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CONSTITUTION FOR CURTISS STREET BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

- I.** The legal, corporate name of this church shall be **CURTISS STREET BIBLE FELLOWSHIP**.

II. GOVERNMENT

Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship recognizes that the Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church and, therefore, is the ultimate authority of this assembly as set forth in Matthew 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 2:19-22; Col. 1:18 and 1 Timothy 3:14, 15.

Under Christ, our Head, the basic responsibility for the governing of Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship is invested in its Council of Elders and its Deacons selected from the membership to supervise and manage the church. Elders shall be equal in authority in carrying out their responsibilities as servant leaders as specified in God's Word. (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3) Deacons shall operate under the oversight of the Council of Elders. (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

A. CHURCH LEADERSHIP OF ELDERS:

Elders shall be men, baptized by immersion, who desire to serve in the position of elder, who are recognized by the existing elders and the members of the congregation as being men who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and who are ordained by the existing elders to hold the position of elder.

Once a man is ordained an elder, he remains an elder unless he no longer desires to hold the position of elder, or something pertaining to his quality of life disqualifies him from holding the position of elder.

B. COUNCIL OF ELDERS:

1. **DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS:** The Council of Elders shall lovingly and faithfully shepherd God's flock according to God's will and plan, in the direction of Christ-centered, God-fearing, love-prompted obedience, as clearly set forth in His Word. They shall uphold the constitution, doctrinal statement and purpose statement of Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship. They shall be expected to visit the sick and sorrowing of the membership, investigating (investigate) delinquents, and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of its members. They shall faithfully perform all other duties designated by this constitution or pertaining to their position. They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution for their particular position and especially as found in the Word of God. (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

The Council of Elders shall be the executive of the congregation ¹ in its business transactions, its dealings with the preaching-teaching elder, employees, and affiliated organizations.

The Council of Elders shall have the management and control of all property belonging to the church except they shall have no power to: buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer real property without express authorization conveyed through a majority vote of the membership present at a constitutionally-called business meeting.

The Council of Elders shall handle and consider suggestions, recommendations and grievances, given in a written and signed paper, upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the church.

The Council of Elders shall have authority to appoint individuals or committees to assist in the transaction of its business and they are accountable to the elders.

The church fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

The Council of Elders shall have the responsibility of seeing that the books of the church are reviewed yearly, and not more than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting.

2. **PREACHING-TEACHING ELDER:** The Preaching-Teaching elder(s) shall be a member of the Council of Elders and shall be subject to the Council of Elders and be evaluated by the Council at least once annually.

The paid preaching-teaching elder(s) shall not hold any office on the Council of Elders.

The Preaching-Teaching elder's position can be terminated by: a 30-day notice of resignation, a two-thirds vote of the congregation, or dismissed immediately on moral grounds by the Council of Elders. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:19)

C. APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION OF ELDER:

1. The Council of Elders shall make it their constant duty to see that faithful men are trained and taught in Christian growth and maturity.

¹ Executive of the Congregation: having administrative or managerial responsibility. (Merriam-Webster online dictionary) It shall be the responsibility of the Elder Council to operate within the guidelines of Scripture and the Constitution to manage the affairs of CSBF. It shall be the responsibility of the congregation to uphold and support the decisions of the Elder Council and to vote on matters provided for in the Constitution.

A candidate for the position of elder must be an active member of this church. He must have a moral conduct beyond reproach and be free from carnal indulgence, which is harmful, and a stumbling block, and out of harmony with a dedicated life, as set forth in Romans 8:12; 12:1, 2; 13:13-14; 14:21; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; and 1 John 3:5-9.

