

# **Darby Creek Community Church BYLAWS**

**Adopted 10/10/10**

## **Section 1**

### **GENERAL**

#### **1.1 Name**

The name of the Corporation shall be Darby Creek Community Church, hereinafter referred to as "the Corporation" when referring to the legal entity recognized by the Ohio, or "the church" when referring to the ecclesiastical entity established by Jesus Christ as a local church.

#### **1.2 Nonprofit Purposes**

The Corporation is a local church organized and operated exclusively as a nonprofit, religious, educational, and charitable organization dedicated to the purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation.

## **Section 2**

### **OFFICES**

#### **2.1 Registered Office and Agent**

The Corporation shall continuously maintain a registered office and registered agent within the state of Ohio.

#### **2.2 Principal Office**

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at 3105 Casper Avenue, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 or such place as shall be determined by the Board of Trustees.

#### **2.3 Additional Offices**

The Corporation may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine and the business of the Corporation may require.

## **Section 3**

### **SEAL**

The Corporation may have a seal in the form determined by the Board of Trustees. Said seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or otherwise reproduced, or by writing the word "SEAL" beside the signature of an authorized officer of the Corporation.

## **Section 4**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It seems clear that the early church was led by a plurality or group of godly leaders:

“For this reason I left you in Crete that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.” (Titus 1:5)

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among whom the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

Often referred to as elders, overseers, or shepherd/pastors, this group of spiritually mature men shared the responsibility of leading the church. Certain key words from the New Testament reveal the scope of responsibility of the eldership in the local church. These include: shepherding (protecting the church from false doctrines or practices), ruling/governing (providing direction), instructing (teaching & admonishing), proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the community, and ministering (providing holistic care through prayer and practical help).

Scriptures indicate that not all elders are on staff in the church. 1 Timothy 5:16 directs that the “elders who rule well” (managing the affairs of the church through planning, leading, delegating, etc.) be the ones to be compensated financially for their work and to be put on staff. It also seems clear from the New Testament that other individuals assisted the elders in their governing and management roles. This included Deacons (servants) and faithful individuals.

Biblical eldership involves the responsibility of guarding the body of Christ against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in a pattern of sinful behavior. By the grace of God, elders are to protect and provide for the church’s spiritual health. In doing this the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community (1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28-31, Titus 1:9, James 5:14). In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The church uses the terms “pastor” and “elder” interchangeably. That is, when a man is appointed an elder, he is ordained to minister as part of the pastoral team. This practice grew out of an understanding that the terms pastor and elder refer to the same office in the New Testament. It is preferable and Scriptural to have a Board of Trustees comprised of elders/pastors responsible for governing the affairs of the church.

Ideally, the Board of Trustees will be comprised of a majority of appointed elders from the ranks of qualified men in the church. (Concerning gender limitations on the office of elder, please refer to the “Women in Leadership” article written by John Piper and Wayne Grudem found in the Great Commission Leadership Institute material, available in the church office). However, if the number of elders is not adequate to comprise a Board of Trustees of sufficient size, the Board may appoint as Trustees individuals who are qualified male Deacons to serve on the Board.

#### **4.1 Number and Term**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than three (3) nor more than nine (9) persons, as may be determined from time to time by resolution of the Board of Trustees. Trustees shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees for terms as determined by the Board or until their successors are appointed and qualify in their stead.

#### **4.2 Qualification and Appointment**

In general, each Trustee must be a male in the church who meets the requirements of an elder.

##### **4.2.1 Biblical Requirements** (from 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9)

In determining a candidate's qualifications, the Great Commission Churches elder qualification test and Great Commission Churches doctrinal tests will be used.

##### **4.2.2 Practical Requirements**

Level of involvement/commitment required to fulfill the responsibilities of a Trustee:

- A. Supportive of the church doctrine, philosophy and strategy of ministry
  - 1.) Agree to the Great Commission Covenant
  - 2.) Commitment to the statement of faith and core values statement of the church
  - 3.) Commitment to the mission of the church.
  - 4.) Commitment to attend with reasonable regularity Sunday morning services, church-wide functions, the church leadership meetings, and activities in the local community that involve the church. (NOTE: A Great Commission Churches representative who is nominated for the Board is exempted from this requirement.)
  - 5.) Give generously (at least 10% of his income) to the church.
  
