

1 ***Constitution and Bylaws***
2 **REDEEMER CHURCH OF FORT WORTH**

3 **CONSTITUTION**

4 **ARTICLE I: NAME**

5 The legal name of this church shall be Christ the Redeemer Church of Fort Worth, Inc.
6 (hereinafter, "Redeemer Church").
7

8 **ARTICLE II: FOUNDATION, OBJECT,
9 AND PRIORITIES OF MINISTRY**

10 ***The foundation of this church*** is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), and its code of
11 guidance in all its affairs is the Word of God. This church does here affirm its faith that the Holy
12 Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).

13 ***The object of this church*** is to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice
14 the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the Scriptures, to
15 sustain its ordinances and doctrines, and to preach and propagate among all peoples the gospel of
16 salvation that is by personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This church
17 is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention on a national level and the Southern Baptists
18 of Texas Convention on a state level; it may also partner with other agencies for the purposes of
19 Christian ministry or gospel proclamation.

20 ***The priorities of ministry of this church*** flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus
21 Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen this vision in nurture and
22 education (1 Corinthians 14:26; 2 Peter 3:18), and spread this vision in evangelism, missions,
23 and loving deeds (Matthew 28:18–20; 5:16; 1 Peter 2:9; 3:15).

24 **ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

25 **Section 1: The Word of God**

26 We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible
27 given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (*i.e.*, inspired equally in all parts) Word of
28 God. (*Jeremiah 23:28–29; 1 Corinthians 2:7–14; 2 Peter 1:20–21.*)

29 We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original
30 manuscripts, that it was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme
31 authority in all matters of faith and conduct. It is completely sufficient in the life of the Christian
32 and the body of Christ, the Church. (*Mark 13:31; John 8:31–32; 20:31; Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy*
33 *3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21.*)

1 **Section 2: The Trinity**

2 We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons—Father,
3 Son, and Holy Spirit—who are equal in every divine perfection, and that the persons of God
4 execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.
5 (*Genesis 1:1, 26; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 3; 4:24; Romans 1:19–20; Ephesians 4:5–6.*)

6 **Section 3: God the Father**

7 We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power,
8 and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of man, that He hears
9 and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus
10 Christ. We believe that the Father orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose
11 and grace. (*Isaiah 46:9–10; Matthew 23:9; Luke 10:21–22; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1*
12 *Timothy 1:1–2; 2:5–6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6.*)

13 We believe that, as the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, God is sovereign in
14 creation, providence, and redemption. In His sovereignty, He is neither author nor approver of
15 sin, nor does He waive the accountability of His creatures. He has graciously chosen from
16 eternity past those whom He would have as His own, not based on anything they have done, but
17 according to His own good pleasure. (*Genesis 1:1–31; Psalm 103:19; Habakkuk 1:13; John*
18 *8:38–47; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 1:4–6; 2:8–9; 1 Timothy 6:13–16; James 1:13; 1 Peter*
19 *1:17; Revelation 4:11.*)

20 **Section 4: Jesus Christ**

21 We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son. We believe in His virgin birth by the Holy
22 Spirit (Matthew 1:18, 25 point to the miraculous nature of both Christ’s conception and birth),
23 sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary and propitiatory death (on
24 our behalf the Son satisfied His Father’s holiness, averting His Father’s wrath), bodily
25 resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal, visible
26 return to earth. We believe Jesus Christ is coequal, consubstantial (*i.e.*, having the same
27 substance, nature, or essence), and coeternal with the Father. (*Isaiah 9:6–7; Matthew 1:18–25;*
28 *20:28; Luke 1:26–38; John 1:1, 14; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28, 30–31; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6–8; 6:9–*
29 *10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 8:46; 9:5; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:8; 7:25; 9:28; 1*
30 *Peter 2:21–23; 2 Peter 1:1.*)

31 We believe that in the incarnation (when God became man), Christ surrendered only the
32 prerogatives of deity, and nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. We believe that
33 Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness. (*Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9–*
34 *10; Philippians 2:5–8; Colossians 2:9.*)

35 We believe that on the basis of the efficacy (effectiveness) of the death and resurrection of our
36 Lord Jesus Christ, every genuine believer is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power,
37 and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous (*i.e.*, justified), given

1 eternal life, and adopted into the family of God. (*Romans 3:25; 5:8–9; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; 1*
2 *Peter 2:24; 3:18.*)

3 We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, God the Father displayed to His
4 creation the deity of His Son and gave proof that He accepted the propitiatory work of Christ on
5 the cross. (*Isaiah 53:10–12.*)

6 **Section 5: The Holy Spirit**

7 We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son to convict the world of
8 sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and
9 sovereign agent in regeneration. It is His work to indwell, sanctify, instruct, empower for service,
10 and seal until the day of redemption all who believe on Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy
11 Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. He
12 is a divine person, eternal, underived (*i.e.*, having no beginning or source), possessing all the
13 attributes of personality and deity. In all the divine attributes, He is coequal, consubstantial, and
14 coeternal with the Father and the Son. (*Jeremiah 31:31–34; John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26–27;*
15 *16:9–14; Acts 2:15–20; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians*
16 *5:22–26; Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 10:15–17.*)

17 **Section 6: Man**

18 We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God in His own image and
19 likeness, free from sin, with a rational nature, intelligence, and volition; yet with a moral
20 responsibility to God who created him. (*Genesis 1:26–27; 2:7; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9.*)

21 We believe that God’s intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God by
22 enjoying Him forever. (*Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11.*)

23 We believe that in Adam’s sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost
24 his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath
25 of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is
26 acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Thus, every human being is utterly depraved and,
27 having no recuperative powers to enable him to rescue himself, is hopelessly lost. Man’s
28 salvation is, therefore, wholly of God’s grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus
29 Christ. (*Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–19; John 3:36; Romans 3:10–11, 23; 5:12; 6:23; 1 Corinthians*
30 *2:14; Ephesians 2:1–3, 8–9; 1 John 1:8.*)