When the Council of Elders agrees that a man meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and when that man expresses his desire to serve in the position of elder, he shall meet with all the existing elders of the church in which:

- a. The candidate will explain his testimony of salvation and Christian growth and he will explain why he desires to hold the position of elder.
 - b. The Council of Elders shall thoroughly investigate his qualifications and capabilities. They shall examine the candidate as to his loyalty to the constitution and doctrinal position of Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship, his Christian life, and his willingness and ability to live in accordance with any standards maintained by the church and any other matters that pertain to the high position and solemn responsibility of shepherding the flock of God.
2. If the candidate, having been carefully and judiciously examined and having studied the Constitution and Doctrinal Statement of the church, is in agreement of such and is approved by the elders, a congregational meeting shall be called in which the candidate's name shall be recommended to the members for the position of elder. At that meeting the candidate must be able to answer in the affirmative to the following questions:

Do you publicly confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and have you experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3 and Titus 3:5?

Are you in agreement with and will you be loyal to the Doctrinal Statement and Constitution of this church?

Are you endeavoring to live a surrendered, prayerful Christian life, especially with regard to loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, Titus 2:11-15; and with regard to separation from worldliness, 1 John 2:15-17; and James 4:4?

Are you free from membership in oath-bound religious or social secret organizations? (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

3. The members shall have the opportunity to ask any questions of the candidate they believe are pertinent to the high position of elder and the solemn responsibility of shepherding the flock of God.

Finally, the members shall voice their approval or disapproval through a private ballot. If there is a decision of disapproval, the member shall write his/her name so that in private, a specific explanation for disapproval may be learned and examined. It shall be the responsibility of the elders to insure that the specific reason(s) for disapproval are carefully and judiciously examined and investigated. If, in the elders' judgment the cause(s) for disapproval is(are) confirmed, then that candidate shall not be ordained an elder.

If there is disapproval by a member(s) but no name, that ballot shall be invalid.

Should the candidate be disapproved at any point of the process, the Council of Elders shall make it their duty to see that the reason for disapproval is prayerfully, lovingly and clearly communicated to the man. If he is willing and sincere, they shall also insure that he is faithfully and personally nurtured by another man of God until he reaches maturity in that specific area(s), encouraging him to press on to growth.

If the candidate is finally approved by the member(s), he shall be publicly ordained ² and officially accepted to the position of elder of the flock of God.

D. MEETINGS:

All regular meetings of the Council of Elders shall be held on the second Sunday of the month, unless changed by mutual agreement of the Council members.

The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held on a date no later than the second Sunday in February.

Any meeting of the congregation may be called for the transaction of business, providing an announcement of the said meeting be given at the regular church service on two consecutive Sunday mornings.

² Publicly Ordained: To invest officially (as by the laying on of hands) with ministerial authority. (Merriam-Webster online dictionary). This shall be performed by the Elder Council, before the congregation, and apply to a man that has been chosen for the position of Elder.

The voting members present at any business meeting, called in accordance with the requirements of this Constitution, shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

A voting member is a member in good standing.³

E. THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH:

1. **THE CHAIRMAN:** The chairman is to preside at all Council and congregational meetings. He shall be elected from the Council of Elders. Election is for 1 year.

The chairman may serve for 3 consecutive 1-year terms and then refrain from holding that office for a minimum of 1 year.

2. **THE CLERK :** The clerk shall keep an accurate record of all congregational business meetings or council meetings upon request of either body; admissions, dismissions, deaths, baptisms, and ordination services. He shall carry on and maintain complete record of all correspondence and such other records as may pertain to this office. He shall also have in custody any other papers, records or other documents as directed by the congregation or the Council of Elders. The Council shall appoint one of its members as clerk.

3. **THE TREASURER:** The treasurer shall have charge of all monies connected with the church and for all monies received and disbursed with the exception of the Deacon's Fund, which will be administered by an appointee of the elders and be reviewed regularly by the elders. All checks shall be made out in the name of the church over the signature of the treasurer. Disbursement of church monies shall be guided by the Council of Elders. All elders shall have access to the books at any time. A financial statement showing the true status of all funds for the fiscal year of the church shall be presented at the annual meeting of the church each year. Reviewing of the books will be done at the close of each fiscal year. The Council shall appoint one of its members as treasurer.