- B. Family
  - 1.) In the case of a Trustee who is married, his wife must be in agreement with the all that is written in these bylaws, as well as one who has agreed to the Great Commission Covenant.
  
  - 2.) The Trustee must be one who manages his household well. An indication of this (for Trustees who are married or have children) will be that the wife of the Trustee and the children in his household will be active members and in good standing in the church. Also, the wife of the Trustee will be one who is diligent to pursue a unity of spirit with the other Trustees, their wives, the staff and their wives, as well as all church members.
  
- C. Personal ministry
  - 1.) Discipling believers and developing leaders.
  - 2.) Personal evangelism (bringing visitors, reaching out, etc.)

D. Responsibilities of an Elder

- 1.) Board meetings
  - a.) Support Board decisions, even where the elder dissented
  - b.) Study and preparation as required for Board meetings and for decision making
- 2.) Care of members
  - a.) Getting to know and caring for the congregation. Those assigned to the elder's care should have regular personal contact with responsibility for their special needs in order to give an account of those under their care.

**4.2.3 Non-Elder Trustees**

Should a situation arise that the number of ordained elders may not be sufficient to comprise a governing Board of sufficient size, the appointment of non-elders on the Board may be necessary: 1) to address the need for plurality and accountability within the Board process, 2) as a consideration of the valuable contributions other leaders in the church can bring to the governing process, and 3) as a consideration to the sensitivities to the congregation and community. Whenever possible a Non-Elder trustee should be male and meet the biblical qualifications of a Deacon found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The current board shall select a man by a majority vote of the board, and the term shall be defined by the board.

A. Board meetings

- 1.) Support Board decisions, even where the trustee dissented
- 2.) Study and preparation as required for Board meetings and for decision making

**4.2.4 Selection of Board Members**

INTRODUCTION:

Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the founders of the church. By this example it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders to ensure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would therefore appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations (Acts 14:21, Titus 1:5).

The following process will be used for the appointment of a Trustee:

A. Potential candidates for the Board will be evaluated as to their character and doctrine. The Great Commission Churches Elder Qualification Test and the Great Commission Churches Doctrine Test will be used to evaluate the character and doctrine of candidates who are first-time appointees except in the case where the church board must select a trustee as described in Section 4.2.3.

B. After this evaluation is completed, the Board of Trustees will nominate Board candidates.

C. If the candidate is also being appointed an elder of the church, the Board will inform a Great Commission Churches representative of his nomination, and follow Great Commission Churches ordination procedures. (See "Procedures for the Appointment and Removal of Ministers" available at the Church Office.)

D. The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the biblical qualifications for elders and their scriptural role.

E. Names of the prospective Trustees shall be brought before the participating members of the church, who will be given 15 days to show cause why any one of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matthew 18:15 and Matthew 5:24, any members with such "cause" must first express his or her concern to the prospective elder. Then the member must also express the concern to the Board or the Board's representative for consideration. A good faith effort must be made by the Board to consider and resolve any concern raised by a church member as to any potential Board member.

F. If no concerns are raised at the end of the 15-day period or if the concerns that are raised are deemed by the Board to be without merit, the prospective Trustees will be presented to the present Board for approval.

G. The initial Board of Trustees shall be as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. Subsequent appointments of trustees of the Corporation may be made by a vote of a two-thirds majority of those trustees present at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, or at a special meeting convened for that purpose. A good faith effort will be made by the Board to be unanimous in the appointment of any man to the Board of Trustees.

#### **4.3 Vacancy**

If the office of any trustee becomes vacant, the remaining trustees, though less than a quorum, shall be authorized to select a successor who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Corporation to serve the unexpired term of the vacated trusteeship.

#### **4.4 Powers**

The government of the church is vested in its Board of Trustees, who shall provide oversight in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church, and shall appoint and confer authority upon paid and volunteer staff to manage the church. The Board of Trustees shall exercise all such powers of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. The Board of Trustees shall also be a resource for providing godly counsel, biblical wisdom, and accountability for the Lead Pastor and other Elders of the church.