31 We believe that because all humanity descended from Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam’s sin
32 has been transmitted to all of humanity (Jesus Christ being the only exception). All of humanity
33 is thus sinful by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration, spiritually dead in their trespasses
34 and sins, and by nature, children of God’s wrath. (*Psalms 14:1–3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9–*
35 *18, 23; 5:10–12; Ephesians 2:1–3.*)

36 **Section 7: Salvation**

1 **A. Election**

2 We believe that election is the sole act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He
3 chose in Christ all whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies. (*Romans 8:28–30;*
4 *Ephesians 1:4–11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1–2.*)

5 We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of human
6 beings to their Creator. Spiritually dead humanity, however, can never be considered righteous,
7 and none will ever understand spiritual truths, much less ever seek after God, on their own
8 accord. Therefore, God’s sovereign grace includes the only means of receiving the gift of
9 salvation. God’s sovereign election always results in what God determines. Therefore, all whom
10 the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive.
11 (*Isaiah 55:6–7; Luke 13:3; John 6:37–40, 44; Acts 2:38; 13:48; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4;*
12 *3:10–18; 8:28–30; 9:11–16; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 1:4–11; 2:1–2,*
13 *4–5, 8–9; 2 Peter 1:1.*)

14 We believe that when God grants grace to utterly depraved sinners, it is not related to any
15 initiative of their own, nor to God’s anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is
16 solely on the basis of His sovereign purpose and will. (*Ephesians 1:4–8; Titus 3:4–7; 1 Peter*
17 *1:1–2; 2 Peter 1:1.*)

18 **B. Regeneration**

19 We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred
20 physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all
21 human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners, and are, therefore, under
22 condemnation. We believe that those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit repent and forsake
23 sin, trust Jesus Christ as Savior, become new creatures, are delivered from condemnation, and
24 receive eternal life. (*Genesis. 1:26; 2:17; 3; 5:2; Psalm 51:7; Proverbs 28:13; Ecclesiastes*
25 *2:11; Jeremiah 17:9; John 1:13; 3:14, 16; 5:24, 30; 7:13; 8:12; 9:22; 10:26; Romans 3:19;*
26 *5:19; 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; James 1:14; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 19:3,*
27 *20; 20:10, 14–15; 21:18.*)

28 We believe that regeneration is manifested by fruits consistent with repentance as demonstrated
29 in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works done in faith and love will be the proper fruit
30 (result) and evidence of genuine repentance. (*Matthew 7:18–21; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20;*
31 *Ephesians 2:10.*)

32 **C. Justification**

33 We believe that justification is the act of God by which He declares man righteous. This
34 righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man and involves the imputation of our sins to
35 Christ and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us. By this means, God is able to “be just
36 and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). (*Romans 3:26; 8:33; 3:20;*
37 *4:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8–9; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24.*)

1 **D. Sanctification**

2 We believe that every genuine believer experiences justification before God. Therefore, having
3 been justified, we believe that in the daily life of the believer he is being progressively
4 conformed to the likeness of Christ. In this respect, every saved person is involved in a daily
5 conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the remnant of the flesh (sinful
6 thoughts, desires, actions, and words). Those who are genuinely saved will persevere to the end
7 in this battle against the flesh. (*Matthew 24:13; John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1–22; 2 Corinthians*
8 *3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4; 5:23.*)

9 **E. Perseverance of the Saints/Preservation by the Savior**

10 We believe that all those regenerated by the Spirit of God will be likewise kept by God’s power
11 and are thus secure in Christ. (*John 5:24; 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Romans 5:9–10; 8:1,31–39; 1*
12 *Corinthians 1:4–8; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24.*)

13 We believe that the true children of God, chosen from the foundation of the world, will stand
14 firm for Christ to the end, because they are kept in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Paralleling the
15 clear teachings concerning the security of the true believer, God’s Word warns the professing
16 church concerning the perseverance of those who claim the name of Christ. (*Matthew 24:9–13;*
17 *Hebrews 10:23–39; Revelation 2–3.*)

18 We believe that references to those who do “fall away” (*Matthew 24:10*), whose “love will grow
19 cold” (*Matthew 24:12*), are references to men and women who claim that they are in Christ but,
20 in reality, are not. Christ taught that the kingdom of God—the genuine elect of God—will be
21 infiltrated with tares, those who claim (and may even think) that they are in Christ but who, in
22 reality, are not. These claimants (tares) may be members of a local church, but they are not, and
23 have never been, true citizens of the kingdom of God. (*Matthew 7:21; 13:24–30, 37–42; 24:10,*
24 *12; 1 John 2:19.*)

25 We believe the foregoing warnings should be taken seriously by all of us who claim the name of
26 Christ, including the leadership of Redeemer Church, “so that when he appears we may have
27 confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming” (*1 John 2:28*). Only the genuine
28 elect of God will ever experience the promise of Christ, “that I [Christ] should lose nothing of all
29 that he [the Father] has given me [Christ], but raise it up at the last day” (*John 6:39*). Therefore,
30 we teach and encourage all who claim the name of Christ to “examine yourselves, to see whether
31 you are in the faith. Test yourselves” (*2 Corinthians 13:5; cf., 1 Corinthians 10:12*).

32 We believe that it is the privilege of all genuine believers to rejoice in the assurance of their
33 salvation through the testimony of God’s Word. But we also teach that God’s Word clearly
34 forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality. For that reason,
35 we teach that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (*James 2:17*). (*Romans 6:1–2,*
36 *15–22; 13:13–14; Galatians 5:13, 25–26; Titus 2:11–14.*)

37 **Section 8: The Church**

1 We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all
2 regenerated persons are members. We also believe in local churches. In particular, we believe the
3 local church ought to consist of, and our local church shall consist of, a company of believers in
4 Jesus Christ, baptized by immersion on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship,
5 ministry, and fellowship. We believe that the overflow of the worship of this glorious God will
6 lead the members of this local church to declare the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (*Acts*
7 *1:8; 2:42; Ephesians 2:19–22; 5:19–21; Hebrews 10:23–25.*)

8 We believe that every child of God is baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body,
9 the bride of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. We also believe that the bride of Christ includes
10 Old Testament saints (*Isaiah 54:5–6; 62:4–5; Hosea 2:19–20*). (*1 Corinthians 12:12–13; 2*
11 *Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:23–32; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 19:7–8.*)

