

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS



**SIGNED AND ADOPTED  
11 FEBRUARY 2023**

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS FOR MERCY GATE CHURCH – BOX ELDER

## Contents

ARTICLE 1 – CONSTITUTION .....	5
SECTION 1.01 – NAME .....	5
SECTION 1.02 – REGISTERED OFFICE .....	5
SECTION 1.03 – ORGANIZATION .....	5
SECTION 1.04 – NONPROFIT STATUS AND DISSOLUTION .....	5
SECTION 1.05 – PURPOSE .....	6
SECTION 1.06 – MISSION/VISION/MODEL .....	6
Our Mission: To Know, Grow, and Go .....	6
Our Vision:.....	6
Our Model:.....	6
ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH & COVENANT .....	7
SECTION 2.01 – PREAMBLE .....	7
SECTION 2.02 – BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000 .....	7
I. The Scriptures.....	7
II. God .....	7
III. Man .....	9
IV. Salvation .....	9
V. God’s Purpose of Grace .....	10
VI. The Church .....	10
VII. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper .....	11
VIII. The Lord’s Day .....	11
IX. The Kingdom .....	11
X. Last Things.....	12
XI. Evangelism and Missions .....	12
XII. Education.....	12
XIII. Stewardship.....	13
XIV. Cooperation.....	13
XV. The Christian and the Social Order .....	13
XVI. Peace and War .....	14
XVII. Religious Liberty .....	14

XVIII. The Family .....	15
SECTION 2.03 – COVENANT.....	15
ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP BY-LAWS .....	16
SECTION 3.01 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP .....	16
SECTION 3.02 – DUTIES OF A MEMBER.....	17
SECTION 3.03 – PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP.....	18
SECTION 3.04 – DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER .....	19
Matters of Sin.....	19
Matters of Doctrine .....	20
SECTION 3.05 – TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP .....	21
SECTION 3.06 – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP.....	21
ARTICLE 4 – OFFICERS .....	22
SECTION 4.01 – CHURCH OFFICERS .....	22
SECTION 4.02 – DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS .....	23
SECTION 4.03 – ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE.....	23
SECTION 4.04 – TERMS OF OFFICE .....	24
SECTION 4.05 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS .....	25
SECTION 4.06 – PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF.....	25
ARTICLE 5 – DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS & MINISTERS .....	25
SECTION 5.01 – DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS & MINISTERS.....	25
SECTION 5.02 – THE PASTOR .....	26
SECTION 5.03 – ELDERS.....	27
SECTION 5.04 – EXECUTIVE PASTOR.....	28
SECTION 5.05 – DEACONS.....	28
SECTION 5.06 – SECRETARY .....	29
SECTION 5.07 – TREASURER .....	29
SECTION 5.08 – MINISTRY STAFF .....	30
SECTION 5.09 – INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS.....	30
ARTICLE 6 – ORDINATION, LICENSING, AND COMMISSIONING .....	30
SECTION 6.01 – QUALIFICATIONS .....	30
SECTION 6.02 – ORDINATION.....	31
SECTION 6.03 – LICENSURE.....	31
SECTION 6.04 – COMMISSIONING .....	32
ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS .....	32
SECTION 7.01 – MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.....	32

SECTION 7.02 – MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION .....	33
SECTION 7.03 – SPECIAL MEETINGS .....	35
SECTION 7.04 – FISCAL YEAR .....	35
ARTICLE 8 – COMMITTEES & COUNCILS.....	35
SECTION 8.01 – STANDING COMMITTEES .....	35
SECTION 8.02 – SPECIAL COUNCILS .....	36
SECTION 8.03 – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES .....	36
SECTION 8.04 – FINANCE COMMITTEE.....	36
ARTICLE 9 – DESIGNATED FUNDS .....	37
ARTICLE 10 – EDUCATION .....	37
SECTION 10.01 – PURPOSE .....	37
SECTION 10.02 – CHURCH PARTICIPATION.....	37
SECTION 10.03 – STAFF MEMBERSHIP.....	37
SECTION 10.04 – STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD .....	38
SECTION 10.05 – UNITY .....	38
SECTION 10.06 – CHRISTIAN WALK .....	38
ARTICLE 11 – PROPERTY .....	39
SECTION 11.01 – PROPERTY USAGE .....	39
SECTION 11.02 – WEDDINGS .....	40
SECTION 11.03 – FUNERALS.....	40
SECTION 11.04 – NON-CHURCH AFFILIATED GROUPS .....	40
ARTICLE 11 – INDEMNIFICATION.....	41
SECTION 11.01 – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION .....	41
SECTION 11.02 – EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION.....	41
SECTION 11.03 – LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION.....	41
SECTION 11.04 – TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION .....	42
SECTION 11.05 – EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION .....	42
SECTION 11.06 – INSURANCE.....	42
ARTICLE 12 – BINDING ARBITRATION.....	42
SECTION 12.01 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION .....	42
SECTION 12.02 – NOTICE OF ARBITRATION.....	42
SECTION 12.03 – LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS .....	43
SECTION 12.04 – ARBITRATION PROCEDURES .....	43
ARTICLE 13 – AMENDMENTS .....	43
ADOPTION .....	44

## **ARTICLE 1 – CONSTITUTION**

### **SECTION 1.01 – NAME**

- A. This congregation of believers shall officially be known as **Mercy Gate Church – Box Elder**.
- B. Unofficial, but acceptable, alterations of this name are Mercy Gate, Mercy Gate Church, Mercy Gate Box Elder, and MGBE.
- C. This congregation is not affiliated with—nor legally bound—to any other church, regardless of similarities of name or beliefs.

### **SECTION 1.02 – REGISTERED OFFICE**

- A. The address of the principal office of this church is 400 225<sup>th</sup> St, Box Elder, South Dakota 57719.

### **SECTION 1.03 – ORGANIZATION**

- A. Mercy Gate Church – Box Elder is an autonomous and self-governing Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains exclusive right of self-governance in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.
- B. Mercy Gate will not enter into any obligations without the approval of the pastor (or in the absence of a pastor, the Executive Pastor) and the supermajority (a two-thirds approval during a business meeting) vote of the membership. Mercy Gate will uphold any obligations made by the approval of the pastor (or in the absence of a pastor, the Executive Pastor) and the supermajority vote of the membership.

### **SECTION 1.04 – NONPROFIT STATUS AND DISSOLUTION**

- A. This church is not organized for profit. This church is organized exclusively for religious purposes and is dependent on eleemosynary giving and purposes.
- B. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church the building and real property at 400 225<sup>th</sup> St, Box Elder, South Dakota 57719 shall be transferred to the Dakota Baptist Convention (DBC) or to a church in good standing with, and approved by, the DBC.

- C. All other assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be paid over and transferred at the direction of the pastor and elders to the Black Hills Area Baptist Association (BHABA), the Dakota Baptist Association (DBC), the North American Mission Board (NAMB), the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) or some combination of the five as approved by a majority vote by the membership, or—if the membership is unable to vote—the vote shall be accomplished by the DBC.