F. REMOVAL OF ELDERS:

Any charge against an Elder must be well founded and sustained by two or three witnesses as set forth in 1 Timothy 5:19-20. These charges shall be brought to an elder by any two elders or two members or two non-members. That elder shall present the charges to the Council of Elders.

³ "In good standing": A member in good standing shall be any member that:

- a. Is not under some form of discipline from this or any other congregation of like belief;
- b. Is not on the inactive role;
- c. Has shown a desire to meet with the CSBF body of believers (especially Sunday morning worship) on a regular basis.

The Council of Elders shall thoroughly and judiciously investigate said charges. Should an elder be found participating in conduct in violation of Scripture, especially 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and the requirements of this Constitution as set forth in Article II, he shall be asked to step down from his position.

If the elder in question removes himself, the elders shall call a Congregational meeting to present their findings and the results thereof, to the Congregation.

If the elder refuses to step down, he shall be brought before the Congregation. Upon hearing the charges, he shall be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present.

In either case the elders shall lovingly and diligently work with the fallen brother to restore him. Reinstatement to eldership shall be according to the procedure set forth in Article II, C of this Constitution.

G. QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACON:

Deacons shall be men baptized by immersion, and active members of this church, who meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 He must have a moral conduct beyond reproach and be free from carnal indulgence, which is harmful, and a stumbling block, and out of harmony with a dedicated life, as set forth in Romans 8:12; 12:1, 2,; 13:13-14; 14:21, Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; and 1 John 3:5-9.

H. JOB DESCRIPTION FOR DEACONS:

Deacons shall assist the elders in caring for the flock, and in any service that promotes the ministry of the Word, whether in new or existing ministries of the church.

The primary duty of the deacon is to serve the physical needs of the church so the elders may devote themselves to spiritual needs of the church. (Acts 6:1-6)

1. Specific duties of the deacons include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Maintenance of all church properties and equipment
- b. Enforcing church polices regarding the physical facilities and grounds
- c. Assisting the elders with some budgeting responsibilities

Deacons shall administer the Deacon's Fund to assist the poor and needy in the church first, and then in the community. Distribution of funds will be at the discretion of the Deacons. A financial report of the Deacon's Fund will be presented to the Council of Elders at the monthly meetings.

2. Deacons shall appoint a moderator to lead in meetings and a clerk to record the minutes of the meetings.

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I. APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS:

The Council of Elders shall appoint men from the active membership and present them to the congregation to serve as deacons.

When the Council of Elders agrees that a man meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and that man expresses his desire to serve in the position of deacon, he shall meet with the Council of Elders at which:

1. The candidate will explain his testimony of salvation and Christian growth and why he desires to hold the position of deacon.
2. The Council of Elders shall thoroughly investigate his qualifications and capabilities. They shall examine the candidate as to his loyalty to the constitution and doctrinal position of Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship, his Christian life, and his willingness and ability to live in accordance with any standards maintained by the church.

If the candidate, having been carefully and judiciously examined and having studied the Constitution and Doctrinal Statement of the church, is in agreement of such and is approved by the Council of Elders, a congregational meeting shall be called in which the candidate's name shall be presented to the members for the position of deacon. At that meeting, the candidate must be able to answer in the affirmative to the following questions:

1. Do you publicly confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and have you experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3 and Titus 3:5?
2. Are you in agreement with and will you be loyal to the Doctrinal Statement and Constitution of this church?
3. Are you endeavoring to live a surrendered, prayerful Christian life, especially with regard to loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, Titus 2:11-15; and with regard to separation from worldliness, 1 John 2:15-17; and James 4:4?
4. Are you free from membership in oath-bound religious or social secret organizations? (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

The members shall have the opportunity to ask any questions of the candidate they believe are pertinent to the position of deacon. Finally, the members shall voice their approval or disapproval through a private ballot. If there is a decision of disapproval, the member shall write his/her name so that in private, a specific explanation for disapproval may be learned and examined. It shall be the responsibility of the elders to insure that the specific reason(s) for disapproval are carefully and judiciously examined and investigated. If, in the elders' judgment, the cause(s) for disapproval is (are) confirmed, then that candidate shall not be approved for the position of deacon.