#### **4.5 Committees**

The Board of Trustees may appoint two or more natural persons, a majority of whom are Trustees, to serve as special and standing committees, such as the Board may determine are necessary, which shall have such powers and duties as shall from time-to-time be prescribed by the Board. All members of such committees shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The delegation of authority to any committee shall not operate to relieve the Board of Trustees or any member of the Board from any responsibility imposed by law. Any non-Trustee who becomes a member of any such committee shall have the same responsibility with respect to such committee as a Trustee who is a member of that committee. Rules governing procedures for meetings of any committee of the Board shall be established by the Board of Trustees, or in the absence thereof, by the committee itself. The minutes of all meetings of any Board Committee shall be reported to the Board of Trustees at the meeting next succeeding such action. Other

committees not having and exercising the authority of the Board of Trustees in the management of the Corporation may be designated and appointed by a resolution adopted by a majority of the Board of Trustees at a meeting at which a quorum is present, or by the President if authorized by a similar resolution of the Board, and the members of such committees may, but need not be, limited to Trustees.

#### **4.6 Removal and Resignation**

Any Trustee may at any time deliver a written notice of intent to resign to the Board chair, which shall be effective upon its acceptance by the Board. Any Trustee may be removed from the Board with or without cause when, in the sole judgment and discretion of the Board of Trustees, it is determined by at least a two-thirds percent majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present that such Trustee should no longer serve on the Board; provided, however, that a notice, including the names of the Trustee(s) proposed to be removed, and the date, time and place of any meeting called to consider such removal shall be given in writing to each of the Trustees at least seven (7) days prior to the date of such meeting.

##### **4.6.1 To remove a Trustee, the additional procedures will be taken:**

A. The Trustee will first be approached privately by a member of the Board of Trustees as to why he is unfit to be on the Board.

B. If there is not a unity of mind, then 1 or 2 other Trustees will be included into the process. A representative of Great Commission Churches may also be included in the process at this point.

C. If there is still not a unity of mind, the Board as a group will meet to hear the issues and concerns. Without the Trustee being present, the Board will then vote on whether to remove the Trustee from the Board.

D. Any Trustee being removed from the Board has the right to appeal the Board's decision to Great Commission Churches. The action to remove the Trustee is not binding until the appeal has been heard and acted upon fully by Great Commission Churches. Throughout this entire process, the decision to remove or not remove the Trustee must be based upon objective and factual evidences substantiated by 2 or 3 witnesses.

E. Good faith effort will be taken throughout the entire process to protect the unity of the church and the privacy of every individual involved. Except for church members who are witnesses of facts relevant to the Trustee's qualifications, no church member will be included in this process until the process has been completed by the Board.

F. In communicating to the church concerning the removal of a Trustee, the Board will make a good faith effort to be both honest (as to the reasons for removal) as well as honoring to the Trustee.

G. Good faith effort will be taken to help strengthen a Trustee in his character and ministry rather than remove him from the Board. Notwithstanding, the Board is empowered to take whatever action is necessary to make sure that the church and the Board are above reproach and are honoring to Jesus Christ and the Scriptures.

H. If the Trustee being removed is an elder and is being removed as an elder of the church, the Board must follow Great Commission Churches "Procedures for the Appointment and Removal of Ministers" (available in the church office). In particular, the Board must notify a Great Commission Churches representative before the elder is removed from his position.

#### **4.7 Transactions with Interested Parties**

A contract or other transaction between the Corporation and one or more of its Trustees, officers, or family members thereof (hereinafter "Interested Party"), or between the Corporation and any other entity, of which entity one or more Trustees, officers, or trustees are also Interested Parties, or in which entity an Interested Party has a material financial interest -- shall be voidable at the sole election of the Corporation unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

**4.7.1** The Corporation entered into the transaction for its own benefit;

**4.7.2** The transaction was fair and reasonable as to the Corporation, or was in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the Corporation entered into the transaction;

**4.7.3** Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the Board of Trustees authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the Trustees then in office, without counting the vote of the interested Trustee or Trustees, and with full knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties' interest in the transaction, even though the disinterested Trustees are less than a quorum; and

**4.7.4** Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the disinterested members of the Board of Trustees, in good faith and with ordinary care, determined, after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the Corporation could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes.

Common or interested Trustees may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Trustees (or a committee thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction.

Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the Corporation to any of its Trustees or officers, as provided further in Section 9.6 of these Bylaws.