## **SECTION 1.05 – PURPOSE**

- A. This congregation is organized as a church to glorify God by obedience to his revealed will through the Bible. The will of God compels us to lead people to know, love, and serve Jesus by fulfilling the Great Commission through Evangelism, Fellowship, and Discipleship. We shall accomplish this by knowing Jesus Christ, knowing his Bible, growing faith in our lives and sowing seeds of faith in the lives of unbelievers, and going to the nations locally and globally. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8, 2:42; Colossians 1:28)
- B. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes.
- C. This church shall ordain, license, and commission individuals to the gospel ministry; maintain missionary activity in the United States and any foreign country; and any other ministries approved by the leadership in obedience to the will of God.

## **SECTION 1.06 – MISSION/VISION/MODEL**

### **Our Mission: To Know, Grow, and Go**

**To Know** – Knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent through his revealed Word and through singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (John 17:3, John 17:17, 1 John 5:11, Colossians 3:16)

**To Grow** – Growing in faith and obedience to the Word of God, becoming disciples and making disciples who live our lives through consistent reading, discussion, exhortation, action, and sharing our faith with both believers and unbelievers. (Romans 10:17, Philemon 6)

**To Go** – To go to the world as ambassadors of Christ, evangelizing those God providentially places in our lives, beginning in our own neighborhoods, into Box Elder, South Dakota, the United States, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20)

### **Our Vision:**

To make disciples who honor Jesus Christ with their whole heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love their neighbors through discipleship, evangelism, and bearing burdens.

### **Our Model:**

Baptist, congregational, autonomous, evangelistic, cooperating closely with likeminded conventions, institutions, ministries, and boards, etc, to preach the Word, administer the church

ordinances, and to make disciples through accountability and loving correction, reproof, rebuke, and training in righteousness.

## **ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH & COVENANT**

### **SECTION 2.01 – PREAMBLE**

As an autonomous church, Mercy Gate Church seeks to maintain companionship with likeminded fellowships worldwide and to declare the faith given once for all and delivered to the saints. For this reason, Mercy Gate Church has adopted the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 which many Southern Baptist Churches likewise affirm. Should the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 be silent on an issue, prove ambiguous, or seem to present a contradiction with the Word of God, the Word of God is our first and primary source of authority and faith. The Statement of Faith is copied word for word as of 11 February, 2023 and the copy contained in this constitution is the Statement of Faith of this church; updates, addendums, and revisions of the Baptist Faith and Message may or may not be adopted by this congregation and shall be considered in accordance with Article 13 – Amendments.

### **SECTION 2.02 – BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000**

#### **I. The Scriptures**

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

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

#### **II. God**

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

## **A. God the Father**

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

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

## **B. God the Son**

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

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

## **C. God the Holy Spirit**

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



Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

### III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

### IV. Salvation

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

- A. Regeneration**, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.
- B. Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

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

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

## V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

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

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

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

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

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

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

## **VIII. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

## **IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

## **X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

## **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

## **XII. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

### **XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

### **XIV. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

### **XV. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We

should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

## **XVI. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

## **XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

## **XVIII. The Family**

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

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

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

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; Psalms 127; Psalms 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

## **SECTION 2.03 – COVENANT**

Having been led, as we trust, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this congregation, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and fruitfulness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children and those entrusted to us; to seek the salvation of our kindred, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, rivalries, and

dissentions; to abstain from drunkenness, carousing, and debauchery; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense; always ready for reconciliation; zealous to secure reconciliation with one another in Christ; to rejoice at each other's sanctification and growth; and to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

When we are exiled from this place by providence we shall—as soon as possible—unite with a like-minded faithful church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

We endeavor to always pray in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, that we shall all be found faithful when Christ returns or calls us home. Amen.

## **ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP BY-LAWS**

### **SECTION 3.01 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Any person professing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, baptized by immersion, and after due examination as to his or her Christian experience by the pastor (or person appointed by the pastor and/or elders), a supermajority vote by the congregation (either during announcements on any given Sunday Morning or at a business meeting) may be received into full membership.
- B. Members of other churches of like faith may be received by a letter of recommendation and dismissal from their previous church accompanied by their own personal testimony of their salvation and baptism and the commendation of their previous church and/or pastor. The pastor shall summarize the contents of the letter and a supermajority vote by the congregation shall welcome the member into fellowship.
- C. Persons desiring to come into fellowship from another belief system or dissimilar denomination (as determined by the pastor and/or elders) must fulfil the requirements outlined in subsection A.
- D. Persons who have been asked to leave a previous church, have been forcibly expelled, have left without recommendation for membership, or will not disclose their church history are welcome to attend services at Mercy Gate Church, but will not serve in any capacity until it is determined by the pastor (or a person appointed by the pastor and/or elders) that they are repentant followers of Jesus Christ and they fulfil the requirements in subsections A or B of this section.



- E. Persons against whom allegations of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse have been made by a previous church may not attend Mercy Gate Church and are encouraged to seek reconciliation and justice through their former church. Except in extenuating circumstances coordinated between the pastor of Mercy Gate Church – Box Elder and the pastor of the former church (or a similar organization familiar with the allegations), Mercy Gate will not assume the role of leading the member or regular attender of another church in their repentance and reconciliation.
- F. The pastor, elders, and deacons serving this congregation are required to be members in good standing.
- G. Membership is not compulsory, but any regular attender should be encouraged to join for the spiritual benefits expressed in Hebrews 10:24-25 and 13:16-17.
- H. Members of this Church, when received, accept our Statement of Faith without reservation, By-laws adopted by the Church, and agree to abide by the Covenant of the Church. They remain in good standing as long as their life and conduct remain consistent with the Statement of Faith, the By-laws, and the Covenant adopted.

## **SECTION 3.02 – DUTIES OF A MEMBER**

On becoming a member of this church, expanding on the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 2.03, each member shall:

- A. Obey God – Each and every person will give an account to God regardless of their standing in this or any church. Each member should serve God according to his revealed Word and according to a well-trained conscience.
- B. Attend Regularly – Faithful church attendance is expected and encouraged, understanding that there will be times when providentially hindered. In these instances, absences may be reviewed by the pastor and/or elders or other appointees.
- C. Contribute Faithfully with Finances – Financial support with tithes and offerings not out of compulsion, but out of a desire to work for and with the Lord Christ. Faithfully supporting the work of Christ first at the local church, then as the Holy Spirit enables and leads, not according to rote or percentage, but out of a cheerful and loving heart.
- D. Serve Joyfully – Members are blessed by serving with their talents and gifts, willingly growing their abilities and training others.
- E. Love Passionately – Every member will strive to uphold the unity of the church. Members are expected to seek out ways to bless fellow members and are required to – as much as it depends on them – live at peace with all other members. Members shall seek reconciliation as outlined in Section 3.04 and in Matthew 18:15-20.

- F. Live Harmoniously – Every member will strive to live in accord with the vision and mission of the church as revealed by Jesus Christ in his Word and support the pastor and leadership in the mission, submitting ultimately to the authority of Jesus Christ.
- G. Obey Their Leaders and Submit to Them – Every member is responsible to support their leadership with joy and not with groaning, praying regularly for the church and its leaders, and to act in such a way as to bring honor to Jesus Christ, Mercy Gate Church, its pastor(s), and its membership.
- H. Leave Graciously – If members see fit to cease attending this church for reasons other than providential exile (moving) or death, every member is responsible to voice concerns to the offense (especially if the member leaving has been offended by a fellow church member) and to the pastor or an appointed elder; gossip, backbiting, and sowing division after leaving the church will be grounds for bringing disciplinary action against the member, as outlined in Section 3.04.

