Bylaws of [Name of Congregation]

 The [Name of Congregation] hereby adopts these bylaws to memorialize for legal purposes the goals and practices of this entity. The **[Name of Congregation] currently meets at [address], and is organized as a NonProfit Corporation under the laws of the state of [State]. These bylaws shall be applicable to all business of this congregation and will remain in effect until a change is officially accomplished by the congregation. We adopt these bylaws to protect us from unwanted government intrusion on our right to freely practice our religion as set forth in Constitution of the United States. We hereby provide notice of our intent to protect our rights to practice our faith free from the dictates or oversight of human institutions.**

**Supremacy of the Bible**

We believe that the Holy Bible is the inerrant and perfect Word of God. We are determined to follow its teachings to the fullest extent of our ability. We recognize no authority outside the Bible in matters of faith and intend to hold to its teaching no matter the cost. We subscribe to no creed, catechism, or statement of faith other than the Bible. These bylaws are intended only as a statement to the world of our intent to practice the principles of the Bible. These bylaws are not intended as a comprehensive statement or summary of our beliefs, but a formal acknowledgment of the authority of the Bible to guide all of our decisions. These bylaws are intended to provide a guide to any court system as to our commitment and dispute resolution practices before any dispute arises.

**Elders**

 We believe that the Bible teaches that a local group of elders have the sole authority to lead and make decisions for local congregations such as ours. We believe that local congregations are autonomous. We recognize no earthly religious authority higher than the local eldership for an individual congregation. As such, the **[Name of Congregation]** shall be overseen and directed by our elders who shall be appointed in accordance with Biblical teaching. Our elders shall be charged with making decisions for the congregation. Our elders, subject to answering to Almighty God, shall be the final authority on matters of Biblical teaching and interpretation as applied to this congregation.

 Our elders shall have authority to conduct all the affairs of this congregation. Our elders shall have authority to manage all assets, debts, and legal affairs of the congregation and its property, employees, and other rights and responsibilities. Our elders shall have authority to amend these bylaws and other incorporation documents of this congregation. Our elders shall act according to the internal policies and standards they decide for themselves.

 If our congregation has no elders, then the responsibility of the elders shall be held by the men of the congregation who shall act by Men’s Business Meeting. We recognize that the Bible teaches the doctrine of male leadership and vests the authority of leadership in men. For this reason, in the absence of elders, the male members of the congregation shall have decision making authority and shall be the final authority on matters of Biblical teaching and interpretation.

Any Men’s Business Meeting must be conducted with sufficient notice to members of the congregation. Sufficient notice shall be satisfied by holding a regularly scheduled and announced meeting at regular intervals through time. A special Men’s Business Meeting shall require a public announcement at the regular Sunday Morning worship assembly of the date, time, and place of the special Men’s Business Meeting. Sufficient notice shall require at least two days notice to the congregation before the special Meeting. The special Men’s Business Meetings shall be held during regular waking hours at the Church building. The Men’s Business Meeting shall act by majority vote in meetings scheduled with notice to the congregation.

**Membership**

 Our elders shall maintain a list of members of the congregation and include a designation if the person is faithful and in good standing with the congregation. Our elders shall have final authority to decide whether a person is eligible for membership and whether they are faithful based on the teachings of the Bible and their decisions shall not be subject to review by any other earthly authority.

**Church Property**

 **All church property and resources shall be reserved for use in ways that glorify Almighty God and advance the interests of His Kingdom. Church property must never be used in ways that violate Biblical teaching or support conduct the Bible condemns.**

**We hereby reserve the right to refuse or revoke permission for anyone to use church property or resources on the basis that their intended use will include or promote behavior that violates the teachings of the Bible. Such uses may include, but are not limited to, weddings, showers, anniversaries, birthday parties, civil unions, celebrations, vow renewals, or other memorials and gatherings. To the extent that our elders believe that any potential use will focus on conduct or relationships condemned by the Bible, our elders will refuse or revoke their permission for such uses. These condemned relationships include, but are not limited to, marriage by people who are actually in an adulterous relationship according to the Bible, marriage or other unions by people of the same sex, or other relationships that are sinful according to the teachings of the Bible. Other prohibited uses may include, but are not limited to, drunkenness, carousing, promiscuity, immorality, indecency, or other behavior condemned in the Bible. Decisions on permission to use church property shall be made in the discretion of our eldership, in accordance with their understanding of Biblical principles. Our elders shall also have discretion to refuse or revoke permission for other practical reasons, unrelated to the violation of Biblical principles.**

**Statement on Marriage and Sex**

 **We believe the Bible gives clear and unequivocal teaching regarding sexual relationships of human beings. The Bible condones sexual contact by human beings only in a marriage. Almighty God instituted marriage between the first man and woman; he is the creator and governor of marriage. Jesus reaffirmed God’s institution of marriage and gave very clear teaching about its sanctity and restrictions. We believe the Bible teaches that marriage is the uniting by God of one man and one woman in a lifetime covenant. Additionally, the Bible universally condemns all homosexual conduct – sexual contact between persons of the same gender. We believe that Biblical teaching requires us to condemn as sinful all homosexual conduct, including homosexual marriage. For this reason, our property, resources, and employees are strictly forbidden from being involved with or in any way sanctioning illicit behavior, including homosexuality and homosexual marriage.**

**Church Employees/Teachers/Representatives**

 **As a part of the Body of Christ, we recognize the overwhelming importance of communicating the Word of God to fellow believers and to non-believers. As such, the messages delivered and examples set by our congregation must be protected with great fervor. For this reason, we hereby give notice that we intend to restrict who shall be eligible for employment with us to people who live and speak in conformity with the teachings of the Bible. Any employee, prospective employee, contractor, teacher, guest speaker, or other person connected with our congregation must uphold in word and deed the teachings of scripture. Any failure to uphold the teachings of the Bible subjects a person to immediate termination or other discipline as determined in the sole discretion of our elders.**

**Member Discipline**

 **The Bible sets forth a procedure for holding Christians in local congregations accountable for violating the teachings of the Bible. As a local congregation of the Lord’s Church, we intend to follow these teachings. We hereby give notice that these teachings include the public disclosure of an individual’s behavior and a public call to repentance. These teachings also include the possible expulsion from fellowship of an unrepentant Christian. By becoming a member of the [Name of Congregation], all members agree to be subject to this disciplinary process. No earthly law shall provide exception or redress for the congregation following the Biblical disciplinary process. The disciplinary process interpretation and application shall be administered under the sole discretion of our elders.**

 **Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 2015.**

**Elders: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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