#### **4.8 Conflicts of Interest Policy**

It is the policy of the Corporation to avoid conflicts of interest and to provide for full disclosure of any and all material conflicting interests by Board members, officers, Lead management, and employees, and permit the Board to gather all relevant facts and circumstances to determine in accordance with the guidelines of Section 4.7 above whether or not any disclosed potential conflict is benign and not in any way jeopardizing the religious mission, exempt function, or reputation of Christ's church, so that the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the Corporation.. This policy will be implemented by appropriate practices and/or written procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees.

#### **4.9 No Compensation of Trustees**

Trustees and members of any committee of the Board of Trustees shall not receive compensation for their services as Trustees and members of any such committee, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred in attending such meetings. Trustees may serve the Corporation in any other capacity and receive reasonable compensation for such other services, which compensation shall be set by the Board without their participation.

### **Section 5**

#### **MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

##### **5.1 Notice**

Regular, annual, and special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be held within or outside the state of Ohio without formal notice at such time and place as shall from time to time be determined by the Board, except for meetings at which the Board shall consider the removal of a Trustee, as noted in Section 4.6.

##### **5.2 Waiver of Notice**

Whenever any notice is required to be given by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to the notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent thereto. Attendance at a meeting by a person entitled to notice shall constitute a waiver of proper notice of such meeting, except where attendance is for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

##### **5.3 Quorum**

A majority of the Trustees shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a two-thirds majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws.

##### **5.4 Action Without a Meeting**

Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Trustees or by a committee thereof may be taken without a meeting, by written action signed and dated by all the Trustees. However, a written consent setting forth the action so taken and signed and dated by all the members of the Board or of a committee, as the case may be, must be filed with the minutes of proceedings of the Board or the committee. The written action is effective when signed and dated by the required number of Trustees, unless a different effective time is provided in the written action. When written action is permitted to be taken by less than all Trustees, all Trustees must be notified promptly of its text and effective date. Failure to provide the notice does not invalidate the written action, but a Trustee who does not sign and date the written action is not liable for the action.

### **5.5 Participation by Conference Telephone**

Members of the Board of Trustees or of any committee designated thereby may participate in a meeting of such Board or committee by means of a conference telephone videoconferencing technology or the Internet, or similar communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can communicate concurrently with one another; if each individual entitled to participate in the meeting consents to the meeting being held by means of that system. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or other means of remote communications, the minutes recording any action taken at such meeting shall also note who participated in person and who participated by alternative communications.

## **Section 6**

### **OFFICERS**

#### **6.1 Number and Positions.**

The officers of the Corporation shall be elected by the Board of Trustees and shall be the Lead Pastor (who functions as President), Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board may also elect an Executive Pastor (who functions as Vice-President), one or more assistant secretaries and assistant Treasurers. Two or more offices may be held by the same person except that the offices of the Lead Pastor and Secretary may not be held by the same person. Except as otherwise provided, the officers may, but need not be, Pastors of the church. However, all officers must be members in good standing of this Church. The Board may appoint such other officers and agents as it shall deem necessary, who shall hold their offices for such terms and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

#### **6.2 Term of Office**

The Board of Trustees shall elect officers of the Corporation, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Any officer elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, whenever, in their judgment, the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. If the office of any officer becomes vacant for any reason, the vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees. In case of the absence or disability of an officer of the Corporation, or in any other case that the Board of Trustees may deem sufficient reason therefore, the Board of Trustees, a two-thirds majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, may delegate for the time being any or all of the powers or duties of any officer to any other officer, Pastor, or any other person.

#### **6.3 The Lead Pastor**

To be appointed as the Lead Pastor, and to maintain that position, an individual must satisfy the criteria established for pastors, as set forth below.

**6.3.1** The Lead Pastor shall serve as the chair of the Board of Trustees.

**6.3.2** He shall preside at meetings of the Board of Trustees.

**6.3.3** He shall serve as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, and shall have general active management of the business of the Corporation.

**6.3.4** He shall see that orders and resolutions of the Board are carried into effect, sign and deliver in the name of the Corporation deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments pertaining to the business of the Corporation, except in cases in which the authority to sign and deliver is required by law to be exercised by another person or is expressly delegated by the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws or by the Board to another officer or agent of the Corporation.