12 We believe that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined
13 in the New Testament Scriptures, and that the members of the one spiritual, universal body of
14 Christ are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (*1 Corinthians 11:18–20;*
15 *Hebrews 10:25*). (*Acts 13:1–3; 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Romans 16:1–5, 16; Galatians 1:2;*
16 *Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1.*)

17 We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ, and that church leadership,
18 gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the
19 Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the spiritual care of
20 our local assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, overseers, presbyters, and pastor-
21 teachers; *see Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1; 4:14*). The members of the local church
22 should submit to their leadership, while also holding such leadership accountable to biblical
23 precepts and qualifications. The biblically designated officers helping to serve the assembly's
24 physical needs under the direction of the elders are deacons. Both elders and deacons must meet
25 biblical qualifications. (*Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9;*
26 *Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1–5.*)

27 We believe that these leaders who lead or rule well are worthy of double honor before the
28 church. But likewise, those holding the office and responsibility of an elder who continue to sin
29 in a manner that contradicts the biblical qualifications must be publicly rebuked before the
30 congregation for the purpose of making the church fearful of sinning. (*1 Timothy 5:17–22.*)

31 We believe in the importance of discipleship (*Matthew 28:19–20; 2 Timothy 2:2*) and mutual
32 accountability of all believers to each other (*Matthew 18:15–20*), as well as the need for
33 discipline of unrepentant members of the congregation in accordance with the standards of
34 Scripture. (*Matthew 18:15–22; Acts 5:1–11; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–12; 1*
35 *Timothy 1:19–20; Titus 1:10–16.*)

36 **Section 9: Christian Conduct**

37 We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow
38 man, that his conduct should be blameless before the world, that he should be a faithful steward
39 of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of

1 maturity in Christ. (*John 14:15, 23–24; Romans 12:1–3; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 10:31; 2*
2 *Corinthians 9:6–9; Colossians 1:9–10; Hebrews 12:1–2; 1 John 2:3–6.*)

3 **Section 10: The Ordinances**

4 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism
5 and the Lord’s Supper. We believe that Christian baptism by immersion, in the name of the
6 triune God, is the visual representation with water of the believer’s identification with Christ
7 spiritually. We believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His
8 death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return
9 of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe these ordinances hold any salvific value—they do
10 not convey saving grace upon the recipient. These ordinances, however, are means by which
11 God reveals His gospel to His people and brings loving encouragement into their lives. (*Matthew*
12 *28:18–20; Romans 6:3–5; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.*)

13 **Section 11: Religious Liberty**

14 We believe that every human being is created in the image of God and is responsible to God
15 alone in all matters of faith, and that each church is independent and must be free from
16 interference by political authorities. (*Romans 14:7–9, 12; 1 Timothy 2:5.*)

17 **Section 12: The Last Things**

18 We believe in the personal, bodily, and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth, and in His
19 eternal kingdom in heaven. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the
20 eternal felicity (*i.e.*, intense joy) of the righteous who have been saved by the grace of God to
21 worship Him forever, and the eternal conscious torment (in opposition to annihilationism) of the
22 wicked who eternally perish in their sins apart from Christ. (*Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John*
23 *14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians*
24 *1:7–10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4–6, 11–15.*)

25 **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

26 **Section 1: General Constitution**

27 The membership of this church shall consist of persons (1) who confess faith on the Lord Jesus
28 Christ as their personal Savior, (2) who give evidence of regeneration by living consistently with
29 their confession and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this church, as stated in its
30 Constitution and Bylaws (including the Doctrinal Statement and Redeemer Church Covenant)
31 and in the Church Discipline Signature Form (together hereinafter, “Documents”), (3) who have
32 received believer’s baptism by immersion, and (4) who have been received into membership
33 according to the Bylaws of this church. It is required that each person who desires membership
34 in Redeemer Church will go through the necessary membership course. Furthermore, they are
35 required to submit a membership profile in which they understand and agree to abide by and be
36 held accountable for the church’s beliefs, positions, and policies, as outlined in the church’s
37 Documents. Should disagreement in any of these areas ever occur, members will inform the

1 elders of the point(s) of disagreement and hold Redeemer Church and its leadership harmless.
2 There will be no appeal to any court (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 6:1–11). Membership in Redeemer
3 Church does not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the church, but shall only entitle
4 the member to affirm or deny those matters submitted to the church membership by the Council
5 of Elders in accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

6 **Section 2: Redeemer Church Covenant**

7 “We do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter
8 into covenant with one another as one body in Christ, having been led, as we believe, by the
9 Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith,
10 having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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

16 We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the
17 Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in
18 the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our
19 deportment; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger; to seek God’s help in abstaining
20 from practices that bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another’s faith.

21 We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in
22 prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and
23 courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of
24 the guidelines of our Savior to secure it without delay.

25 We moreover engage to encourage one another as we eagerly await the Second Coming of our
26 glorious Savior and King, the Lord Jesus Christ; and, should we move from this place, we will, if
27 possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.”

28 **ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

29 The officers of the church shall be elders and deacons. The purpose of the elders of the church is
30 to govern lovingly, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. The
31 purpose of the deacons is to serve lovingly the physical needs of the membership.

32 **Section 1: Council of Elders**

33 The spiritual oversight of the church shall be vested in the Council of Elders, who are
34 responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word, and prayerfully tending to the flock of
35 God in this local congregation. The elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in
36 function. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, this plurality of elders will

1 exercise loving, caring, biblical shepherding of the flock, while the members of Redeemer
2 Church will mutually submit to and serve one another and the leadership within this local church
3 (Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:17). The Council shall propose direction in the following areas (for
4 decision-making and participation in accordance with Bylaws II.4.D and II.6):

5 (1) Accepting members into the church, giving letters of transfer or recommendation to
6 members, and dropping members from the church roll;

7 (2) Appointing officers of the church;

8 (3) Disciplining members by dismissing them from membership, and disciplining officers by
9 removing them from office (*see* Bylaws VII.3);

10 (4) Approving annual budgets of the church, authorizing expenditures of the funds of the
11 church when such expenditures are not covered by an approved budget, and approving any
12 transactions regarding real property;

13 (5) Adopting, amending, or repealing the Constitution and/or Bylaws of this church; and

14 (6) Approving the call, ministry description, and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and
15 Vocational Ministers.

