

# Constitution

## *The Chapel*

### **Preamble**

We, the members of this church, in order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to define our responsibilities and to establish orderly governance for our church consistent with the teachings of the Word of God, voluntarily submit ourselves to this Constitution.

### **Article I - Name and Incorporation**

**NAME:** The name of this church shall be The Chapel.

**INCORPORATION:** Founded on January 15, 1934, this church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

### **Article II - Purpose**

The Chapel exists to glorify God by living out the First and Second Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-39) while accomplishing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). To this end, we seek to provide and maintain a place for corporate worship, spiritual growth and ministry to and for The Chapel members and attenders. We may seek to own and maintain suitable real estate and buildings for this purpose, receiving, holding and disbursing gifts, bequests and funds arising from other sources, so as to accomplish those things necessary to fulfilling our purpose.

### **Article III - Doctrinal Statement**

We accept the Word of God (that is, the Scriptures) as our authority in matters of faith and practice, and we adopt the following Doctrinal Statement as our interpretation of Bible doctrine.

1. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are fully inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one, co-equal, which is the Trinity.
3. We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, who has blessed His children with every spiritual blessing. He adopts as His own all those who come to Him through His Son, and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man without division or confusion of the two natures.
5. We believe in the Holy Spirit, one of the three Persons of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He is the life of every believer, empowering the believer for godly living, service and the preaching and teaching of the gospel.
6. We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners in thought, word and deed.

7. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for all believers.
9. We believe in that “blessed hope,” the personal, premillennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
10. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby they become children of God and heirs of eternal life. This is a relationship in which they are eternally secure.
11. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost and the everlasting joy of the saved — which demand a heaven and hell.
12. We believe in the existence of a personal devil, who is working in the world to destroy the souls of mankind and that he and all his fallen angels and all who do not receive Christ as their Savior will eternally suffer in the lake of fire. That is the second death.
13. We believe in the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, whose mission it is to preach the gospel to all the world and to edify believers, glorifying God, with its endeavors being supported by her own freewill gifts and offerings, as faithful stewardship requires.
14. We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord, are Baptism (by immersion following conversion) and Communion (the symbolic remembrance meal commemorating the Lord’s Supper).

#### **Article IV – Statements Of Belief**

The Bible proclaims that all people, even Jesus’ followers, continue to be impacted by and struggle with sin. Therefore, we all remain vulnerable to falling short of God’s perfect will, and thus fail to receive the full measure of His blessings for our lives. Even so, we believe that God offers full redemption, restoration and life eternal to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23; Romans 10:9-10).

As human beings created in the image of God, we believe that every person must be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Genesis 1:27; Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31-38; James 2:1-9).

In light of various interpretations of the Word of God within the Christian community, we set forth the following affirmations to give clear definition to what we believe the Word of God teaches regarding the following areas.

We affirm:

##### **The Sanctity of Human Life**

All humans are made equally in the Image of God, and as such, human life is of the highest intrinsic value. We believe that all human life is a gift from God to be cherished from the time of conception until natural death. Therefore, we believe that this life should not be taken by man through any form of abortion or euthanasia (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; Job 10:8-11; Psalm 139:13-16).

## **Marriage and Family**

God has ordained that the family is an institution established to accomplish His purpose in Christ, and the foundation of the family is marriage. Marriage, according to the Scriptures, is a covenant between one man and one woman, and the blessings and obligations of marriage are designed by God to be for all of this life on earth (Matthew 19:3-6; Mark 10:2-12).

Given God's design for marriage, oversight elders and/or pastors shall not conduct wedding ceremonies, blessings, unions, renewal of vows or the like, contrary to the views contained herein. Nor shall any of The Chapel's property be used for ceremonies or the like that violate this belief.

In marriage, husbands and wives have joint responsibility for the physical and spiritual well-being of one another and their children. God has also appointed husbands to exercise headship within their homes, loving their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. God has also appointed wives to submit to and respect their own husbands (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Ephesians 5:22-31, 6:4; Colossians 3:21).

## **Biblical Sexuality and Sexual Identity**

All humans are created by God as either biologically male or female; as such, He has determined our gender and sexual identity for His glory. (We acknowledge that there are rare, yet real pathologies related to ambiguous genitalia and sexual differentiation; this is not speaking to such conditions.) Sexual relations between husband (male) and wife (female) are commended by God, solely to be given and enjoyed within the covenant of marriage. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including but not limited to adultery, bisexual conduct, fornication, homosexual behavior, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Genesis 1:27, 2:18-24; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:20-23; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; Hebrews 13:4).

## **The Holy Spirit in The Life of The Believer**

Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, beginning with salvation (life in Christ) and continuing forever, and it is God's intent for those who are born again to be filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14; Romans 8:9-15; Ephesians 5:18-21).

The Holy Spirit is sovereign in bestowing gifts of Himself to the Church for the purpose of building up the Church, not to manifestly glorify any individual or the gifts themselves (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 12:14; Ephesians 4:7-16).

## **Leadership in The Church**

Both men and women should utilize their spiritual gifts of leadership within the parameters outlined in God's Word, affirming that spiritual gifts are not gender dependent. We believe and practice that God has created men and women with equal worth, dignity, value and personhood and that He has given them distinct and complementary roles in the Church. Accordingly, the role of elder/pastor/overseer/shepherd within the local church is limited by God's Word to men who meet the biblical quality and character of Scripture. Women who are gifted in leadership and teaching can and will fill vital roles within The Chapel as prescribed by the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:9-15, 3:1-12, 5:9-16; Titus 1:6-9).

## **Article V – Membership Covenant**

The Members of The Chapel enter into a covenant with one another as one local body in Christ. Each Member agrees to follow and support the *Constitution, Bylaws, Membership Covenant, Doctrinal Statement and Statements of Belief* prior to becoming a Member.