**6.3.5** He shall bear ultimate responsibility for maintaining records of and, when necessary, certifying proceedings of the Board.

**6.3.6** He shall make reports to the Board of Trustees, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

**6.3.7** This corporate role of the Lead Pastor shall always be secondary and subservient to his primary role as the spiritual leader of the local church to establish the church's vision, mission, and priorities in accordance with the Bible, to lead the local church to be a gospel-centered reflection of Christ's body, to extend the glory and kingdom of God in and through this local church.

#### **6.4 The Executive Pastor**

To be appointed as the Executive Pastor, and to maintain that position, an individual must satisfy the same criteria set forth for the Lead Pastor.

In the absence of the Lead Pastor, the Executive Pastor shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Lead Pastor, or such of them as may be so delegated, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time. He shall serve as Vice-President of the Corporation.

#### **6.5 The Secretary**

**6.5.1** The Secretary or an assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board and record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose.

**6.5.2** He shall perform like duties for the standing committees when required.

**6.5.3** The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, such notice as is required of all meetings of the Board of Trustees.

**6.5.4** He shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

**6.5.5** The Secretary shall keep in safe custody the seal of the Corporation and, when authorized by the Board, affix the same to any instrument requiring it, and when so affixed it shall be attested by the signature of the Secretary, or by the signature of the Treasurer or an assistant Secretary.

## **6.6 Assistant Secretaries**

The assistant Secretaries in the order of their Leadity shall, in the absence or disability of the Secretary, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Secretary, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

## **6.7 The Treasurer**

**6.7.1** Except as the Board of Trustees may otherwise determine, the Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall deliver all funds and securities of the Corporation which may come into his hands to such bank or trust company as the Trustees shall designate as a depository, and shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation.

**6.7.2** The Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements.

**6.7.3** The Treasurer shall render to the Lead Pastor and the Board of Trustees, at the regular meetings of the Board or whenever they may require it, an account of all his transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation.

**6.7.4** The Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall deposit money, drafts, and checks in the name of and to the credit of the Corporation in the banks and depositories designated by the Board.

**6.7.5** The Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall endorse for deposit notes, checks, and drafts received by the Corporation as ordered by the Board, making proper vouchers for the deposit.

**6.7.6** The Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall, upon request, provide the Lead Pastor and the Board an account of the financial condition of the Corporation.

**6.7.7** If required by the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer shall give the Corporation a bond in such sum and with such surety or sureties as shall be satisfactory to the Board for the faithful performance of the duties of his office, and for the restoration to the Corporation, in case of death, resignation, retirement or removal from office, of all books, papers, vouchers, money, and other property of whatever kind in possession or under the control of the Treasurer, belonging to the Corporation.

**6.7.8** The Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer shall also have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

## **6.8 Assistant Treasurers**

The Assistant Treasurers in the order of their Leadity shall, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Treasurer, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

## **Section 7**

### **ADVISORY BOARDS**

The Board of Trustees may create one or more advisory boards, for such terms as deemed fit by the Board of Trustees. Such advisory boards shall have no vote or governance role, but shall serve the Board of Trustees in the specified advisory capacity. The members of such advisory boards must be active Church members or members in good standing of other local churches.

## **Section 8**

### **CHURCH MEMBERS**

#### **8.1 Membership Universal and Local**

As a concept distinct from corporate membership, which refers to the Board of Trustees, the church follows the New Testament concept of church membership: that each person regenerated by the Holy Spirit and responding in repentance and faith toward Jesus Christ is a unique and indispensable part of the organism which is Christ's body and all such persons are members of the universal body of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2). Membership in this Body of Christ is the grounds for fellowship between Christians. However, the Bible identifies local churches as those Christians in a locality who by the leadership of God and common agreement join together under recognized local leadership and governance for the purpose of worship, instruction, mission, and fellowship.

#### **8.2 Qualifications for Church Membership**

As a local expression of the universal body, the church will have the following standard for initial and continued membership as described in the following Darby Creek Community Church membership covenant:

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Darby Creek's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Darby Creek church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

##### **8.2.1 I will protect the unity of my church**

- ... by acting in love toward other members
- ... by refusing to gossip
- ... by following the leaders
- ... by respecting and submitting to the process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 both for myself and for others.