16 **Section 2: Deacons**

17 Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration,
18 and implementation of ministry, all as prayerfully determined by the Council of Elders and in
19 accordance with Bylaws II.5.

20 **ARTICLE VI: CHURCH PROPERTY**

21 In the event of a division of this church—from which may God in His mercy save us—the
22 property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest
23 portion of the church membership, provided such group is loyal to this Constitution; otherwise, it
24 shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this Constitution, though it may not be the largest
25 group in such division.

26 Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason the church work cannot
27 continue, the church property shall be sold to retire any debt, and the remaining proceeds shall be
28 donated equally between the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention,
29 Wycliffe Bible Translators, Overseas Missionary Fellowship, and The Pregnancy Help Center of
30 Fort Worth.

31 Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same beliefs is
32 advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by the membership of the church to propose
33 an advisable course for negotiating the terms of such consolidation that concerns the property of
34 Redeemer Church.

1 **ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS**

2 Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the Council of Elders in writing for
3 recommendation to the members of Redeemer Church. The amendment(s) will be approved or
4 disapproved by the decision of the Council and the membership of the church in accordance with
5 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

6

7 **BYLAWS**

8 **ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

9 **Section 1: General Procedure**

10 All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be made by the Council
11 of Elders and the membership of the church in accordance with Constitution IV and V and
12 Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

13 The names of individuals seeking membership in Redeemer Church (who have completed all
14 requirements in accordance with Constitution IV.1) will be made known to the membership 10
15 days in advance of a Members' Meeting. At that later meeting, the candidates will be presented
16 individually for membership. The members present at the meeting will then decide whether or
17 not they are able, with a clear conscience, to covenant with each individual presented as seeking
18 membership in Redeemer Church.

19 **Section 2: Admission by Baptism**

20 All applicants for membership professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a
21 change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims, and ideals of this church (as expressed in
22 Constitution III and IV) may be received into membership by means of believer's baptism by
23 immersion, upon the affirmation of the Council of Elders and the membership of the church in
24 accordance with Constitution III.1 and V and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6. Valid New Testament
25 baptism is that which is received after one's commitment to Christ. Redeemer Church holds that
26 baptism is not necessary for salvation; rather, it is better understood as an important step of
27 obedience in every believer's life and walk with Christ that results from God's work in the heart
28 to follow His Word. For this reason, believer's baptism by immersion is a requirement for
29 membership at Redeemer Church. Any applicant who has been baptized by means other than
30 immersion shall undergo baptism by immersion before membership.

31 **Section 3: Admission by Experience or Restoration**

32 All applicants for membership other than by believer's baptism (*i.e.*, by Christian experience if
33 previously baptized by immersion, or by restoration) shall be received into the church in the
34 same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

1 **Section 4: Instruction to New Members**

2 All persons uniting with this church in any of the ways set forth in Bylaws I.1–3 shall do so in
3 accordance with Constitution IV. New members will testify publicly of their faith in Christ and
4 their support of Redeemer Church. By making a public profession of faith and joining the
5 church, new members, without devaluing other areas of obedience, service, and communal life,
6 pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations regarding corporate worship, Care
7 Group involvement, Members’ Meetings, service, and giving.

8 **Section 5: Dismissal of Members on Grounds Other Than Church Discipline**

9 Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the church, or satisfactorily
10 arranged the same with the elders and the membership, shall, upon request, be granted a letter of
11 character to unite with such a church as they may designate. Such letter of character shall be sent
12 to the church the member intends to join. Members who unite with another church without such
13 letter shall be removed from the church roll.

14 **Section 6: Extended Care Membership Ministry**

15 Members in good standing who are unable to participate in communal life (due to, e.g. age or
16 illness, a change of residence or employment, etc.) will be identified on the Membership List for
17 Extended Care Ministry. Fundamentally, this designation is a tool for members to be reminded to
18 extend care and encouragement to those who might otherwise be out of sight and out of mind.
19 This is a ministry by members to members, not church discipline.

20 Aided and informed by the membership, especially the care group leaders, the elders will
21 determine if a member is unable to participate in communal life and include them as a
22 beneficiary of this ministry by assigning the member’s contact and care to a care group.
23 Members will seek to care for the individual through every means consistent with the gospel for
24 the sake of God’s glory in His church. The care group leader(s) will update the elders at each
25 monthly care group leaders’ meeting.

26 In the same way they determined a member was in need of extended care, the elders will
27 determine when such a member no longer needs such care under this ministry.

28 **ARTICLE II: Church Government**

29 **Section 1: General Statement**

30 **A. Officers**

31 The officers of the church shall be elders (comprising a Council of Elders) and deacons. Officers
32 shall be called to office by affirmation of the membership of the church in accordance with
33 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6. All officers of the church shall be members of the
34 church in good and regular standing.

1 **B. Committees and Appointees**

2 The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees (hereinafter, “Ministry Teams”) and
3 positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibilities. The Council has
4 the authority to dissolve any Ministry Team or position on such a Ministry Team. These Ministry
5 Teams shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the expressed purpose of Redeemer Church.

6 **Section 2: Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers**

7 **A. Definition**

8 Vocational Pastors are the ordained elders of the church, who, in response to God’s call, have
9 devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church
10 of the Lord Jesus Christ. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the church who,
11 in response to God’s call, serve the church as their primary vocation. Redeemer Church
12 financially supports both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers in return for their
13 vocational labors.

14 **B. Duties**

15 In addition to the duties of their office described in Bylaws II.4 and 5, Vocational Pastors and
16 Vocational Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders. The duties
17 shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by
18 the Council of Elders.

19 The church’s call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the eldership of the church. Therefore,
20 Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Council of Elders and shall have all the biblical
21 qualifications of an elder.

22 Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called to the eldership, but are called as assisting
23 partners in the ministry. Vocational Ministers may be added to the Council of Elders (in
24 accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6).

