

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

## Article I

### **Name and Incorporation**

The name of this congregation shall be New Life Christian Community, a non-denominational church. For the purpose of this constitution and bylaws, New Life Christian Community shall be referred to as “this congregation” and shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

## Article 2

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this congregation is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; to go and make disciples of all people, baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded.

## Article 3

### **Statement of Faith**

- a. This congregation believes that the Bible is the Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in the matters of faith and conduct.
- b. This congregation believes that there is 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.
- c. This congregation believes in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in his virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe He died in our place to atone for our sins, in His bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, continual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.
- d. This congregation believes in the Holy Spirit, sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need for a Savior and regenerates them. 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. 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.
- e. This congregation believes that man was created in the image of God, that 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.
- f. This congregation believes that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior receive forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life, and are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

- g. This congregation believes that salvation from judgment, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life are free gifts of God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and cannot be earned, deserved, inherited or bought.
- h. This congregation believes that water baptism is the symbol of Holy Spirit baptism, and therefore is done by immersion for followers of Jesus Christ. We also believe in the dedication of children to God, as well as their parents, family and this church to raise the child in such a way that they might live for God. We intentionally celebrate and communicate about these events so as to clear up any confusion that may arise.
- i. This congregation believes that those who celebrate in the partaking of the Lord's Supper should be believers walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- j. This congregation believes that the Church is the body of Christ on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit and exists to evangelize the lost and to edify the saved.
- k. This congregation believes that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with each other as partners in the building of the kingdom of God.

## Article 4 **Partnership and Covenant**

### 4.01 Partnership Requirements

Individuals desiring to join this church shall first meet with an elder and/or pastor two or more times to discuss and verify agreement to the fundamental beliefs of New Life Christian Community as stated in the constitution. Upon completion, each individual shall sign the partnership covenant. Any youth who has reached the age of 16 may participate in this process.

### 4.02 Conditions for Removal of Partnership

Partners may be removed from the roll of this church by the action of the Elders when the following conditions apply:

- a. The partner has not attended services for one year. Any partner who has not been worshipping regularly will be contacted by a partner of the Body to see if any help is needed.
- b. The partner is in violation of the Partnership Covenant, has been interviewed by the Elders following the principles of Matthew 18:15-20, there is no positive response, and therefore the decision to remove the partner from the rolls has been made. The procedure in Matthew 18 is as follows:
  - 1. One member of the Elder Board will speak personally with that person regarding the violation to the Covenant.
  - 2. If the behavior continues, the person will be brought before the entire Board.
  - 3. If the violation continues to occur, the person will be brought before the church; the church will have an opportunity to speak with and question the person; the church will then vote on whether or not to remove this person who will then be notified in person and in writing of the decision.

Article 5  
**Powers of the Congregation**

The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregational Meeting, called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws. Specific authority is delegated to the Elder Board or other organization units in this document; all remaining authority is retained by the Congregation, who has the authority to:

- a. call a pastor
- b. terminate the call of a pastor
- c. adopt amendments to the constitution and bylaws
- d. approve the annual budget
- e. acquire real and personal property by gift, will, purchase or other lawful means
- f. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose
- g. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means
- h. approve the Elders and require that they carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and bylaws
- i. vote on any other matter before the congregation at the annual meeting or any special congregational meeting called in accordance to the provisions in this constitution and bylaws

Article 6  
**The Pastor**

6.01 Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of partners present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.

6.02 Consistent with the faith and practice of the church, every pastor shall:

- a. Lead this church in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. Preach and teach the Word
- c. Administer baptism and communion
- d. Conduct public worship
- e. Provide pastoral care: visit the sick and distressed, counsel those in need or refer them to a qualified counselor
- f. Perform marriages and funerals
- g. With the Elder Board, administer discipline
- h. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel
- i. Equip and encourage people for leadership roles within the church
- j. Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications (e.g., church newsletter and local newspapers)

6.03 The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call.

6.04 The call of this church, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated for the following reasons:

- a. mutual agreement to terminate the call
- b. resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted
- c. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor
- d. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty
- e. the dissolution of the church

6.05 At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Elders.

6.06 When an associate pastor is called to serve, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the elders. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

6.07 Pastors shall ensure accurate parochial records are kept. The pastor shall be responsible to assign the task or to keep accurate parochial records of all baptism, marriages, burials, partners received, dismissed or excluded from this church, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the church.

6.08 The pastor shall be a partner of this church.

## Article 7 **Elders**

7.01 Any male partner of this church may be elected to be an Elder, subject only to the quality of their character (1 Timothy 3:8-13). A person's place on the Elder Board shall be declared vacant if the person (a) ceases to be a partner of this church, or (b) is terminated as an Elder due to reasons noted in [7.11].

7.02 Elder candidates shall be nominated by the current Elder Board and voted on by the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

7.03 The Elder Board shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this church, and in particular its ministry life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God. The duties of this board shall include the following:

- a. To assist and give direction to this church in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its missions and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all partners of this church in worship, learning, witness, service and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this church to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the life and ministry expected of all baptized followers of Jesus Christ.
- f. To promote a church climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

7.04 The Elders shall see that the provisions of this constitution/bylaws are carried out.

7.05 The Elders shall provide for an annual review of the partnership roster.

7.06 The Elders shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried staff and lay workers of the church.

7.07 The Elders shall submit a comprehensive report to this church at the Annual Meeting.

7.08 The Elders shall set the date and time of the Annual Meeting.

7.09 The Elders shall normally meet at least once a month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Board Chairman. Notice to each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

7.10 A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the elders, including the pastor or interim pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda or routine matter which shall be the only business of the meeting.

