CONSTITUTION OF BITTERROOT FAMILY CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Introduction. the By-laws of Bitterroot Family Church (BFC) are used to define how this faith family will operate in order to carry out the mission that Christ Jesus has given us to make disciples in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana and around the world. These By-laws are guidelines and principles for this autonomous body which will inherently need to change from time to time as the needs of the church change. These By-laws are based in scriptural principles, are not intended to be burdensome, but are parameters to help define how the church will organize into a local body of committed Christ followers, function as a family, and choose leadership. Those who desire to become BFC members voluntarily agree to submit to these By-laws. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

ARTICLE I - CHURCH NAME

Section 1.0 This local body of Christ shall be known as Bitterroot Family Church.

ARTICLE II - MISSION STATEMENT

Section 2.0 Bitterroot Family Church has grown because God has added to our numbers. We try to glorify Christ in all we do. Our church has sought to be unified on salvation beliefs while permitting differing opinions on non-salvation beliefs. This Church has people with many different backgrounds, but we are a family. Jesus said that the world would know that we are His because we love one another and because we are one. Therefore, these Statements of Faith are our non-negotiable statements of belief. (John 13:35; John 17:21-22; Acts 2:47)

ARTICLE III - OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

Section 3.0 Bitterroot Family Church is a family of believers that exists for the purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ. We accomplish this by:

Section 3.01 We exist as a faith family to share the great news of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is the communication of God's word of salvation to a world that needs forgiveness of sin. The Bible declares that God is not willing for anyone to perish. God's desire is for His eternal house to be full. The Bible places the responsibility of evangelism on the church as His ambassadors. "His intent was that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known." As committed members of the body of Christ, we are commanded to make disciples wherever we go. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:10; 2 Peter 3:9)

Section 3.01.2 We exist as a faith family to humbly serve. Ministry is the hands-on demonstration of Christ's love to one another and to the communities we serve. God has put a high priority on ministry. Every follower of Christ is a minister. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples- that you have love for one another." He also said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me." Ministry occurs when people serve the Lord and build up His Church by exercising their gifts and by applying the resources that He provides to the needs around them. Ministry also occurs when the ministers of the Lord's church seek to care for the widows, the orphans, and the ones who cannot defend or care for themselves. (Matthew 20:25-28, Matthew 25:35-40; Mark 9:35; John 13:35; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Section 3.01.3 We exist as a faith family to help believers mature as disciples. Discipleship is the intentional process of educating people in God's word. Discipleship leads people to Jesus. Discipleship brings about maturity in the individual believer and in the church. "Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity." Discipleship teaches the commands of Christ Jesus and leads people to become committed followers of the Savior. Discipleship helps us to know God through knowing His Word. Discipleship undergirds and informs evangelism and ministry. (Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 11:19; Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 6:1)

Section 3.02 We acknowledge and understand that the church is comprised of people from many different backgrounds. In accordance with Scripture, we believe, as a faith family, we are to strive for unity in the foundational beliefs of our faith (Ephesians 4:1-6).

ARTICLE IV - OUR STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Section 4.0 These are the core beliefs of the membership of Bitterroot Family Church. This statement of faith is not all inclusive of every belief of every member but outlines important beliefs which unite us as a faith family.

Section 4.01 About God. God is self-existent, the creator, and by nature He is eternal, all knowing, all-powerful, righteous, and omnipresent. God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. The Godhead is in agreement with the role of each. These three are co-equal and are one God, and therefore, God is by nature a relational God who enjoys loving fellowship within the Godhead, and who extends a loving relationship to us through faith in Jesus Christ and in unity with the Holy Spirit.

(Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 3:22; Deuteronomy 6:4; Job 38-40; Psalm 50:6; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 139:1-4; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-17; Isaiah 45:18; Matthew 19:26; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2)

Section 4.02 About the Father. Jesus Christ did not have a biological human father. God is His Father, and Jesus was born of a virgin mother by the power of the Holy Spirit, yet still, all three exist as one God. The Fatherhood of God is eternal; therefore, Father and Son have always existed in a love relationship. God revealed Himself as Father in both Old and New Testaments. God adopts believers in Jesus Christ into a relationship with Him as their Father. Through Christ, believers have the privilege of being heirs to God's glory. As Father God actively prunes and disciplines believers they may grow in character, wisdom, and knowledge of Him and bear the fruit of Christlikeness. (Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 63:16; John 15:1-4; John 20:17; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6)

Section 4.03 About the Son. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He is God. He is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead after three days, according to the Scriptures, to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to claim His church. (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1-5; John 8:58; John 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 1:15-23; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 4:14-15; Revelation 1:8)

