; 4th to 6th Grades, 1st to 3rd Grades, Pre-K/Kindergarten (ages 3-5), and Nursery to 2 years of age- infants.

10.15.8 Helps Ministry Team:

10.15.8.1 Hospitality Ministry. Ensures a ministry team effort to express genuine care and hospitality in the church environment and on behalf of the church, provide appropriate acknowledgements for special events, make arrangements for guest(s) requiring lodging, meals, etc. for special ministry events conducted by the church.

10.15.8.2 Fellowship Ministry. This ministry plans or coordinates with other ministry teams for special fellowship meals, etc. for church events. This ministry shall have general supervision of the supplies, equipment, and use of the church kitchen suggesting to the church rules and regulations as they deem wise. It shall enforce policies necessary to properly maintain the kitchen in a clean, orderly, and acceptable condition.

10.15.8.3 Ushers Ministry. This ministry will prep and assist leader's and participants before, during, and after worship, and special services. This ministry greets and seats people attending the service, works closely with the Pastor/under Shepherd or officiating leader as needed, provides information and assistance, distribute bulletins or materials, and assist with receiving offerings as required.

10.15.8.4 Congregation Care Ministry. Anything not covered under hospitality.

10.15.8.5 Nursing Home Ministry. First those members of the house then to outsiders.

10.15.9 Transportation Ministry. First to those of the house then outsiders.

10.15.10 Media Ministry. Any means by which worship is captured and given out.

10.15.11 Music and Worship Ministry: This ministry has different components to support the worship experience of the church. It includes the music ministry of the church, oversee proper use and care of musical instruments on the premise, recommend equipment needs, recruit and train persons participating on ministry teams, and evaluate church music ministry needs, make recommendations to the Pastor/under Shepherd, and support vision and church spiritual focus through the vehicle of music and worship:

10.15.11.1 Choir Ministry

10.15.11.2 Praise and Worship Team

10.15.11.3 Youth Choir

10.15.11.4 Dance Ministry

10.15.12 Facilities and Grounds Ministry: This ministry shall be responsible in matters of the church facilities and properties administration. Throughout the year, this committee shall give attention to and study the condition and state of repair and appearance of the facilities and grounds of the church and equipment therein, making arrangements for repairs and improvements authorized by the Pastor/under Shepherd and included in the church budget. All matters of major repairs, changes, improvements or items of equipment not included in the budget shall be referred to the pastoral ministry team for fiscal review. Purchase of equipment shall be through this ministry unless another committee is directed specifically to make studies, report to the Pastor/under Shepherd, and make necessary arrangements as the Pastoral Administrative Ministry Team deliberates, and or presents to the church for a vote of implementation.

10.15.13 Evangelism Ministry: This ministry is under the immediate leadership of the Pastor/under Shepherd. The Pastor/under Shepherd forms a committee to develop and implement a strategy for effective programs of community evangelism outreach such as visitation; Bible studies in homes, offices, places of works; special evangelistic meetings inside and outside of the church; and other needed programs to reach people with the gospel. This committee is also responsible for planning training events for evangelism “soul winning”, as well as the production or securing evangelistic printed materials to be used by the church.

10.15.14 Community, Social and, Public Relations Ministry: This ministry is responsible for the preparing and managing the distribution of press releases concerning church events. To enhance leaderships’ understanding of the imperative of good community relations. To make studies and recommendations of appropriate media to reach specific target audiences. To recommend proper policies and projects to enhance community relations within the church and beyond. To plan and implement special projects as needed. All publicity and or press releases that concern the church will be submitted to the Pastoral Ministry team for approval.

10.15.15 Other ministries may be formed based on congregational needs, or changes within the church, or as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd. (Current & Future hierarchal structure)

ARTICLE 11. CHURCH MEETINGS (Matt.8:20; 1 Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 5:4)

11.1 *Worship Services*: The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and on Wednesday, or another night, designated for prayer and Bible study. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor/under Shepherd or designated church officer in the absence of the Pastor/under Shepherd.

11.2 *Church Assemblies*: Church Assemblies or corporate church meetings will be held once a quarter or as needed. Meetings should take place once on a weekend and once on a weekday. The agenda shall be circulated or made known to the church as soon as possible prior to the assembly. Should there be any unusual meeting or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular meeting, notice shall be given to the membership as soon as possible prior to that meeting.

11.3 *Business Meetings*: A special call business meeting may be summoned by the Pastor/under Shepherd, and with other church leaders, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. All available members are expected to attend this meeting.