25 **C. Calling**

26 The Council of Elders and the membership of the church shall have the responsibility of all
27 hiring and terminating of Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers (in accordance with
28 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6).

29 **D. Termination**

30 A vocational call at Redeemer Church may be terminated as follows:

- 31 (1) Resignation: The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or
32 Vocational Minister shall be considered at any time by the Council of Elders upon the
33 presentation of the Pastor’s or Minister’s resignation.

1 (2) Grievance: Where a grievance exists against a Vocational Pastor or Vocational Minister,
2 either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in
3 Constitution III, or due to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder or minister, such
4 grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good
5 standing, in accordance with Bylaws VII. If the Council, after thorough investigation and
6 consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of
7 the Vocational Pastor or Vocational Minister may be terminated upon the decision of the
8 Council and the membership of Redeemer Church, in accordance with Constitution V.1
9 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

10 **Section 3: Lay Officers**

11 **A. Definition**

12 Lay officers are the non-vocational elders and deacons of the church.

13 **B. Duties**

14 Lay elders and deacons shall have the duties of their respective offices as described in Bylaws
15 II.4 and 5.

16 **C. Calling**

17 The Council of Elders, on behalf of the membership of Redeemer Church, and in accordance
18 with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6, shall recognize, interview, and investigate
19 candidates for lay officers of the church. The Council shall provide for individual members of
20 the church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Council as candidates
21 for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instance shall any individual be
22 considered a nominee for office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council
23 concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office, they shall inform the nominee, stating the
24 reasons for this conclusion.

25 **D. Removal**

26 Lay officers at Redeemer Church may be removed as follows:

27 (1) Resignation: An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able
28 to discharge the duties of the office.

29 (2) Grievance: Where a grievance exists against an officer of the church, either due to the
30 adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in
31 Constitution III, or due to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder or deacon, such
32 grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good
33 standing, in accordance with Bylaws VII. If the Council, after thorough investigation and
34 consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be

1 removed from office upon the decision of the Council and the membership of Redeemer
2 Church in accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

3 **Section 4: Council of Elders**

4 **A. Composition and Calling**

5 The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both lay elders and vocational elders. The
6 Council shall always be a plurality (*i.e.*, more than one). The total number of elders at any time
7 on the Council shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification
8 of men in the church.

9 The man who holds the full-time office of pastor/teacher will also hold the office of elder. Other
10 candidates will be carefully examined by the Council of Elders as to their qualifications and
11 support of both the doctrine and the practice of the church. A potential elder must have proven
12 himself as a man of elder character and ability within the context of Redeemer Church.

13 The following steps constitute the process by which an individual will be screened and evaluated
14 to discern God's hand upon that person's life in qualifying him for a leadership position within
15 Redeemer Church:

16 (1) Initiation: The individual responds to God's working in his life by expressing a desire to
17 serve in a leadership capacity.

18 (2) Consultation: The Council of Elders and the individual meet together to discuss the
19 biblical qualifications for service, agreement with the Documents of Redeemer Church,
20 expectations of the ministry, and other areas that may be deemed pertinent and beneficial
21 by either the elders or the individual.

22 (3) Confirmation: The Council of Elders meets to determine if the elders unanimously agree
23 that the individual has the potential for leadership. If unanimously agreed, the elders
24 assume responsibility to work with the individual toward leadership.

25 (4) Demonstration: The Council of Elders informs the congregation that the individual is
26 under consideration for the leadership position and assigns the individual specific
27 responsibilities of ministry within the church for a period of six months to one year so
28 that the entire body may examine the individual's character and effectiveness in service.

29 (5) Presentation: If the individual's life and service is deemed to be appropriate by the
30 Council of Elders, he is presented to the membership at a Members' Meeting for
31 evaluation, examination, and ultimate affirmation or rejection as one whom God has
32 qualified for leadership. The membership is given a 30-day period in which to personally
33 express any concerns or needed input to the Council.

34 (6) Affirmation: After the Council of Elders has acted upon the input and affirmation of the
35 congregation, and if the elders unanimously agree that the individual has indeed been

1 qualified by an act of the grace of God for leadership within the church, then the elder
2 candidate is presented to the membership at a Members' Meeting for affirmation or
3 denial, in accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

4 **B. Qualifications and Responsibilities**

5 Elders and nominees for elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant
6 texts include: 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:6–9; and 1 Peter 5:1–4.

7 The fundamental responsibility of the elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word of
8 God. The elders are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word of God, and
9 prayerfully tending the flock of God in this local church.

10 Moreover, the responsibilities of the elders shall include: (1) examining prospective members
11 and acquainting them with the Documents and membership course material; (2) overseeing the
12 process of church discipline; (3) examining prospective candidates for office; (4) overseeing the
13 work of the deacons, appointed church agents, Ministry Teams, and ministry positions; (5)
14 conducting worship services; (6) administering the ordinances of the Gospel; (7) equipping the
15 membership of the church for the work of the ministry; (8) teaching the whole counsel of God
16 both formally and informally; (9) correcting error; (10) overseeing, coordinating, and promoting
17 the ministries of the church; (11) mobilizing the church for both local and world evangelism and
18 missions; and (12) helping establish policies, positions, and practices for Redeemer Church that
19 are consistent with the express purposes of the church.

20 **C. Organization**

21 The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of
22 the church. The elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function. The
23 Council must meet at least once every month. Council meetings may be held at any location and
24 may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the elders may
25 simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings may be held
26 upon immediate notice. A quorum for Council meetings shall be at least one-half of the Council.

27 The priorities of discussion and action at Council meetings shall be the following:

28 (1) Prayer/Worship: Prayer, discussions, and decisions pertaining to the shepherding and
29 accountability roles of the elders over the flock (*see* Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2–3);

30 (2) Management: Decisions regarding finances, administration, and policies affecting the
31 direction of the ministry (*see* 1 Timothy 3:5);

32 (3) Church Discipline: Discussion and initiation of church discipline where necessary (*see*
33 Hebrews 13:17); and

1 (4) Church Policy and Ministry Methodology: Periodic discussions regarding doctrine, the
2 ministry, and how to be biblical and effective in the task to which God has called the
3 church and its leadership.