## **SECTION 3.03 – PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Members at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church, and in good standing shall be entitled to vote. Proxy voting, or voting for another member, is not permitted. Absentee voting, except in matters where church sponsored mission's trips or involuntary military absences render members unable to vote in person, is not permitted. Absentee voting at such a time will be accomplished in real-time with no delay and be approved by the moderator prior to the meeting.
- B. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Voting shall only be accomplished at meetings as outlined by Article 6.
- C. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although non-members are invited to the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the pastor or elders) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, at the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the pastor or elders), be treated as a trespasser. Members asked to leave shall be addressed as soon as possible in accordance with Section 3.04.
- D. Any member, in good standing with explanation of request and upon five business days prior written request made upon the church, may inspect or copy the prepared balance sheet and collapsed Profit & Loss Statement (current monthly or year to date) of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of the annual business meetings.
  - a. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

- b. The church may request the member cover the costs of labor and material for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.
- E. Members may have access to the church member directory. Members may choose to opt-out of any of their information being shared in church member directory.

## **SECTION 3.04 – DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to:

- A. Glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church.
- B. Edify believers by deterring sin.
- C. Promote the spiritual welfare of the offending member by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct.

### **Matters of Sin**

- A. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member is sinned against or is witness to behavior that is injurious to this body of believers, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of discipleship and restoration.
  - a. The matter should be reported to law enforcement immediately if the member is unrepentant (Repentance may include the member self-reporting to law enforcement, as determined by the pastor or a member appointed by the pastor, and an elder or deacon) and:
    - i. Minors are in danger.
    - ii. Sexual or physical abuse has occurred or will occur.
    - iii. The matter is not a sin against an individual, but endangering many.
    - iv. Someone's life or wellbeing are in immanent danger.
  - b. A member will not be accused by the church of gossip or backbiting if they ask for advice without naming names, providing overwhelming identifying details, or slandering. Members are always encouraged to seek law enforcement help (even anonymously) if they are unsure of the legality of the offense.
  - c. South Dakota does not consider clergy "Mandatory Reporters", therefore the pastor (of this or many churches, including BHABA, DBC, NAMB, and BBFI churches) is a safe sounding board to determine if a matter should be legally reported. The pastor should weigh the matter seriously and consider involving elders and other godly counsel in his decision.
- B. If reconciliation is not reached, the member should approach one or two other brothers or sisters simply with the statement, "I have a Matthew 18 matter I need to involve you in with [accused name]." The member shall not gossip, backbite, or prepare the second witness in any other way. The member shall address the accused in the presence of the

witness and allow for discussion with the witness asking questions and making determinations. If the witness agrees that the accused is in sin, both the original member and the witness ought to exhort and encourage repentance with the goal of restoration. Should the accused repent, the matter may be dropped. The second/third witness need not be a pastor or an elder.

- C. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections A and B have been taken, the matter should be brought to the pastor and/or elders to determine how and when to bring the matter before the church. The pastor and elders ought not delay and should call a business meeting not sooner than 10-days in the future for matters not addressed in subsection A item a.
- D. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections A, B, and C have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a recommendation of the pastor and supermajority vote of the congregation at a business meeting. The offending member should be invited to the meeting, but need not be present. The pastor and church ought to pray for the person's salvation, then ask God to turn the offending person over to Satan, and that true salvation and restoration would occur in the future.
- E. If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with them from that point forward must be with the express goal of treating them as unbelievers in need of repentance, reconciliation, and restoration. Members may continue to interact with their disciplined family members, but care must be taken not to diminish the decision of the church or imply that the disciplined member is in good standing with God through Jesus Christ.
- F. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 10-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

## **Matters of Doctrine**

- A. Members should be judged by their fruit as expressed in Galatians 5:19-24. In rare circumstances a member may hold to heterodox or contrary beliefs without bearing obvious works of the flesh.
- B. The pastor may convene an exploratory board consisting of the pastor and the elders.
- C. This board should first determine:
  - a. the ramifications of the heretical beliefs.
  - b. the extent and frequency the member is teaching these heretical beliefs.
  - c. if unrepentant sin exists in the member's life.
- D. This board shall have authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the church covenant.

- a. If the pastor or elder is the subject of the matter, they shall not sit as a member of the exploratory board.
  - b. If a family member of the pastor or elder is the subject of the matter, the pastor or elder may recuse themselves from the board.
- E. This exploratory board shall examine the fruit of the individual's life and determine if they should be addressed as a matter of sin. If the matter is judged a matter of belief, the pastor and elders should gently seek to disciple the member to match the Statement of Faith from the Bible.
- F. If the pastor and elders cannot convince the member of the teachings of the Bible, the pastor and elders ought to suspend the member's teaching/serving roles. The member should be brought before the next business meeting for a supermajority vote to suspend their voting and serving rights until the member either brings their beliefs into line with the Statement of Faith, some manner of sin becomes evident which can be addressed, or until the pastor reconvenes the exploratory board not longer than six months later.

## **SECTION 3.05 – TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Members, not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church of like faith. A "letter" may be a phone call, text, instant message, meeting, e-mail, or physical letter. The pastor, or elder delegated by the pastor, should respond to all requests and at a minimum recommend to the gaining church:
  - 1. The strengths of the member.
  - 2. Areas for future growth.
  - 3. Recommendation for membership.
- B. Members, under any of the steps of the disciplinary process of Section 3.04, are required to request that letters be sent to any churches and/or religious organizations which they regularly attend or intend to serve. This requirement shall remain in effect until the member repents and is voted reconciled by a supermajority of Mercy Gate Church, or a likeminded church does likewise. The pastor should respond to all requests and at a minimum convey to the gaining church:
  - 1. The details of the church discipline process which were followed in Section 3.04.
  - 2. Possible ramifications of not addressing the member's actions and sin.
  - 3. Recommendation for continued discipline of the member with the goal of repentance and full reconciliation.

## **SECTION 3.06 – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- A. The membership of any individual member may be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months.

- a. The pastor, an elder, or a member appointed by the pastor should attempt to ascertain the reason a member is no longer attending after at least one month of absences and before membership is revoked at six months.
  - b. Upon good cause being shown, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor and at least one other member who can vouch for the member's faith.
- B. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.
  - a. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor.
  - b. Military members on extended temporary duty, deployments, or remote tours when they expect to return to the Box Elder community within two years, are permitted and encouraged to covenant with a local church at their location without fear of losing their membership at Mercy Gate Church.
- C. Matters of sin which demonstrate that a member is not a believer, after following Section 3.04, shall result in an individual's membership being terminated.
- D. A member may not resign if being examined under Section 3.04. For the sake of the member and the health of other churches which the member may seek to affiliate with, a member under discipline must be reconciled or removed. A member who persists in resigning shall follow the procedures in Section 3.05 Subsection B.
- E. A member who dies shall be removed from the membership rolls. No vote is required.