Believing in Jesus Christ as the only way to God, trusting in his death and resurrection to accomplish my redemption and bring me into the Church, his Body and Bride, I pledge myself as a member of this local church—The Chapel. In so doing:

1. I will embrace the Purpose of The Chapel stated in Matthew 22:37-39 and Matthew 28:19-20:

<sup>37</sup> *And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* Matthew 22:37-39 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

2. I will support the *Doctrinal Statement* and the *Statements of Belief* of The Chapel by fully embracing the foundational beliefs outlined below, and by prioritizing unity and peace in areas outside these core beliefs where I might hold alternate views. Furthermore, I agree not to teach, formally or informally, anything contrary to the teachings of the church.
  - The Bible is the fully inspired, inerrant Word of God in the original writings, the final authority for all faith, practice and discipline.
  - There is one God, eternally existing as the Trinity in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  - Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sins of the world and was bodily resurrected the third day. He is now interceding for all believers at the right hand of God the Father and will someday return in power and glory.
  - People are created in God's image and made to live in relationship with Him. But through the original disobedience of Adam, all mankind is captive to sin and in need of forgiveness and restoration to relationship with God.
  - Salvation, which is life in Christ, comes by faith alone in the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ on the cross. This salvation includes the forgiveness of sin, the free gift of Christ's righteousness and the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, who indwells all true believers.
3. I will treat others at The Chapel as brothers and sisters in Christ, promoting unity and peace by honoring them in Christian love.
4. I will participate frequently in the worship services and meetings of the church.
5. I will pray for the church and serve in a ministry of the church in a meaningful way.
6. I will contribute to the financial support of the church in a planned and consistent manner.
7. I will nurture my own relationship with Christ in community with others in obedience to the Scriptures.
8. I understand that The Chapel aspires to obey the Bible in all matters including church discipline and restoration when necessary. I will therefore support the established policy governing church disciplinary and restorative procedures as prescribed by the Scriptures.

## **Article VI – Authority and Government**

### **Section 1 – General**

As an independent, evangelical Protestant church, we are under the supreme authority and guidance of Jesus Christ and His Word. The governing authority of The Chapel is vested in its members as they affirm the various oversight elders, deacons and others who lead in the midst of this self-governing body according to this Constitution and associated Bylaws.

### **Section 2 – Biblical Interpretation and Final Authority on Faith Matters**

With respect to the various elements of the *Doctrinal Statement*, the *Statements of Belief* and all other matters of Church theology, we seek divine truth, faith and morality in the life of this church. The Oversight Elder Board, under the guidance of the lead pastor, and in cooperation with the pastoral staff, will make the final determination of interpreting and understanding God's Word. Notwithstanding, the Oversight Elder Board will seek to maintain a posture of humility and wisdom, consulting with like-minded Christian leaders as needed.

### **Section 3 – Oversight Elders: Qualification, Board Composition and Governance**

The Oversight Elder Board (hereafter OEB) shall be charged with the responsibility to oversee the governance of this church body and conduct the affairs of The Chapel in all aspects in accordance with O.R.C. §1702.30.

1. The OEB shall consist of men who have consistently demonstrated the godly qualities prescribed in the Scriptures for those aspiring to such a role and serving the Church and being devoted to her well-being in Christ. As those who seek to be filled with the Spirit, they represent the leadership of Jesus to the Church (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
2. The OEB shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) to a maximum of eleven (11) men. With the exception of the lead pastor, the OEB shall be composed of non-staff members of The Chapel. The lead pastor will serve ex-officio as a voting member of the OEB without serving as chairman. Each member of the OEB shall have an equal vote.
3. Non-staff members of the OEB shall serve three-year terms, staggered to promote continuity. Non-staff OEB members shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. An OEB member who serves less than two (2) full years is eligible for two (2) additional terms. Terms begin in January.
4. Members of The Chapel are welcomed and encouraged to commend qualified candidates to the OEB, who are then responsible for vetting, preparing, and recommending the OEB candidates to The Chapel members for approval at the Annual Members Meeting.
5. The OEB is open to seeking assistance with some of its duties that require expertise outside of the OEB members. Such assistance and/or delegation to other individuals or organizations is permitted, provided that such delegation does not breach the OEB's spiritual and fiduciary duties to The Chapel.
6. Unless otherwise stated, all issues needing formal approval shall require a majority affirmative vote of the OEB.

## **Article VII - Property**

All assets and debts of The Chapel shall be held in the name of the Corporation. The personal and private property of the officers or members of this corporation shall not be used in the payment of corporate debt, nor used to procure corporate debt.

## **Article VIII - Dissolution of the Entity**

With a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the OEB approved by a majority vote of the members at a members meeting of 100 members or 50% of members (whichever is less), the OEB shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of The Chapel, dispose of all assets of The Chapel to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes that are consistent with The Chapel's purpose, doctrinal statement and statements of belief. The designated organization(s) shall qualify as an exempt organization(s) under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). No profit shall ever accrue to the personal benefit of any member from the assets, holdings or other transactions because of dissolution.

## **Article IX - Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**

The Constitution and Bylaws of The Chapel may be amended by submitting any proposed amendment(s) in writing to the OEB or by recommendation of the OEB. Upon approval by the OEB, the amendment(s) shall be presented publicly and in writing to the membership at least three (3) weeks prior to any vote. In that time frame prior to the vote, the OEB shall call a meeting in accordance with the Bylaws to review the proposed amendment(s) with the Members. A two-thirds (2/3) approval from a quorum, as defined in the Bylaws, is needed for any amendment(s) to be adopted. It shall be understood that the Doctrinal Statement (Article III) may not be changed in substance.