7.11 An elder's position may be terminated for the following reasons:

- a. the physical or mental incapacity of the elder
- b. disqualification of the elder through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty
- c. the dissolution of the church

7.12 An elder must be a partner of this church.

## Article 8 **Ministry Teams**

8.01 Ministry Teams shall be formed as needed to assist the pastor and elders in carrying out the ministries of this church, directed at both the needs of people within the church and those in the larger community, according to the commands of God's Word and the mission and purposes of this church.

8.02 Each ministry team shall appoint a leader to facilitate the actions and responsibilities of the ministry. Leaders shall be appointed only after they have proven themselves to be faithful and mature church partners. Leaders are responsible for communicating the actions of their teams to the Elder Board at quarterly joint meetings (see [8.04]). Leaders shall also provide a report of their team's activities from the previous year to the Elder Board prior to the Annual Meeting.

8.03 Each ministry team shall meet together on an as-needed basis, or no less than once per quarter.

8.04 Ministry team leaders shall meet together with the Elder Board as needed, or no less than once per quarter.

8.05 Each ministry team may make their own decisions regarding the use of the funds appropriated to them in the church budget.

8.06 Ministry teams are open to all people of the church who wish to serve, both partners and non-partners who regularly attend New Life.

8.07 The Finance Ministry Team shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this church. This team:

- a. shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting the church's property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to a Board of Trustees under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this church.
- c. may enter into contracts/expenditures of up to 3% of this church's current annual budget without church approval.
- d. shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by the church, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance with the budget following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than 3% of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a meeting of the church.
- e. shall ascertain that the financial affairs of the church are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
- f. shall be responsible for the church's investments and its total insurance program.

## Article 9 **Church Meetings**

9.01 The Annual Meeting of this church shall be held typically during the month of January each year at a date and time to be determined by the Elders, subject to proper notice requirements of this constitution. Its purpose is to celebrate the work the church has accomplished to advance the Kingdom of God, to share our vision, and communicate plans for the future.

9.02 Only active partners will be allowed to vote at official meetings of the church.

9.03 A special church meeting may be called by the pastor, or the elders of this church, and shall be called at the written request of ten percent of the partners. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted at the special meeting.

9.04 Notice of all meetings of this church shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and/or by mail to all voting partners at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent the last known address of such partners shall be sufficient.

9.05 Two thirds of all partners shall constitute a quorum.

9.06 Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

9.07 All actions by this church shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

9.08 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this church.

## Article 10 **Officers of the Church**

10.01 The Elder Board officers shall be chosen, by mutual agreement, by the Pastor and the existing elders. The officers shall serve for one year, and may be reappointed to a second term. The offices are as follows:

- a. Chairman: presides at the Annual Meeting and all congregational meetings, and as appropriate, signs necessary documents and reports
- b. Vice Chairman: presides at all meetings of this church in the absence of the Chairman
- c. Secretary: keeps accurate minutes of all Elder Board meetings and congregational meetings, seeing that these are prepared and printed for distribution

10.02 The Treasurer of this church shall:

- a. receive and disburse all moneys of this church as dictated by this church's budget,
- b. oversee the ledger of all transactions
- c. report as requested to the Elders and to the annual meeting of this church
- d. be a member of the Finance Ministry Team
- e. be nominated from within the Finance Ministry Team and approved by a vote at the Annual Meeting for a three year term.

10.03 The Financial Secretary of this church shall:

- a. keep an accurate record of all donations given by the individual partners and visitors of this church through the offering envelopes
- b. send individual giving reports to the members at the beginning of each year
- c. report to the Elders and the Annual Meeting
- d. be a member of the Finance Ministry Team
- e. be nominated from within the Finance Ministry Team and approved by a vote at the Annual Meeting for a three year term.

10.04 No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Article Eleven  
**Church Committees**

11.01 There shall be an Auditing Committee of three voting partners of this church , nominated by the Elder Board and elected at the Annual Meeting to three year terms, one of which shall expire each year; this committee shall audit the books of this church and all related organizations at the end of each year and report it's finding to this church at the Annual Meeting.

11.02 Ad Hoc Committees (e.g. Constitution, Anniversary, etc.) may be established as needed by the Elders; such committees normally would be disbanded after the purpose for which they were established has been accomplished.

11.03 When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Elders shall use one of the following two procedures:

- a. A Search Committee of no more than eight partners of this church shall be appointed by the Elder Board to work in the process of securing a new pastor; the committee will terminate with the ordination of the newly called pastor.
- b. The Elders shall function as the Search Committee, in the process of securing a new pastor, if the appointed Search Committee is unable to complete the process.
- c. Any pastoral candidate selected by the Search Committee must personally visit New Life to worship and preach before that candidate may be put before the church for a vote.

Article Twelve  
**Amendments**

12.01 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 15 voting partners or by the Elders. Proposals must be filed in writing 60 days before the formal consideration by the church at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. They shall notify the partners of this church of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

12.02 A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at a church partner meeting held not less than 90 days after perceiving preliminary approval as in 13.02 by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting;
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

12.03 The amendment shall become effective at the completion of the meeting at which there was a vote.

Article Thirteen  
**Continuing Resolutions**

13.01 The Elders may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various committees or organizations of this church.

13.02 Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Elder Board.