## **ARTICLE 4 – OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 4.01 – CHURCH OFFICERS**

The church officers are Pastor (see Article 5, Section 5.02), Elders (see Article 5, Section 5.03), Executive Pastor (see Article 5, Section 5.04), Deacons (see Article 5, Section 5.05), Secretary (see Article 5, Section 5.06), and Treasurer (see Article 5, Section 5.07). One person may hold two or more offices, except that of pastor.

## **SECTION 4.02 – DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS**

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the elders shall serve as the directors; the secretary shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation. A trusted church member may serve as a director of the corporation at the behest of the pastor.

## **SECTION 4.03 – ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE**

- A. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to – or expresses disagreement with – the Statement of Faith. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).
- B. All church officers must be approved by the pastor prior to commencing their role. The pastor should reaffirm officers annually.
- C. Only church members in good standing (as described in Article 3, Section 3.01 and Section 3.02) are eligible for election or appointment to any church office.
- D. The pastor and elders shall be ordained by a Southern Baptist Church, Baptist Bible Fellowship Church, or church of like-faith to the Gospel ministry. Biblical qualifications for pastors and elders shall be consistent with 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, and Titus 1:5-16:
  - a. Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6–7)
  - b. Husband of one wife; a one-woman man; not divorced (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6) (The fruit of a divorced man may be examined on grounds of divorce before regeneration, and in the case that an unbelieving wife chose to end the marriage) (1 Corinthians 7:15) (Unmarried men shall be evaluated based on 1 Corinthians 7:27-35)
  - c. Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2)
  - d. Sober-minded, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  - e. Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
  - f. Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  - g. Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
  - h. Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  - i. Not violent; not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
  - j. Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)
  - k. Not a brawler; not contentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  - l. Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

- m. Rules well his own house; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7)
  - n. Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
  - o. Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
  - p. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
  - q. A lover of good; appreciating useful men, doctrines, and things (Titus 1:8)
  - r. Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
  - s. Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
  - t. Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)
- E. Deacons shall be ordained by a Southern Baptist Church, Baptist Bible Fellowship Church, or church of like-faith to the Gospel ministry or as a deacon. Biblical qualifications for deacons shall be consistent with Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- F. Charges against officers shall not be admitted except on clear violations of 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 1 Timothy 5:1, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, and Titus 1:5-16, or other clear biblical teaching on the office, and must be accompanied by witnesses.

## **SECTION 4.04 – TERMS OF OFFICE**

- A. The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice. The calling of a pastor or severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular church business meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to said regular church business meeting. A nine-tenths majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to call a pastor or to sever the relationship between the pastor and the church. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Section 3.01 and 3.04.
- B. The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor, shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-appointed by the pastor. There are no term limits, and the pastor should ensure that a serving elder or deacon is qualified as referenced in Section 4.03 and not simply because they have served in the past.
- C. A vacancy occurring in any office, except in the case of the pastor, may be appointed by the pastor and ratified at the next regular business meeting.
- D. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly appointed.
- E. Any Officer may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, by following the guidelines in Section 3.04 culminating with a supermajority vote of the congregation.



## **SECTION 4.05 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The initial election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the first business meeting since their appointment by the pastor. Ratification of officers shall occur in the month of October at the annual church business meeting. Annual ratification shall take place in October regardless of how many months have taken place since the initial vote.

## **SECTION 4.06 – PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF**

- A. Associate pastors may be hired to assist the pastor in carrying out his God given responsibilities. Associate pastors must fulfil the requirements outlined in Section 4.03 Subsection D. Paid ministers must be recommended to the church by the pastor, be subject to budget consideration by the elders, be accepted as a member, and be elected by a supermajority vote of the membership.
- B. All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor or his designee.
- C. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith, or fails to maintain membership with the church.

# **ARTICLE 5 – DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS & MINISTERS**

## **SECTION 5.01 – DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS & MINISTERS**

- A. Officers shall:
  - a. Be a member in good standing with the church.
  - b. Act as ambassadors of Christ and his church.
  - c. Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the grace and regeneration they profess.
  - d. Affirm and uphold the Statement of Faith.
  - e. Hold the church and fellow officers in good faith and seek their highest and best usefulness.
  - f. Make every attempt to attend scheduled and called meetings.
- B. Any officer and ministry staff who neglects their duties as outlined in these by-laws may be removed or suspended from their office by the pastor while the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 is fulfilled. Should the member be exonerated or repent and be reconciled,

their office shall not be automatically reinstated, but must be reinstated at the behest of the pastor.

- C. All officers and ministry staff shall have a criminal background check and receive “Ministry Safe” training or equivalent. Any conduct that would disqualify an officer from leadership that occurs after the background check and training must immediately be disclosed to the pastor and elders.
- D. All officers and ministry staff who resign or are removed from their duties at the church shall be reasonably expected to provide continuity support to the church in matters of finances, passwords, account numbers, vehicle titles, keys, and the like.

## **SECTION 5.02 – THE PASTOR**

The pastor shall:

- A. Preach the gospel and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him.
- B. Administer the ordinances of the church, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.
- C. Be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
- D. Preside as, or appoint, the moderator for church meetings.
- E. Ensure that at a minimum the Sunday morning worship occurs every Sunday. The pastor may preach as often as he sees fit and shall ensure that a qualified preacher deliver the Word of God on Sundays he does not preach.
- F. Designate the Executive Pastor for the term of one year.
- G. Appoint the Treasurer for the term of one year.
- H. Appoint the Secretary for the term of one year.
- I. Appoint the chairs of the various teams and committees, as he deems appropriate.
- J. Publicly inform all newly elected officers of their particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices.
- K. Extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position.

- L. Supervise all appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments.
- M. Be willing to entertain recommendations from elders, deacons, committees, and councils in accordance with Proverbs 11:14, “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”
- N. Serve as the president of the corporation.

## **SECTION 5.03 – ELDERS**

- A. The Elders shall assist the pastor in caring for the spiritual health and financial integrity of the church. Elders ought to always be prepared to contribute through preaching, teaching, counseling, correcting, and discipling church members and attenders.
- B. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the elders shall serve as, or appoint, a pastoral search team.
- C. An elder may serve as the moderator for church meetings.
- D. The elders shall also exercise the following specific powers:
  - a. To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church, if such action is approved by a vote of the church membership.
  - b. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation, if such action is approved by a vote of the church membership.
  - c. Have access to view the church’s accounts in order to detect any improper spending or expenditures.
  - d. Have access to view the surveillance/security footage of the security system.
  - e. The Elders shall meet with the pastor to receive the report of the Treasurer and to deal with business and financial matters each six months, or more frequently at the behest of the pastor.
- E. Serve as director of the corporation.
- F. Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. Elders are not precluded from serving the church in any other capacity and receiving compensation in that capacity. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from the church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

## **SECTION 5.04 – EXECUTIVE PASTOR**

The Executive Pastor, in addition to his duties as elder, shall:

- A. Be a trusted advisor to the pastor.
- B. Act in the pastor's stead if the pastor is incapacitated, resigns, is dismissed, or dies until such a time as the pastor resumes his duties, or until the church calls a new pastor.
- C. Act as an ambassador for the church.
- D. Assist in the preparation of the annual budget.
- E. Coordinate the annual compensation evaluation of the pastor.
- F. Review outcomes and metrics created for evaluating the church's impact, and regularly measuring the church's performance and effectiveness using those metrics.
- G. Assist the pastor in preparing for elder meetings.
- H. Assist the treasurer in the financial report to the elders at the scheduled meeting.
- I. Work with the pastor and treasurer to maintain the financial integrity of the church.
- J. Preside as, or appoint, the moderator of all meetings in the absence of the pastor.
- K. Be eligible to receive compensation for his services. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from the church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

## **SECTION 5.05 – DEACONS**

A deacon shall:

- A. Assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church.
- B. Minister to the physical needs of the church.
- C. Assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church.
- D. Disburse the elements of the Lord's Supper
- E. Collect, count, and record tithes and offerings
- F. Check on assigned church members at least monthly
- G. Not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. Deacons are not precluded from serving the church in any other capacity and receiving compensation in that capacity.

Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from the church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation

## **SECTION 5.06 – SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall:

- A. Certify and keep for the church's records: the original by-laws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the by-laws.
- B. Keep at the place where the by-laws or a copy are kept: a record of the proceedings of meetings of the elders, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of those present at the meetings.
- C. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law.
- D. Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the by-laws and minutes of proceedings of the elders or the minutes of the meetings of the church members.
- E. Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church, which are of historical interest.
- F. Keep all records updated for the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- G. Serve as the secretary of the corporation.

## **SECTION 5.07 – TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall:

- A. Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the pastor and the elders.
- B. Oversee the receiving and receipting of all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church.
- C. Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the pastor or an elder, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements.
- D. Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.

- E. When and as requested, render to the pastor and the elders accounts of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.
- F. Present a monthly report to the pastor and elders.
- G. Present an annual report to the church at the annual meeting.
- H. Keep all financial records of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- I. The Treasurer will work with the finance team to ensure the financial integrity of the church. The finance team shall comprise, at minimum:
  - a. The Pastor.
  - b. An Elder.
  - c. The Treasurer.
- J. Serve as treasurer of the corporation.

## **SECTION 5.08 – MINISTRY STAFF**

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the ministry staff of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church and be accountable to the senior pastor or their supervisor. The pastor shall determine which ministers are necessary and appoint them to their position. A minister shall not be considered an officer and therefore the pastor may act simultaneously in the role of a minister and of pastor, such as “music minister.”

## **SECTION 5.09 – INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

The pastor shall appoint the elders, name the Executive Pastor, the secretary, and the treasurer for a one-year term. All changes in leadership, officers, and/or elders are to be communicated to the church membership by the pastor in a timely manner.

# **ARTICLE 6 – ORDINATION, LICENSING, AND COMMISSIONING**

## **SECTION 6.01 – QUALIFICATIONS**

Any member of this church or churches of like faith, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in Section 4 may be ordained, licensed, and/or commissioned as a minister of the Gospel or deacon.

## **SECTION 6.02 – ORDINATION**

- A. Ordination refers to the recognition and conferring of gifts upon a minister to serve the church in leadership and/or as a deacon. Ordination declares that the church recognizes that a man has been called to the ministry, is bearing fruit according to the same, and is qualified to the office to which he is ordained. (2 Timothy 1:6)
- B. The pastor shall examine a candidate for ordination; upon satisfactory findings, the pastor shall call a council of ordained ministers to examine the individual.
- C. The pastor shall declare the qualifications of the candidate to the ordination council and recommend the member for ordination. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
- D. If the candidate is found worthy of ordination by the ordination council, the council shall recommend the candidate for ordination by the church.
- E. The pastor shall arrange for the ordination service, at which time the candidate shall receive the laying on of hands of all ordained ministers present and a prayer of dedication by the congregation.
- F. An Ordination Certificate ought to be furnished to the individual with the name of the church, the ordination date, and the signatures of the pastor and secretary prominently displayed. The signatures of all ordained ministers who laid hands on the member are recommended.
- G. If the candidate is deemed not worthy of ordination by the pastor or council, the pastor and/or council shall clearly state their concerns and pray for the future growth and usefulness of the individual. There is no shame, either in the candidate or in the council, in deciding an individual is not yet ready. (1 Timothy 5:22)
- H. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office. The pastor who ordained the man may—with the witness of two other ordained pastors and/or elders preferably from the original ordination council—rescind the ordination. In the event the ordaining pastor and/or council is not available, the ordained individual ought to be disciplined in accordance with Section 3.04 with special detail given that the individual's ordination is deemed revoked and/or fraudulent.

## **SECTION 6.03 – LICENSURE**

- A. Licenses are not required by the state of South Dakota. Notwithstanding, the pastor and elders are granted the authority to license individuals in recognition of an individual's service in a ministry. The license, in certain states and nations, is required to declare that a person is authorized to act on behalf of the church to perform ecclesiastical duties of the church and preach the Gospel.

- B. Licenses should be evaluated per requirement and should not be issued lightly. Many governments use license and ordination interchangeably. For example, some states require a wedding officiant to be ordained, while other states require them to be licensed, and still others require them to be licensed and ordained. Therefore, only members in good standing should be licensed, and the pastor should weigh whether licensing or ordination are more appropriate. The primary differences between a license and ordination are that:
- a. A license can be granted by the pastor and elders for a specific purpose without convening a council or the laying on of hands.
  - b. A license limits the scope of responsibility a minister may exercise for the church.
  - c. Licenses may expire after a determined length of time.

## **SECTION 6.04 – COMMISSIONING**

- A. Commissioning declares that a member or team is operating with the blessings, prayers, and support of their local church.
- B. Commissioning is time and ministry specific and expires once the ministry opportunity no longer exists. Commissioning generally is for a shorter period, narrower mission scope, and grants less authority than licensure.
- C. A commission may be granted by the pastor and elders to an individual and/or group for a specific purpose without convening a council. For example, a mission team should be commissioned before departing. The laying on of hands of all present is recommended to confer and confirm the blessing, prayers, and support of the local church in the commissioned purpose.

# **ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS**

## **SECTION 7.01 – MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP**

- A. The church shall meet each Sunday morning for public worship.
  - a. The Sunday morning worship gathering shall not be canceled except rarely when concerning matters of safety such as impassible roads, natural disasters, building structural failure, extreme and real illness, etc. The Sunday morning worship gathering may not – under any circumstances – be cancelled for holidays, national or local days of mourning, or government (at any level) decree.
  - b. In cases concerning safety, Sunday morning worship should be restricted in the least possible way and not canceled. Some examples include moving venues (such as to a park, public gathering space, or another church), delaying the time to allow snowplows to clear roadways, or engaging the church in an online setting.



- c. Though the church is encouraged to livestream various events, if in-person gathering is possible, all members and regular attenders are highly encouraged to attend services together. Only under extremely dire circumstances – as determined by the pastor and elders – should the church cancel services or opt for online services for two or more consecutive Sundays.
  - d. Should the pastor be incapacitated before a Sunday morning service, the Executive Pastor should preach or appoint a person to preach. If no-one is able to preach, the congregation shall sing psalms, hymns, and/or spiritual songs and pray for the pastor and one another.
- B. Other meetings may be scheduled throughout the week at the discretion of the pastor and elders for the studying of God’s Word, prayer, edification, topical studies, committees, and any topic or special class deemed necessary. Voting may not be held at any meeting that has not been designated as a business meeting and advertised 10-days in advance.
- C. Music should play an integral part in the meetings of the church. The church should sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs utilizing the gambit of instruments decently and in good order. Heretical songs sung by heretical bands serving heretical churches pastored by heretical preachers which deviate from the church’s Statement of Faith should be avoided. The pastor is the final authority on barring a song or band from worship.