Should the candidate be disapproved at any point of the process, the Council of Elders shall make it their duty to see that the reason for disapproval is prayerfully, lovingly, and clearly communicated to the man. If he is willing and sincere, they shall also insure that he is faithfully and personally nurtured by another man of God until he reaches maturity in that specific area(s), encouraging him to press on to growth.

(7)

If the candidate is finally approved by the members, he shall be officially accepted to the position of deacon.

J. TERM OF SERVICE:

Deacons may serve for an unlimited term provided they continue to meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Scripture does not require a minimum or maximum number of deacons.

K. REMOVAL OF DEACONS:

Deacons may be removed under the same procedure for the removal of elders Article II, F.

III. CHURCH AFFILIATION

Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship will not be subject to the authority of any denominational body, or to any individual within or outside of this local body of believers. We maintain fellowship with those who practice a like precious faith. (2 Peter 2:1)

IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Persons who are at least 16 years old, have received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, given assurance of their desire to live a consistent Christian life, a willingness to abide by the Constitution and doctrinal standards of this church, completed the membership class taught by a well qualified teacher approved by the Council of Elders, and have been approved by the Council of Elders, shall be presented to the congregation as members.

B. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:

Anyone who has been a member in good standing and moves from the area shall, upon request, be placed on an Associate Membership Roll subject to the approval of the Council of Elders. Those on this roll shall not have the right to vote. They shall be subject to removal if they violate the standards for regular members under Article IV, F. Restoration to regular membership shall follow the same procedure as stated in Article IV, A.

C. LETTER OF TRANSFER:

A person desiring to transfer into the membership of this church must meet the same requirements as stated in Article IV, A.

D. TRANSFER:

A member may be transferred to the fellowship of another church of like precious faith by a letter of recommendation.

E. INACTIVE MEMBER:

Any member who fails to attend or to take an active part in the services of the church over a period of 3 months, without a reasonable excuse, shall be placed on the inactive roll by the Council of Elders. If, when any member who has been placed on the inactive roll, shall again return to active participation within the church, the Council of Elders, may at their discretion, certify him to the Clerk as again being an active member.

1. Any member placed on the inactive roll shall lose his right to vote.
2. No member on the inactive roll shall hold any office of the church.

F. DISCIPLINE:

It is our conviction that discipline should be administered in accordance with the Word of God. Every attempt should be made to bring the erring member back into fellowship with God and with fellow Christians. But when all of these efforts fail, discipline should be kindly and prayerfully administered. Some occasions for discipline are:

1. Propagation of doctrines not in accord with the doctrinal statement of this church, whether in the church or out of it.
2. Any action or conversation that would harm the testimony of the Church as a whole.
3. Any action or conversation that would cause division in the church.

Discipline initially shall be handled entirely by the Council of Elders (Matthew 18:15-19 and 1 Corinthians 5:13). When dismissal from the fellowship appears necessary, a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members of the congregation will be required to effect such a dismissal.

V. ORDINATION

When in the judgment of the Council of Elders a man of this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Council of Elders to call a meeting to examine the candidate for ordination, providing authority for same is granted by a 2/3 vote of the voting members of the church. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all candidates for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service.

The following shall not be ordained in the ministry:

- One who has not served 12 months in Christian service.
- One who is not certain of God's call to the ministry.

- One who practices any form of worldliness as dealt with in Article II, C1 of this Constitution.

VI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a 3/4 majority vote at a constitutionally-called congregational meeting. A notice of the proposed amendment, along with a copy of the standing article, must be posted on the church bulletin board prior to the time the said meeting is announced.

VII. DISSOLUTION

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or any private individual, and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more Christian organizations decided by the governing elders, whose Biblical doctrinal Statements are in agreement with that of Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship, and are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes.

CONSTITUTION
of
CURTISS STREET BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Revised 12/2018