4 **D. Decision-Making**

5 Decisions shall be reached by the Council of Elders after prayerful consideration only by the
6 unanimous or majority vote of the Council, as differentiated below, in a spirit of humility, each
7 elder thereby regarding others before himself.

8 Therefore, in essence, whether the decision is one that necessitates a unanimous vote or a
9 majority vote, the Council of Elders must have a spirit of unanimity regarding the direction of
10 the church after all discussions are terminated and binding decisions have been made by the
11 Council. Any violation of this spirit of unanimity must be considered a serious breach of elder
12 qualifications. If it should occur more than once, without genuine repentance, that elder must
13 seek the re-approval of the Council of Elders and the membership of Redeemer Church (in
14 accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6) to continue in the office of elder
15 (*cf.* Titus 3:10–11).

16 **1. Unanimity is required on certain matters.**

17 The unanimous vote of the members of the Council of Elders, whether voting in person, or by
18 telephone to be confirmed later in writing, is required on these matters: (1) calling and approving
19 a Vocational or non-Vocational officer or minister of the church; (2) supporting a missionary (to
20 be supported by the Missions Budget); (3) proposing an amendment to or modification of the
21 Constitution and Bylaws generally, or the Doctrinal Statement specifically; (4) approving or
22 modifying a Policy/Position Statement; and (5) modifying the indebtedness limitations outlined
23 in the Bylaws IV.5.

24 **2. Majority is required on all other matters.**

25 Decisions on matters other than those listed under the preceding unanimity paragraph shall
26 require a simple majority of the members of the Council of Elders. Those elders in the minority
27 position, after having an opportunity to defend their view from Scripture and sound reason, will
28 humbly yield to the majority position of the Council in the spirit of Philippians 2:3, thereby
29 preserving the spirit of unity that the Council must maintain to the congregation and the public.
30 Therefore, the minority elder(s) must publicly support the decision of the majority of the Council
31 in every situation. Any violation of this spirit of unanimity will be dealt with as outlined in
32 Bylaws II.4.D above.

33 **3. Elders may be excluded from voting.**

34 Decisions by the Council of Elders that pertain directly to any of the elders themselves (*e.g.*,
35 church discipline, conflict of interest cases, salary review, etc.) may be made with or without the
36 participation, input, or voting of the elder(s) concerned, at the discretion of the majority of the
37 other elders.

1 **E. Chairman**

2 The Council of Elders will appoint a Chairman of the Council by a majority vote. The Chairman
3 will provide leadership for Council meetings and will represent the Council to the congregation
4 at Members' Meetings. The Chairman must be appointed or reconfirmed every 12 months.

5 **Section 5: Deacons**

6 **A. Composition and Calling**

7 The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and
8 qualification of individuals in the membership of Redeemer Church, in accordance with
9 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

10 **B. Qualifications**

11 Deacons and nominees for deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (1
12 Timothy 3:8–12).

13 **C. Responsibilities**

14 The deacons shall inform and be ready to assist the elders regarding any service that supports and
15 promotes the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and care for
16 members of the congregation. The deacons' responsibilities may include (but are not limited to)
17 the following:

- 18 (1) Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy, and otherwise providing aid in times
19 of crisis or distress;
- 20 (2) Assisting the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
- 21 (3) Assisting the administration of the ordinances of the Gospel;
- 22 (4) Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
- 23 (5) Caring for and maintaining the church properties; and
- 24 (6) Administering the business affairs of the church that pertain to its material assets.

25 **D. Organization**

26 The elders shall organize the deacons however the elders determine best to achieve the mission
27 of the church. The elders may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in
28 some particular diaconal function.

29 **Section 6: Church Participation**

1 The elders will seek participation by the members of the church in decisions on major issues (in
2 accordance with Constitution V.1) at a Members' Meeting in the following manner:

3 (1) If the Council of Elders is unified in their decision, then there must be a subsequent
4 Members' Meeting convened in order to allow for adequate discussion of the matter(s). If
5 such a meeting allows for ample discussion and reflection on the matter(s), then a two-
6 thirds majority decision is required by the membership in attendance for acceptance or
7 denial of the matters(s).

8 (2) In the event that there is not ample discussion, the elders recognize that there are
9 necessary amendments to their proposal, there are questions that are objectionable in
10 nature, or other information presented is deemed appropriate to support an objection, the
11 Council of Elders will reconvene to come to a decision.

12 (3) Further discussion from any members regarding questions that are objectionable in
13 nature, or other information deemed appropriate to support an objection, will be directed
14 to one of the elders on a personal basis outside of and within one week from the initial
15 Members' Meeting. If the elder who is presented with the information related to the
16 objection is not able to answer satisfactorily the member's concern, that elder must take
17 the information to the entire Council of Elders for consideration. To assist the elders in
18 their discussion of the issue at hand, the member may be asked to meet with the Council
19 to clarify the concerns or objections.

20 (4) Should the Council of Elders reconvene as described in (2) above, the elders must come
21 to a decision in accordance with Bylaws II.4.D.1 or 2. If the elders determine further
22 discussion is necessary, they will re-present the matter(s) at a subsequent Members'
23 Meeting(s). If the elders cannot reach the required unanimous or majority vote, no action
24 will be taken, and the congregation will be informed of this process in a manner deemed
25 appropriate by the elders. If the elders reach a different decision on the matter(s) and
26 reach the required unanimous or majority vote, they will present the newly decided
27 matter(s) at a Members' Meeting as described in (1) above. And if the elders maintain the
28 required unanimous or majority vote on the original matter(s), they will present the
29 matter(s) again at a Members' Meeting as described in (1) above.

30 **ARTICLE III: CHURCH EMPLOYEES**

31 In addition to Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers, the church may employ additional
32 personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the Council of Elders in
33 conjunction with the Budget and Finance Ministry. The Council shall be responsible for
34 determining the duties and hiring of such personnel.