## SECTION 7.02 – MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- A. Sunday morning worship services may be considered a business meeting for minor matters and votes may be held with no notice during/after the announcements. Matters not covered below should be opened with, “I move to vote on (the matter at hand).”, these matters require a motion to second. A supermajority is required to approve minor matters. If discussion is required, the matter must be moved to a scheduled business meeting.
- a. Matters that may **not** be voted on without notice are:
    - i. Financial Decisions exceeding/outside of the approved Church Budget by more than 10% of the budget line item, or 5% of the total budget.
    - ii. Real-Estate Decisions concerning moving, closing, or dissolving the church.
    - iii. Staff Decisions appointing a pastor, or removing a pastor, elder, or deacon.
  - b. Votes are **expressly permitted** and encouraged on Sunday mornings with no notice for matters pertaining to:
    - i. Voting to gain a member.
    - ii. Voting to release a member in good standing.
    - iii. Staff decisions appointing an elder or deacon.

- B. The annual church business meeting shall be held as scheduled for a day in October, annually, at which time the regular church business shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members in good standing who are present for the transaction of business. The annual meeting shall accomplish at least a minimum of three tasks:
- a. Ratify the Constitution and By-laws.
  - b. Ratify the Officers (Elders, Deacons, Secretary, Treasurer) of the Church Appointed by the Pastor.
  - c. Vote to Approve a Budget.
- C. Church business meetings may be scheduled throughout the year, there is no restriction to what these meetings may address; these meetings must be:
- a. Given a minimum of 10-day notice in a prominent place where the majority of the church membership can reasonably be expected to see or hear the announcement.
  - b. Announced during the Sunday morning announcements at least 1 Sunday prior.
  - c. Scheduled at the church building unless deemed otherwise by the pastor and elders.
  - d. At times which the majority of the church membership would be able to attend, such as Sunday evenings or weekday evenings, or immediately following the Sunday morning worship meeting; not on holiday weekends, unless deemed necessary by the pastor and elders.
  - e. Given a clear agenda announcing which matters shall be addressed, as much as can be foreseen.
- D. All church business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing and be accompanied by a devotion from the Word of God pertaining to at least one of the matters at hand, or an article from the Statement of Faith, or current events directly impacting the life of the church.
- E. The moderator shall be appointed by the pastor. The pastor, an elder, or a trusted member may be appointed as the moderator. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. The following order shall be observed at the regular church business meetings:
- a. Devotion and Prayer
  - b. Recognition of Officers
  - c. New Matters
  - d. Adjournment
  - e. Benediction
- F. For any meeting under this Article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require non-members to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by actions or presence. The moderator shall

have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Section 3.03 Subsection C and treat the person as a trespasser.

## **SECTION 7.03 – SPECIAL MEETINGS**

- A. The pastor (or elders if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than 10-days before said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Section 4.04 Subsection A.
- B. Conferences, training, and fellowships may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.
- C. No business meeting shall be called by any team, including elders, without the knowledge and consent of the pastor.
- D. No business meeting may be held without a clear announcement with 10-day's notice.
- E. No action taken by any team or committee shall be binding on the church unless the church designates authority to them, or the action is approved by a supermajority vote.
- F. Staff Meetings shall be called by the pastor not less than quarterly. Staff meetings may be scheduled as frequently as the pastor deems necessary and not burdensome to the accomplishment of the church purpose, mission, and vision.

## **SECTION 7.04 – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin November 1<sup>st</sup> and end October 31<sup>st</sup>.

# **ARTICLE 8 – COMMITTEES & COUNCILS**

## **SECTION 8.01 – STANDING COMMITTEES**

The pastor (or the Executive Pastor if the office of pastor is vacant) shall appoint standing committees and designate a chairperson for each committee who shall determine the membership of each standing team. In addition to the discipline team and ordination council, the pastor may appoint other standing teams, as he deems appropriate.

## **SECTION 8.02 – SPECIAL COUNCILS**

The pastor and elders, at their discretion, may create special councils to provide the pastor and elders with advice and information regarding matters submitted to the council by the pastor and/or elders for consideration. The council shall have no authority to act on behalf of the church. The members of the council shall be chosen by the chairman of the council and approved by the pastor and elders. The special council shall be subject to the control and direction of the pastor and/or elders at all times.

## **SECTION 8.03 – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES**

For matters requiring executive power, the pastor (or in the absence of a pastor, the Executive Pastor) may recommend an executive committee be empowered to act on behalf of the church for a specific purpose, such as a pastoral search committee, and the church may deputize such committee to act under specific guidelines as approved by a supermajority vote.

## **SECTION 8.04 – FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- A. The Pastor shall appoint a minimum of 5 people to serve on the finance committee for the term of one year (following the term of Church Officers). All elders, and the Treasurer shall serve on the finance committee and the Executive Pastor shall serve as the chairman of the committee. Other church leaders or members may serve on the committee at the behest of the Pastor. Those serving on the finance committee shall be presented to the church at the annual business meeting and approval for the committee shall be voted on as a whole. Anyone serving on the finance committee must be a member in good standing.
- B. The finance committee shall be responsible for preparing and approving a yearly budget that the chairman is to present to the church for approval at the annual business meeting.
- C. The finance committee shall meet no less than quarterly, to review expenditures compared to the approved budget.
- D. The finance committee shall have the authority to amend the yearly budget by transferring funds from the flex reserves fund to any line item, by means of a unanimous vote, as deemed necessary due to higher than expected costs/spending
- E. The finance committee shall have the authority to create new budget line items, and fund those items by transferring funds from the flex reserves fund, as long as funds are available, when deemed necessary by means of a unanimous vote.
- F. Any amendments to the approved budget must be made with prayerful consideration, and discussion on whether more money on a budget line item is necessary for the furtherance of the mission of the church.
- G. The committee chairman shall make any amendments made to the approved budget by the finance committee available to any church member at their request.

## **ARTICLE 9 – DESIGNATED FUNDS**

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Examples include, but are not limited to: International Missions funds, North American Missions funds, Building funds, and Love-Offerings.

- A. When the pastor and elders designate a fund, the entirety of contributions given to that fund shall be used to that end.
- B. Should the designated fund not be able to be used for its original and stated intention, the disposition of the funds may be for a functionally identical purpose or voted on at a called business meeting.
- C. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made for specific purposes, not designated by the pastor and elders, shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the elders. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1.

## **ARTICLE 10 – EDUCATION**

### **SECTION 10.01 – PURPOSE**

The church believes that it is to provide the members, attenders, and children with an education, which is based upon and consistent with biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education for its members, attenders, and children.

### **SECTION 10.02 – CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members and nonmembers alike. The church shall cheerfully bear the cost of providing evangelism and discipleship classes and materials within the approved budget.