Section 4.04 About the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make all people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He inspired and guided the Prophets and Apostles with the revelation of Scripture. He also dwells in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides Christians with power to grow in Christlikeness, to understand spiritual truth, and to serve the church through the use of their spiritual gifts. As Christians, we seek to live under the Holy Spirit's control daily. (Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 51:10-12; John 14:16-17; John 16:7-13; John 16:17; Acts 1:8; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

Section 4.05 About Mankind. We believe that man was created in the image of God by a direct act of God and did not come into being as the result of evolution. Man was created to glorify God, worship and serve Him, and have fellowship with Him. Man fell through sin by disobeying God, thus incurring both physical and spiritual death, which alienated him from God. Man's nature was thus corrupted and he is utterly lost, "dead in trespasses and sins," and totally incapable of saving himself and coming back into right relationship with God by his own merit or effort (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:5-17; Genesis 3:17-24; Isaiah 59:1-2; Luke 18:26-27; Romans 3:9-19; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:13).

Section 4.06 About Salvation. Salvation in Christ Jesus is the remedy for the sin of humankind. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone. Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it and trust in Him. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. There is no way we can earn God's forgiveness. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's provision for forgiveness of sin can anyone be saved from sin's penalty of eternal death. Believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ and His forgiveness by faith. Everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved! (John 1:12-13; John 14:6; Romans 5:1; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:13; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7)

Section 4.07 About the Bible. The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. The 66 canonical books are inspired by God and is the truth without any mixture or error. The Bible is infallible, inerrant, and absolute truth. Where it speaks, we listen and obey. (Psalm 12:6; Psalm 119:105; Psalm 119:160; Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Section 4.08 About Eternal Security. Because God gives eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. Once born again, one cannot lose their salvation. Salvation is sustained by the grace and power of God, not by works or mankind's effort. (John 3:16; John 10:27-29; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:14; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

Section 4.09 About Eternity. People will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or exist eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is eternal death in Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life in Heaven. We believe that Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; John 14:1-6; Romans 5:21; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:11-15)

Section 4.10 About the Church. We believe that the true Church is composed of all who have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ. We also believe members of the true Church, which is the bride of Christ, are eligible for membership in the local church. God primarily ministers on earth through the local church. Christ is the head of the church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe that the local church should be autonomous, self-governing, and free from any denominational control. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16; Ephesians 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:24-25)

Section 4.11 About the Christian Home. 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; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:29; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 31:10-31; Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

Section 4.12 About Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the Church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders. These two ordinances are Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper. While we respect all acts of spiritual obedience, we believe the Bible teaches that Baptism is to be done by immersion in water, following regeneration (salvation), as a symbolic one-time act of obedience and identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as Lord. The Lord's Supper is an ongoing remembrance of thanksgiving for our Lord's death, burial, resurrection and promised return for those who have a vital Biblical relationship with Jesus Christ. Each individual must come to a decision as to their own participation in these ordinances, but we see these as clearly taught and prescribed by the Lord Jesus for those who are saved. We do not regard anyone's participation in Baptism or the Lord's Supper as a means of salvation, but as obedient acts following one's regeneration. (Matthew 26:26-29; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:9-11; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; Luke 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:35-39; Acts 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Colossians 2:12)

Section 4.13 About the Christian Life. We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for himself and should, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, allow Christ to manifest His life through him to God's glory. By ever increasing obedience to the Word of God, each believer should mature and progressively become more like Jesus. In the power of the Spirit, each believer should live a holy life; not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; exercise their spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ; witness for Christ; be personally involved in making disciples to fulfill the great commission; perform good works and bear fruit to the glory of God. (Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:8; John 15:16; Acts 1:8; Romans 6:11-13; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-16; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 1:10; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

Section 4.14 About the Priesthood of Every Believer. God intends for every believer to play a role in the ministry of His Church. Though certain roles of leadership may require special qualifications, ministry is not reserved for the "clergy." Every member is a minister. Ministry is not reserved only for those who are paid or have specialized training, but instead is the obligation of every believer. God's mission is accomplished best when every member of the Church spends time and effort in ministry. In keeping with Paul's words to the Ephesian Church, Bitterroot Family Church endeavors to equip its members to do ministry, and not be fans sitting in the stands. (Ephesians 4:11-14; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-30; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

Section 4.15 About Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female in His image. Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. 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. We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual behavior, transgenderism, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. ***We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Bitterroot Family Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to Bitterroot Family Church's members and to the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Bitterroot Family Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by Bitterroot Family Church Doctrinal Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality.***

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 15:18-20; Matthew 5:16; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Section 4.16 About the Sanctity of Human Life. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1:5)