35 **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH FINANCES**

36 **Section 1: In General**

1 No method of raising funds shall be entertained that is in conflict with the scriptural ideals of the
2 church. All funds donated shall pass through the financial administrator of the church in order
3 that due record may be made. The deacons and/or elders shall provide assistance to the financial
4 administrator in accounting for funds donated.

5 **Section 2: Contributions**

6 It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the
7 church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in
8 scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum.

9 Special offerings may be sought by the church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval
10 of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or
11 designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

12 **Section 3: Financial Planning**

13 The financial planning of Redeemer Church shall be carried out through the annual budgets
14 related to the various ministries of the church. Annual budgets shall be approved and adopted by
15 the church (in accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6) upon
16 recommendation of the Council of Elders via the Budget and Finance Ministry Team. Matters
17 involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the Budget and Finance Ministry in
18 conjunction with the Council.

19 **Section 4: Accounts**

20 Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the financial administrator
21 according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The financial administrator
22 shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the church as detailed
23 in the budget or other authorized designations.

24 **Section 5: Indebtedness**

25 No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the church is
26 pledged shall be made, except by recommendation of the Council of Elders (in consultation with
27 the Budget and Finance Ministry) to the membership in a Members' Meeting in accordance with
28 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.

29 **Section 6: Authority to Bind the Church**

30 The elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with the Constitution and
31 Bylaws, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church
32 property, and church finances.

33 **ARTICLE V: CORPORATE WORSHIP**

1 Public services shall be held on the Lord’s Day. The Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated on the
2 first Sunday of each month, or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other
3 religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the church may require.

4 **ARTICLE VI: ORGANIZATION OF**
5 **MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY**

6 Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for
7 ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Constitution
8 III. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official
9 ministry of Redeemer Church. Such sanction may be granted, provided that: (1) the object,
10 purpose, belief, and conduct of the organization and its members are consistent with Constitution
11 III; and (2) the primary officers of the organization are members of the church who have been
12 approved under guidelines established by the Council. Sanction by the Council does not
13 necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or
14 facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

15 **ARTICLE VII: DISCIPLINE**

16 The discipline of members of Redeemer Church shall be a responsibility of its membership,
17 including the Council of Elders, under the guidelines and procedures established on the basis of
18 Scripture as detailed below. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingled
19 with Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

20 **Section 1: General Policy**

21 All members of the body of Christ have an individual responsibility to live righteously and to
22 encourage righteous behavior in other believers. Interpersonal accountability is a Christian
23 obligation that extends beyond the membership of the local church. As Galatians 6:1–5 instructs,
24 this process begins with self-examination and a spirit of humility sensitive to one’s own faults.
25 Believers are instructed to be aware of their own sins and to be penitent and quick to seek
26 reconciliation with offended individuals (Matthew 5:23–25; 7:1–5).

27 It is recognized that members of Redeemer Church have a special relationship one to the others.
28 Consequently, Redeemer Church members have the privilege of experiencing the full expression
29 of love and care for the local body as outlined in Scripture. The members of Redeemer Church
30 belong to a spiritual body of local believers who identify with a common purpose and mission.
31 There is a mutual accountability that each member has, one to the others, to encourage and to
32 provoke holy living (Hebrews 10:23–25). Church discipline begins with individual
33 accountability that is a responsibility of every member. Members are encouraged to take this
34 responsibility seriously. And a member may not resign membership to avoid church discipline.

35 Church discipline is regarded as a serious and clear directive in Scripture. Church discipline is
36 intended to restore an erring member (2 Corinthians 2:5–8), to purify the church (1 Corinthians
37 5:6–8), to warn other members about the dangers of sinful behavior or teaching (Deuteronomy
38 19:20; Acts 5:11; 2 Corinthians 7:11), and to demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the

1 unsaved world (Ephesians 4:22–24). Discipline is exercised with compassion for the erring
2 member and a sincere desire to seek that person’s repentance, reconciliation, and, if necessary,
3 restoration to the fellowship of the local church (Matthew 18:12–14).

4 Church discipline does not entitle the members of Redeemer Church, including its elders, to
5 abuse any authority over other members of the church (1 Peter 5:1–3). Specific guidelines are
6 followed that identify the grounds for church discipline and the process of such discipline.

7 Scripture is clear that the motives of the member(s) and/or the elders dealing with the erring
8 member must be pure before our Savior, His Church, and the world, as follows:

9 (1) They are to avoid vengeance and arrogant presumption (Galatians 6:1);

10 (2) They are not to be motivated by hostility or anger, but by a loving concern for the erring
11 member (2 Thessalonians 3:15);

12 (3) They are to approach the erring member with heart-felt sorrow and sincere concern (1
13 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4); and

14 (4) They are to be ready to grant restoration to the erring member when repentance
15 occurs (Luke 17:1–10; 2 Corinthians 2:5–8).

16 **Section 2: Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline**

17 Individual accountability is an ongoing expression of love among believers and is always the
18 first step in dealing with an erring member. No member is above or immune from accountability
19 (1 Timothy 5:19-22). Church discipline is not God’s method for making the church sinless. But
20 Scripture defines certain deviations from the truth as grounds for formal disciplinary action. Sin
21 that damages the church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity constitutes an offense that
22 necessitates formal disciplinary action. These sins can be understood in the following categories:

23 (1) ***False teaching*** is a deliberate, persistent program of teaching that intentionally rejects the
24 foundational doctrines of Scripture (Titus 3:10–11; Revelation 2:14).

25 (2) ***Apostasy*** is a public denial of the essential truths of God’s Word (*e.g.*, a belief in the
26 inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the final authority for belief and
27 behavior; a belief in the Trinity; a belief in the complete humanity and the complete deity
28 of Christ; a belief in the utter sinfulness of all humanity; a belief in the virgin birth of
29 Christ and His Incarnation as the eternal Son of God; a belief in Christ’s substitutionary
30 atonement as the only way of salvation; a belief in the bodily resurrection and return of
31 Christ; a belief in salvation by God’s grace alone through faith in Christ alone; a belief in
32 the eternal damnation of the lost and the eternal glorification of the saved) (Galatians
33 2:11–14; 1 John 2:19). These essential truths are reflected in the Doctrinal Statement of
34 the Constitution of Redeemer Church.