### **SECTION 10.03 – STAFF MEMBERSHIP**

All professors, instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members in good standing.

Assistant teachers and helpers must be regular attenders of the church, or members of a like-faith church, and shall not teach or supervise minors without supervision.

All professors, instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be subject to a criminal background check and should receive “Ministry Safe” training. Assistant teachers and helpers should be background checked and receive “Ministry Safe” training prior to extended service in the service and education of the church.

This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting leadership training, or other special meetings on a temporary basis; however these individuals should not be left alone with minors without active membership at a like-faith church, proof of a background check, and “Ministry Safe” or equivalent training, and the approval of the pastor or person delegated by the pastor.

## **SECTION 10.04 – STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee, volunteer, or visiting minister for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. Questions should be directed to the pastor, who shall either review the curriculum/teaching or delegate to an elder or other able member.

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a biblical truth is a deception and distortion of the truth. All members in attendance ought to decry the falsehood and defend the biblical truth from scripture. It is the responsibility of every professor, instructor, teacher, and administrator to present the Word of God as the sole inerrant and infallible source of knowledge and wisdom, able to make mankind wise for salvation in Jesus Christ. The pastor remains the final authority on approval or disapproval of curriculum; this duty may be delegated.

## **SECTION 10.05 – UNITY**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church. Unity shall be found in adherence to the Word of God for there is no benefit in being unified in an error. No educator or class shall teach contrary to the Word of God or unity of the church nor tear down, backbite, or sow division against any officer or member of the church. Any disagreements or addressing of sin must strictly follow Section 3.04 and associated scriptures.

## **SECTION 10.06 – CHRISTIAN WALK**

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall maintain a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

Professors, instructors, teachers, and administrators may be removed or suspended from their office by the pastor while the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 is fulfilled. Should the accused

be exonerated or repent and be reconciled, their position shall not be automatically reinstated, but must be reinstated at the behest of the pastor and other applicable supervisors.

## **ARTICLE 11 – PROPERTY**

### **SECTION 11.01 – PROPERTY USEAGE**

- A. The property of the church is used for public gatherings but remains private property. The church shall retain the sole right to determine who may utilize the property and for what purposes. The property shall not be used for profit or for any purpose that does not further the purpose, vision, and mission of the church stated in Article 1.
- B. A cross shall be prominently displayed on the outside of the building and in the worship hall. Crosses must be plain and never have a depiction of Jesus upon them, for his work on the cross is finished. Crosses should be tasteful.
- C. Images of God, Jesus, or angels are strictly forbidden by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment. Artwork should be God glorifying and tasteful. “Artwork” includes media presentations. The pastor is the final authority on artwork displayed in the building.
- D. Alcohol shall not be consumed, stored, advertised, or brandished on the property.
- E. Weapons may only be carried in accordance with South Dakota Laws; for further guidance see Security Policy
- F. Dress should be modest and befitting the righteousness which Christians profess to wear.
- G. The property may be under video surveillance to dissuade and hold accountable criminal activity. Security cameras may be placed in any public room; security cameras shall not be placed in sleeping areas, bathrooms, or any space where privacy is reasonably expected. The pastor and elders shall have access to the security recordings and livestream. The pastor may grant security system access to any member he deems fit. The church shall keep a record of who has been granted security system access.
- H. Members and attenders may wear face coverings at their own discretion. Under no circumstances will the church or government (at any level) mandate face coverings or restrict members or attenders from attending meetings because of face coverings.
- I. No restriction regarding any social or medical status may bar members or attenders from attending meetings. Members may be barred from serving if addressed in Section 3.04.
- J. Belligerent individuals may be barred from the premises based on actions that disrupt church activities being performed decently and in order.

## **SECTION 11.02 – WEDDINGS**

- A. Weddings may be held at the church building upon approval of the pastor. The bride and groom both must profess faith in Jesus Christ. The wedding party must convince the pastor that their wedding will bring glory to Jesus Christ and be held in a manner that shall not discredit Christ nor his bride. If either or both the bride and groom are not members of the church, they shall be encouraged to join in membership, but membership shall not be required.
- B. Officiants shall be ordained members of a Southern Baptist, Baptist Bible Fellowship, or like-faith church and shall be approved by the pastor. The pastor may reject any officiant on grounds outlined in Section 3.04 or 4.03, regardless of ordination or membership status
- C. Under no circumstances may the cross be removed from the building or worship hall for a wedding, and the cross should play a prominent background for the wedding and wedding photography.

## **SECTION 11.03 – FUNERALS**

- A. Funerals may be held at the church upon the approval of the pastor.
- B. The pastor ought to ensure that:
  - a. The officiant is a God-honoring man who affirms the Statement of Faith.
  - b. The officiant shall preach the gospel.
  - c. The deceased will not be beatified or “preached into Heaven” on any merits other than his/her faith in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. The church is highly encouraged, per Ecclesiastes 7:2, if manpower exists, to provide an ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister who will officiate the ceremony and preach the gospel to the mourning.
- D. Under no circumstances may the cross be removed from the exterior of the building or the worship hall, and the cross should play a prominent background for the funeral.
- E. No caricatures of God, Jesus, or angels shall be displayed at the funeral.

## **SECTION 11.04 – NON-CHURCH AFFILIATED GROUPS**

- A. Mercy Gate Church – Box Elder exists to reach the lost and make disciples in Box Elder, South Dakota. While the building is operated by the church, the true ownership belongs to Jesus Christ, and the church seeks to be a faithful steward of his property.
- B. Churches and para-church ministries are encouraged to utilize spaces at the church as long as:



- a. Activities and leaders are approved by the pastor.
- b. The group or para-church ministry are of like-faith to the Statement of Faith.
- c. The ministries of the church shall not be impeded financially, temporally, or ministerially.
- d. Groups return the facility to equal or better condition than they received it.
- e. Activities promote faith in Jesus Christ and adherence to his Word.
- f. Attenders are exhorted to repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

## **ARTICLE 11 – INDEMNIFICATION**

### **SECTION 11.01 – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner, that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

### **SECTION 11.02 – EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

To the extent that a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

### **SECTION 11.03 – LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of

conduct set forth in Section 11.01 of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastor and elders who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested elders so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

## **SECTION 11.04 – TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the elders in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

## **SECTION 11.05 – EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION**

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may insure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

## **SECTION 11.06 – INSURANCE**

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

# **ARTICLE 12 – BINDING ARBITRATION**

## **SECTION 12.01 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters between members which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

## **SECTION 12.02 – NOTICE OF ARBITRATION**

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of/or relating to these by-laws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes,

claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 12.01, above, and such procedures for arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 12.04, below.

## **SECTION 12.03 – LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS**

Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Section 3.04, were followed.

Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any other church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section 3.04 were followed.

## **SECTION 12.04 – ARBITRATION PROCEDURES**

The procedures for arbitration shall be adopted by the pastor and the elders.

# **ARTICLE 13 – AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws may be revised or amended by a supermajority vote of the members in good standing present and voting at any regular or special called business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced at least 10-days before the vote is taken and from the pulpit at the Sunday service prior.

A record of amendments shall be recorded with the date the amendment was adopted and be kept with these by-laws for so long as the church operates.