Romans 14:19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. (NLT)

1 Peter 1:22 Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts. (NLT)

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (NLT)

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. (NLT)

Matthew 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (ESV)

### **8.2.2 I will share the responsibility of my church**

- ... by praying for its growth
- ... by inviting unchurched friends
- ... by warmly welcoming those who visit

1 Thessalonians 1:1-2 This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. It is written to the church in Thessalonica, you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May his grace and peace be yours.<sup>2</sup> We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. (NLT)

Luke 14:23 So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. (NLT)

Romans 15:7 So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified. (NLT)

### **8.2.3 I will serve the ministry of my church**

- ... by discovering and using my gifts and talents
- ... by being equipped to serve by my pastor(s)
- ... by developing a servant's heart

1 Peter 4:10 God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you. (NLT)

Ephesians 4:11-12 He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, (NLT)

Philippians 2:3-4,<sup>7</sup> Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. <sup>4</sup> Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.<sup>7</sup> He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. (NLT)

#### **8.2.4 I will support the testimony of my church**

... by attending faithfully

... by living a godly life

... by giving regularly

Hebrews 10:25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near. (NLT)

Philippians 1:27 But whatever happens to me, you must live in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ, as citizens of heaven. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing side by side, fighting together for the Good News. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 16:2 On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. (NLT)

Leviticus 27:30 "A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy. (NLT)

#### **8.2.5 Church members will maintain a commitment to the following Statement Of Faith:**

We believe in the Bible as the sole basis of our beliefs. It was uniquely, verbally, and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and was written without error in the original Manuscripts.

We believe in one God, infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and love, the Creator of the universe, existing eternally in three persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that men and women as originally created were innocent before God, but they chose to defy God and thus separated themselves from their Creator incurring divine condemnation. This alienation has corrupted human nature making human beings totally incapable of pleasing God in and of themselves.

We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, and that He was fully God and fully man, and after having lived a sinless life, voluntarily suffered and died to pay the penalty of our sins, thus satisfying God's justice and enabling all those who trust in Him to experience complete forgiveness before God. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and is at the right hand of God the Father. At a future unknown date, He will return to earth -- personally, visibly, and bodily.

We believe that God's gift of grace, a right relationship with Him, is eternally secured, and cannot be achieved through any human endeavor, but only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Believers should be baptized not as a requirement for salvation, but rather in recognition of their newfound relationship.

We believe that the church is composed of all true believers and that its members should gather together in local churches to celebrate God's presence, learn from God's word, commemorate the Lord's Supper, and seek to express their faith in meaningful ways.

We believe in life beyond death and the bodily resurrection of every person. For those who have received Christ, this means eternal conscious existence in His presence. For those who have not believe, this means conscious existence in isolation from God, subject to eternal suffering resulting from voluntary forfeiture of grace realized through Jesus Christ.

#### **8.2.6 Church members will maintain a commitment to the following Statement of Biblical Authority:**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elders are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

#### **8.2.7 Church members will maintain a commitment to the following Statement on Marriage and Sexuality:**

We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's gender, or disagreement with one's biological gender, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

### **8.3 Reception of members**

The following is the procedure for the reception of members:

**8.3.1** Persons desiring to become members will make such desires known to the Pastor or Pastors who will examine the applicant according to the standards for membership.

**8.3.2** The Pastor or Pastors will render final decision on the reception of a member based on satisfactory evidence of all seven criteria of Section 8.2. All persons who have met the membership requirements and have been passed on favorably by the Pastors will be received into the membership of the church.

#### **8.4 Church discipline**

For the church to remain under God's blessing and fulfill God's intentions, at times it becomes necessary, formally and corporately, to confront sin or false doctrine in a Church member.<sup>1</sup>

**8.4.1** While all Church members should accept the responsibility to correct informally an erring Church member, when a Church member refuses to repent after sufficient informal confrontation, his case will be brought before one of the following at the discretion of the Board: (1) the Board of Trustees, (2) one or more Pastors, or (3) a subcommittee of Pastors assigned by the Board for this task.

**8.4.2** If the facts of his sin or error are confirmed, and he or she remains unrepentant upon examination and appeal for change, the Board and/or Pastors will notify the appropriate circle of fellowship (up to and including the entire Church membership when either the leadership responsibility of the unrepentant individual or the notoriety of his sin would so warrant)—through a meeting of its Church members or private correspondence—the nature of that Church member's sin and his refusal to repent.