1 (3) *Divisiveness* is behavior that undermines the unity of Redeemer Church either between
2 members or against God’s established authority in the church (Philippians 4:2–3; 1
3 Thessalonians 5:14).

4 (4) *Immorality* is behavior that is immoral and that brings shame on the testimony of Christ
5 and the local church (1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:9–11 include the sins of idolatry,
6 drunkenness, thievery, greed, reviling, and swindling). This category includes sexual
7 immorality and sexual deviancy (1 Thessalonians 4:3–8). While sexual behavior may or
8 may not be known publicly, these sins internally pollute the church and disrupt its
9 mission. Scripture denounces sexual impurity, and this kind of sin includes adultery,
10 homosexuality, and every other kind of sexual deviancy or impurity that Scripture calls
11 fornication (*porneia*). This behavior will not be tolerated among the membership of
12 Redeemer Church (Romans 1:26–27).

13 **Section 3: Procedures in Membership Accountability**

14 Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly. Below are the steps of
15 accountability and discipline that follow the guidelines given in Matthew 18:15–27, and that will
16 be followed at Redeemer Church:

17 (1) First Step: The offended member arranges a private meeting with the offending member,
18 humbly confronting the person with the nature of the offense. If the offending member
19 repents, the matter is closed (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). Scripture does not specify the
20 number of times that an offender should be confronted on an individual basis. Scripture is
21 clear that believers should be long-suffering and have an unrelenting desire for an
22 offender’s repentance (1 Corinthians 13:4–8a; 1 Peter 4:8). If the offending member does
23 not repent and the offense is of the nature categorized above as “Offenses Applicable to
24 Church Discipline” (*see* Bylaws VII.2), then the offended member has a responsibility to
25 move to the Second Step.

26 (2) Second Step: The offended member sets up another private meeting with the offending
27 member, this time with one or two other witnesses present (Matthew 18:16). This step
28 should never be taken in haste, but only after there is prayerful conviction that the First
29 Step has not availed. If the offending member repents, he should seek forgiveness from
30 the circle of offense, and no further.

31 It is important to understand the qualifications of a witness and the witness’s function in
32 the disciplinary process. Biblically, a witness is a person who bears testimony of
33 another’s wrongdoing based on firsthand knowledge. A person is not constituted a
34 witness who bears testimony based on hearsay, gossip, or secondhand knowledge
35 (Deuteronomy 19:15–19). The Bible condemns false witnesses (Exodus 20:13).
36 Accusations not substantiated by two or three witnesses must be left to the One who
37 knows all things and judges righteously (Numbers 35:30; Psalm 51:3–4). It is the
38 function of a witness to insure that the offense is clearly and impartially presented and
39 that nothing is left unsaid. Witnesses also keep each others’ motivations and actions
40 accountable before God (Matthew 18:20).

1 If the offending member does not repent, the circle of knowledge of the offense must be
2 broadened to include the elders for their consideration of the Third Step, in accordance
3 with Bylaws II.4.D.

- 4 (3) Third Step: With the required vote under Bylaws II.4.D, the elders present the matter to
5 the members of Redeemer Church (Matthew 18:17) at a Members' Meeting in
6 accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6. The membership will then
7 have a responsibility, as opportunity provides, to call the offending member to
8 repentance. An equitable period of time will be established by the Council of Elders to
9 optimize the fullest effect of the witness of the entire membership, to allow for the work
10 of the Lord, and to provide more than ample time for repentance.

11 If the offending member repents, the entire body should be quick to respond with
12 forgiveness, grace, and love (2 Corinthians 2:5–8). While repentance and forgiveness are
13 instantaneous, restoration to service will be monitored by the Council of Elders for the
14 benefit and development of the repentant member, and for the health, protection, and
15 well-being of Redeemer Church.

16 If the offending member does not repent, the elders will bring the matter before the
17 members of Redeemer Church at a Members' Meeting for the Fourth Step, the final step
18 in the process detailed in Scripture.

- 19 (4) Fourth Step: The Council of Elders and the membership of the church approves or
20 disapproves removal of the offending member from membership in accordance with
21 Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6. If the unrepentant offender is removed from
22 membership, he or she will be considered a “pagan or a tax collector,” as described by
23 Scripture and as specifically instructed in Matthew 18:17.

24 This phrase contains two interrelated aspects. First, the unrepentant offender is likened to
25 a pagan, which signifies that the person is outside the community of God's blessing and
26 grace. Second, the offender is likened to a tax collector, which signifies that the person is
27 untrustworthy and potentially dangerous.

28 By way of application, this constitutes a removal from church membership and
29 fellowship resulting in a recognition that the unrepentant offender is outside the realm of
30 God's blessings (1 Corinthians 5:1–13). Common ground for intimate friendship has been
31 removed. The entire congregation has an ongoing responsibility to act in unison, calling
32 the person to repentance with all contact, so as not to undermine the scriptural process or
33 the severe temporal consequences of the person's obstinate behavior. It is sincerely hoped
34 that there will be repentance and reconciliation as a result of the consistent and loving
35 application of this heart-wrenching, but biblical action.

36 The decisions and actions of the church in matters of discipline carry the highest
37 conceivable authority and are both final and binding, as clearly stated in Matthew 18:18–
38 20. There can be no appeal to any court as a result of church discipline (*see* Constitution
39 IV; *cf.* 1 Corinthians 6:1–2).

1 **Section 4: Integrity of Knowledge**

2 In all matters of church discipline, if and when members become aware of an offense and/or the
3 disciplinary action (including any and all steps in Bylaws VII.3), the members are expected,
4 without exception, to hold the knowledge with integrity, avoiding gossip and the defamation of
5 character (Ephesians 4:31–32; James 4:11). Church discipline matters concern the covenanted
6 members of Redeemer Church and must not be paraded before the world.

7 **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

8 Amendments to these Bylaws must be introduced in writing and submitted to the Council of
9 Elders for recommendation to the members of Redeemer Church. The amendment(s) will be
10 approved or disapproved by the decision of the Council and the membership of the church in
11 accordance with Constitution V.1 and Bylaws II.4.D and II.6.