11.4 *Parliamentary Rules*: Robert's Rules of Order (or an agreed upon modified version) will be adopted as the authority for rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings. Robert's Rules of Order is the good and acceptable standard for meetings. All church ministry teams and leadership will govern personal behavior and meetings in a respectful and orderly manner until all parliamentary rules can be implemented.

ARTICLE 12 - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (Ecc. 3:1-8)

12.1 The Constitution Articles will be reviewed once every two years or as directed by the Pastor/under Shepherd for its correctness, spiritual and cultural relevance to the ministry. The Pastor/under Shepherd reserves all rights to the changing, modifying, and/or amending the Constitution as led by the Word and Spirit of God. His only obligation is (1) to ensure that he does not intentionally change this document for personal advantage and (2) to notify the membership of the changes. Any disputes that arise over the interpretation of these Constitution shall be deferred to the highest authority of this church, which is the Pastor/under Shepherd, with the advisement from his pastoral ministry team, and/or selected ministry leaders within the body, or the like.

12.2 The Pastor/under Shepherd can designate a 7 to 12 member board for the sole purpose of convening to deliberate potential amendments to the Constitution. Other than Pastoral/under Shepherd implementation, the steps of amending the Constitution are as follows:

12.3 This initial step is constructed by the Pastor/under Shepherd designating a convening board of 7 to 12 members whose sole purpose is to engage proposed changes to the existing Constitution. The Pastor/under Shepherd will present these thought provoking questions to determine the validity of any actions:

12.3.1 Is the proposed change needed, meaning that the ministry could potentially fail as a result of changes not being made?

12.3.2 Will the proposed change violate members' rights?

12.3.3 Is the proposed change consistent with the existing constitution or bylaws documentation?

12.3.4 Is the proposed change reasonable and relevant, meaning does it pass the commonsense test?

12.3.5 Can the proposed change be obeyed by the ministry without compromise?

*Note - If the majority of the convening board (i.e. designated by the Pastor/under Shepherd) answer, "Yes", to **ALL** questions listed above then proceed to Step 2.*

12.4 This step requires the convening board of members (i.e. designated by the Pastor/under Shepherd) to review the current Articles to determine the validity of the proposed change in the section of the Constitution of which it applies. Once identified, the group will deliberate modifications, deletions, and or changes to the existing Constitution in light of the proposed changes. At the end of all deliberations, the board will proceed to Step 3.

12.5 This step requires that all modifications, deletions, and or changes to the existing Constitution be "tabled" (i.e. cease action for meditation and spiritual consultation) for no less than 24 hours so that all board members can commit the proposed amendments to prayer. After no less than 24 hours, the board will convene to determine changes in heart, thought, or intents. Once all changes in heart, thoughts, or intents have been addressed in light of the proposed amendments, the board will then vote to accept the amendments. Only those proposed amendments that receive 80% of acceptance will become amendments, unless rejected by the Pastor/under Shepherd. The accepted amendment then needs to be written in a manner that captures the spirit of the original Constitution ensuring that everyone can comprehend its contents. Once the amendment(s) is/are written, the board, to include members of the board with who voted and how, then the board can proceed to Step 4.

12.6 This step mandates that amendments be published (written and discussed) at the next general assembly meeting. At this meeting, members can voice their opinions and concerns, but all objections must be made in writing to the board for their feedback. The board with convene within a 30-day period solely to address the congregational feedback. If the

board determines that the issues are relevant for discussion, they will present their findings to the Pastor/under Shepherd who will then determine if another session of deliberations regarding amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws will commence again. **Each Revised Constitution will have an updated naming convention (i.e. GC^{MBC} Constitution Final as of Day/Month/Year) embedded with the Header of the document.**

Constructed by: Greater Community^{MBC} Constitution Development Team

Pastor/under Shepherd Dr. Chris A. Parks //Original signed//	First Lady Dr. Leticia Parks //Original signed//	Deacon Thomas Goodman //Original signed//	Mother Ruth Goodman //Original signed//
Deacon Joseph Grumney //Original signed//	Deaconess Mechelle Grumney //Original signed//	Deacon Tommie Hollins //Original signed//	Deaconess Lois Hollins //Original signed//
Minister Timiya Butts //Original signed//	Sister Yesenia Butts //Original signed//	Minister Dustin Gilmore //Original signed//	Sister Cydnee Gilmore //Original signed//
Minister Nathasia Dorsey //Original signed//	GCMBC Seal and Date: //Original Sealed and dated: 24 NOV 2019//		