# ADOPTION

This Constitution and By-laws were adopted on 11 February 2023 by Mercy Gate Church – Box Elder by:

Pastor **Andrew Daniel** (ordained by Crossway Baptist Church, Springfield Missouri)

Head Elder, **Canyon Shearer** (ordained by Summit Baptist Church, Acworth Georgia)

Secretary, **Tabitha Daniel**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Elder: \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

# AMENDMENTS

#	Page	Original	Update	Date	Notes	Ratified
1	27	"trusted adviser"	"trusted advisor"	6-Mar-23	Typographical Error	26-Mar-23
2	27	"report to the trustees"	"report to the elders"	6-Mar-23	Typographical Error	26-Mar-23
3	19	Incomplete Thought	"repentance may include the offender turning themselves in to law enforcement, and facing the legal consequences of their actions."	17-Mar-23	Clarifying Language	26-Mar-23
4	27	"until such a time as the church calls a new pastor, unless the pastor."	"until such a time as the pastor resumes his duties, or until the church calls a new pastor."	18-Mar-23	Clarifying Language	4-Jun-23
5	28	-	Section 5.06 - Head Deacon The Head Deacon, in addition to his duties as deacon, shall: A. Be a trusted advisor to the pastor. B. Assist the pastor in preparing for deacon meetings. C. Assist the treasurer in tracking and reporting benevolence disbursement. D. Serve as director of the corporation at the behest of the pastor.	24-May-23	Added Position	4-Jun-23
6	35	The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.	The fiscal year of the church shall begin November 1st and end October 31st.	27-Oct-23	Budget / Functional Change	29-Oct-23
7	27	Head Elder	Change the title of "Head Elder" to "Associate Pastor", specifically in Section 5.04 and in all places that Head Elder is mentioned	1-Jun-24	Changed Position Title	2-Jun-24

8	25	-	All officers and ministry staff who resign or are removed from their duties at the church shall be reasonably expected to provide continuity support to the church in matters of finances, passwords, account numbers, vehicle titles, keys, and the like.	19-May-24	Duty of Officers to Assist the Church in Their Absence	2-Jun-24
9	31	The pastor who ordained the man <b>may</b> , with the witness of two other ordained pastors and/or elders preferably from the original ordination council <b>may</b> rescind the ordination.	The pastor who ordained the man may—with the witness of two other ordained pastors and/or elders preferably from the original ordination council—rescind the ordination.	1-Jun-24	Typographical Error	2-Jun-24
10	32	-	A commission may be granted by the pastor and elders to an individual and/or group for a specific purpose without convening a council. For example, a mission team should be commissioned before departing. The laying on of hands of all present is recommended to confer and confirm the blessings, prayers, and support of the local church in the commissioned purpose.	1-Jun-24	Clarifying Language	2-Jun-24
11	23	-	A trusted church member may serve as a director of the corporation at the behest of the pastor.	8-27-24	Functional Change	10-27-24

12	29	<p><b>SECTION 5.06 – HEAD DEACON</b></p> <p>The Head Deacon, in addition to his duties as deacon, shall:</p> <p>Be a trusted advisor to the pastor.</p> <p>Assist the pastor in preparing for deacon meetings.</p> <p>Assist the treasurer in tracking and reporting benevolence disbursement.</p> <p>Serve as director of the corporation at the behest of the pastor.</p>	-	8-27-24	Removed Position	10-27-24
13	28	<p>A deacon shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church.</li> <li>B. Minister to the physical needs of the church.</li> <li>C. In cooperation with the pastor, disburse the benevolence fund.</li> <li>D. Assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church.</li> </ul>	<p>A deacon shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church.</li> <li>B. Minister to the physical needs of the church.</li> <li>C. Assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church.</li> <li>D. Disburse the elements of the Lord's Supper</li> <li>E. Collect, count, and record tithes and offerings</li> <li>F. Check on assigned church members at least monthly</li> </ul>	8-27-24	Position Duties Change	10-27-24

14	19	A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.	A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.	8-27-24	Allows for church member directory	10-27-24
15	34	The annual church business meeting shall be held as scheduled for a Sunday in October	The annual church business meeting shall be held as scheduled for a day in October	10-25-25	Allows for Meeting Time Flexibility	10-25-25
16	39	Weapons may only be carried in accordance with South Dakota Laws	Weapons may only be carried in accordance with South Dakota Laws; for further guidance see Security Policy	10-25-25	Allows for creation of security policy	10-25-25
17	40	<p>Weddings may only be held at the church when either the bride or the groom is a member in good standing. The non-member must be able to apply for membership and have no disagreements with the Statement of Faith.</p> <p>When the bride and groom are members of a like-faith church, the pastor (or elder in the pastor's stead) may grant permission to utilize the church for a wedding. The wedding party must convince the pastor that their wedding will bring glory to Jesus Christ and be held in a manner that shall not discredit Christ nor his bride.</p>	<p>Weddings may be held at the church building upon approval of the pastor. The bride and groom both must profess faith in Jesus Christ. The wedding party must convince the pastor that their wedding will bring glory to Jesus Christ and be held in a manner that shall not discredit Christ nor his bride. If either or both the bride and groom are not members of the church, they shall be encouraged to join in membership, but membership shall not be required.</p>	10-25-25	Change in Policy	10-25-25



18	24	Members of the elders or deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, by following the guidelines in Section 3.04 culminating with a supermajority vote of the congregation.	Any officer may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, by following the guidelines in Section 3.04 culminating with a supermajority vote of the congregation.	10-25-25	Typographical Error	10-25-25
19	28	Section 5.04 – Associate Pastor	Section 5.04 – Executive Pastor Also change all instances of “Associate Pastor” to “Executive Pastor” where appropriate	10-25-25	Title Change	10-25-25
20	36	-	<p><b>SECTION 8.04 – Finance Committee</b></p> <p>The Pastor shall appoint a minimum of 5 people to serve on the finance committee for the term of one year (following the term of Church Officers). All elders, and the Treasurer shall serve on the finance committee and the Executive Pastor shall serve as the chairman of the committee. Other church leaders or members may serve on the committee at the behest of the Pastor. Those serving on the finance committee shall be presented to the church at the annual business meeting and approval for the committee shall be voted on as a whole. Anyone serving on the finance committee must be a member in good standing.</p> <p>The finance committee shall be responsible for preparing and approving a yearly budget that the chairmen is to present to the church for approval at the annual business meeting.</p>	10-25-25	Formation of Finance Committee	10-25-25

			<p>The finance committee shall meet no less than quarterly, to review expenditures compared to the approved budget.</p> <p>The finance committee shall have the authority to amend the yearly budget by transferring funds from the flex reserves fund to any line item, by means of a unanimous vote, as deemed necessary due to higher than expected costs/spending</p> <p>The finance committee shall have the authority to create new budget line items, and fund those items by transferring funds from the flex reserves fund, as long as funds are available, when deemed necessary by means of a unanimous vote.</p> <p>Any amendments to the approved budget must be made with prayerful consideration, and discussion on whether more money on a budget line item is necessary for the furtherance of the mission of the church.</p> <p>The committee chairmen shall make any amendments made to the approved budget by the finance committee available to any church member at their request.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--	--	--