Section 4.17 About Spiritual Gifts. God has designed the local Church like a physical body, with Jesus Christ as the head. God gifts each of His children in unique and special ways to serve and build up the body. Therefore, spiritual gifts are not for personal benefit or glory, but to bring glory to God, as well as encouraging and building up the Church. No one individual can have all the gifts. We are interdependent on each other; together we are the body of Christ which is a clear demonstration of true diversity. There is no division as we all have equal concerns and need for each other. One is an "eye", another is a "hand", another is a "foot"; and some are presentable while other parts are not. We all must be the part God has designed us to be, if not, the body suffers and becomes ill. We are aware that some division can come with reference to the use of "tongues". To preserve unity in the body of Bitterroot Family Church, we ask that the gift of speaking in tongues not be exercised in public meetings (services/small groups). (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:7-11)

Section 4.18 About Stewardship. We view our entire lives as an offering to the Lord, and so we live our lives in such a way that we seek to honor God through ultimate sacrifice of our time, gifts, and resources for the purposes of His Kingdom. 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. We encourage everyone to live as it pertains to their finances, which includes tithing. If tithing has not been a part of a Church member's life practice, we encourage them to explore what God says about finances and step out on a faith journey. We believe that Church members can begin by committing to trust Him in this area and take a step of obedience to give faithfully. As we courageously walk with God in this area, we believe God will bring peace to our Church member's lives as they grow in this worshipful response to God. Being a part of Bitterroot Family Church means being committed to following God as He grows and changes us into persons of generosity. (Exodus 25:1-7; Exodus 28:1-7; Leviticus 27:30-34; Malachi 3:7-12; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 25:14-29; Mark 12:43; Luke 12:16-21; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 20:35; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Section 5.0 As a member of Bitterroot Family Church, having made profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and having been scripturally baptized, I do covenant before God, as I am enabled by His Holy Spirit, to: - Live my life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area.
- Accept the Word of God as my authority for faith and everyday living.
- Joyfully follow the shepherding and equipping of the elders of Bitterroot Family Church, as they lead under the authority of Christ and in accordance with Scripture.
- Maintain the unity of this local faith family by acting in love toward other members and by finding my place of service within this body of Christ.
- Support the mission and ministries of Bitterroot Family Church through prayer, service, generosity, and faithful witness in the community.

ARTICLE VI - POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Section 6.0 The government of Bitterroot Family Church is entrusted to a plurality of biblically qualified elders, also called pastors or overseers (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–4; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). These elders are called by God and affirmed by the congregation to shepherd the flock, provide spiritual oversight, lead in sound doctrine, equip the saints for the work of ministry, and protect the church from false teaching.

Christ Jesus is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), and under His authority the elders lead by teaching, shepherding, praying, and overseeing the ministry and mission of this body. The elders serve together as equals in authority and responsibility, though they may function in different roles and with differing gifts.

Deacons are recognized as servants of the church who assist the elders by caring for practical needs and supporting the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:1–6; 1 Timothy 3:8–13).

The congregation, under the care of the elders, affirms new elders and deacons, participates in matters of membership and discipline, and affirms significant decisions such as constitutional amendments and the acquisition or sale of church property. In all things, the congregation is called to joyfully submit to the leadership of the elders as they follow Christ (Hebrews 13:17).

ARTICLE VII - AFFILIATION

Section 7.0 Bitterroot Family Church is an autonomous faith family and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. However, the Bible teaches that local churches should seek voluntary fellowship with other doctrinally sound churches locally and abroad. This association is to provide help and encouragement as the Lord directs while working together to fulfill the commands of Jesus to take His Great News to all peoples. This is a voluntary association that in no way involves the surrender of the individual church's freedom or their dependence upon God.

Section 7.01 Bitterroot Family Church has chosen to affiliate itself with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Montana Southern Baptist Convention. We continue these relationships, believing that it is God's will to do so. Fundamental to this affiliation is the understanding that the Southern Baptist Convention is a fellowship of autonomous, biblically sound churches that choose to work together to further God's Kingdom. Voluntary contributions of time and resources to local, state, national, and international mission's projects maintain this affiliation. Support may also be provided by sending messengers to the state and annual conventions for voting on doctrinal, ethical, representation, and procedural positions. (John 17:20-23; Acts 15:2; Acts 21:17-18; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 4:15; Philippians 4:18; 1 John 1:3; 3 John 9-11)

ARTICLE VIII - CONDUCTING CHURCH AFFAIRS

Section 8.0 The conduct of the affairs of Bitterroot Family Church shall be overseen by the elders, who serve as shepherds and overseers of this body under the authority of Christ and the Word of God. The elders are responsible for providing spiritual leadership, guarding sound doctrine, overseeing ministry and mission, and ensuring that the church functions in an orderly and God-honoring manner (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–4; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

The elders may appoint ministry leaders, teams, or committees as needed to assist in carrying out the mission of the church. These groups remain accountable to the elders, who retain responsibility for the overall direction and care of the church.

The congregation shall participate by affirming new elders and deacons, receiving and releasing members, and affirming decisions related to church discipline, constitutional amendments, and the acquisition or sale of church property. In all matters, the congregation is called to prayerful cooperation with the elders so that together the body may glorify Christ in unity (Ephesians 4:1–16).

ARTICLE IX - ADOPTION

Section 9.01 — Adoption. This Constitution shall become effective when affirmed by a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the active members of Bitterroot Family Church present and voting at a duly called Family Business Meeting at which a quorum is present, provided that the full text of the proposed Constitution has been presented to the membership and made reasonably available for review for at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

Section 9.02 — Notice and Availability. Notice of the Family Business Meeting called to consider adoption of the Constitution shall be provided in writing to the membership and publicly announced during worship services no fewer than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. The elders shall make available the full text of the proposed Constitution in printed form and electronically (where practical), and shall provide a written summary explaining material changes and the reasons for adoption.

Section 9.03 — Information and Question Sessions. During the thirty (30) day review period the elders shall hold at least one congregational information session (in person and/or virtual as appropriate) to explain the proposed Constitution, answer questions, and hear input from members. The elders will consider reasonable, scripturally-based suggested amendments submitted during this review period and may modify the proposed text before the adoption vote.

Section 9.04 — Voting Mechanics. Voting on adoption shall be by the active members present at the meeting. Votes shall be cast by ballot unless the presiding elder determines that a voice vote is appropriate and the church agrees. Proxy voting is not permitted. The clerk shall receive and count ballots or oversee the count, and the presiding elder shall publicly announce the result.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 10.01 — Who May Propose Amendments. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed either:
A. by the elders, acting by a majority of the elder body; or
B. by written petition signed by at least twenty percent (20%) of the active membership, presented to the elders and the church clerk.

Section 10.02 — Submission and Review. All proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the elders and the church clerk. The elders shall prepare or cause to be prepared a clear explanatory statement that describes the proposed amendment, the reasons for it, and its practical effect. The elders shall present proposed amendments and the explanatory materials to the congregation and make them reasonably available for review at least thirty (30) days prior to the Family Business Meeting called to consider the amendment.

Section 10.03 — Congregational Information and Deliberation. During the thirty (30) day review period, the elders shall hold at least one public forum (or a series of forums) to explain the amendment, answer questions, and receive comments from members. The elders shall prayerfully consider substantial, scriptural input from the membership and may revise the proposed amendment prior to the vote. Any revised text prepared after initial publication must be redistributed to the membership no fewer than fourteen (14) days before the vote.

Section 10.04 — Calling a Meeting to Vote. Proposed amendments shall be voted upon at a Regular Family Business Meeting or at a Special Called Family Business Meeting specifically called for that purpose. Notice of the meeting (including the text of the proposed amendment and the explanatory statement) shall be given in writing and publicly announced in worship services, the church bulletin, and other customary channels in accordance with the notice requirements of Article 9.

Section 10.05 — Required Vote and Quorum. Adoption of an amendment to this Constitution requires a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the active members present and voting at the meeting, provided a quorum is present. Quorum for purposes of constitutional amendment shall be as defined in the By-Laws. Proxy voting is not permitted. Voting shall normally be by secret written ballot; the presiding elder may, at his discretion, order a different method only if clearly announced in the meeting notice.

Section 10.06 — Effective Date. A constitutional amendment shall become effective immediately upon adoption unless the amendment specifies a later effective date.

Section 10.07 — Emergency or Temporary Measures. Because constitutional amendments should not be made hastily, emergency amendments are strongly discouraged. In exceptional circumstances where delay would cause substantial harm or where immediate action is required for the safety, legal compliance, or essential functioning of the church, the elders (by unanimous vote) may adopt a temporary measure that modifies church practice or governance. Any such temporary measure must be (a) recorded in the elders' minutes, (b) communicated to the membership within seven (7) calendar days, and (c) presented to the congregation for affirmation at a Family Business Meeting called within ninety (90) days. If the membership does not affirm the temporary measure within ninety (90) days, the temporary measure will automatically expire at the end of that period.

Section 10.08 — Recording and Publication. The church clerk shall record each proposed amendment, the explanatory materials, meeting notices, and the results of votes in the minutes. Upon adoption, the clerk shall update the official copy of the Constitution, provide an updated copy to every active member (electronic or printed), and post the revised Constitution in customary church locations and online where practical.

Section 10.09 — Interpretation. The elders are charged with the initial interpretation of this Constitution for day-to-day governance. Any question of interpretation that cannot be resolved by the elders may be submitted to the congregation for decision at a Family Business Meeting called for that purpose.