**8.4.3** Included in this notification, will be a call to corporate prayer for the church member and to appeal to him to repent.

**8.4.4** During this time, the church member under discipline might not be eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper or in small groups that gather for the purpose of fellowship. If after a period of appeal, the church member continues in his sin, he or she will be removed from Church membership, and the members of the church (or the appropriate circle thereof) will be notified with instructions to continue withholding fellowship and with an entreaty to treat him like an unbeliever, calling him to repent and to believe in the gospel.

**8.4.5** Once the Board and/or Pastors make a sin publicly known, they commit as well to inform the entire membership of the church (or the appropriate circle thereof) of his repentance and restoration to fellowship and Church membership as appropriate to the situation and the good of the church.

**8.4.6** The Board and/or Pastors in its sole discretion may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the process of appeal for repentance if the sin is especially notorious, or if the church member proves to be factious, disruptive, or leading others into sin or error.

#### **8.5 Resignation of Membership**

A Church member may resign from his Church membership by submitting a written communication to one or more of the Pastors at any time, which shall be effective upon formal

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<sup>1</sup> Scriptural instruction and precedent for this practice appear in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1-2; Acts 20:28ff; Galatians 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 3:10-11; Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

acceptance by the Pastor(s). However, if such resignation is an attempt to avoid the process of Church discipline, the Board will not accept the resignation until that process is completed as outlined in Section 8.4. Though generally such resignations by Church members not under discipline shall not be formally announced or published, such information is treated as public and available to any Church member or inquiring Pastor from another local church.

### **8.6 Removal from Roll**

When a Church member resigns his Church membership or he is removed from Church membership due to unrepentant sin or doctrinal error, the Pastor(s) will remove his name from the church membership roll.

### **8.7 Confidentiality**

Though every reasonable effort shall be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a Pastor counseling context, there will be times when to properly fulfill their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, the Pastors may as they deem necessary or appropriate share confidential information with one another or Church members or others they deem may be part of the solution or problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel or the purpose of protecting others from the effects of a Church member's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the church.

## **Section 9**

### **FISCAL MATTERS**

#### **9.1 Deposits**

The Board of Trustees shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Corporation.

#### **9.2 Checks**

All checks or demands for money and notes of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers or such other persons as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate.

#### **9.3 Fiscal Years**

The Board of Trustees shall have the power to fix, and from time to time to change, the fiscal year of the Corporation. Unless otherwise fixed by the Board, the fiscal year shall commence on September 1 and shall terminate on the following August 31.

#### **9.4 Designated Contributions**

The Corporation may accept any designated contribution, grant, bequest or devise provided it is consistent with the Corporation's (1) mission and spiritual priorities as determined from time to time by the Board, (2) budget process and fiscal restrictions, (3) full ownership and control of the funds or assets, and (4) tax-exempt purposes, as set forth in the Constitution. As so limited, donor-designated contributions will be accepted for special funds, purposes or uses, and such designations generally will be honored. The Corporation shall reserve all right, title and interest in and to, and control of such contributions, as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any special fund, purpose or use.

### **9.5 Books and Records**

The Corporation shall keep at its office correct and complete books and records of account, the complete copies of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the activities and transactions of the Corporation, minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees and any committee of the Board, and a current list of the Trustees and officers of the Corporation and their residence addresses. Any of the books, minutes, and records of the Corporation may be in written form or in any other form capable of conversion into written form within a reasonable time.

### **9.6 Loans to Trustees and Officers Prohibited**

No loans shall be made by the Corporation to its Trustees or officers. Any Trustee or officer who assents to or participates in the making of any such loan shall be liable to the Corporation for the amount of such loan until it is repaid. Nothing in this section shall bar any Trustee or officer from receiving approved compensation in their employee capacities, or approved payments from the Corporation's benevolence fund in accordance with the policy and procedures governing such a fund, provided they do not participate in the decision to grant such benevolence.

### **9.7 Benevolence Fund**

Consistent with Biblical teaching to share with those in need, the Corporation may establish a benevolence fund to meet material and financial needs of Church members and others. This fund shall be administered under a policy which sets forth the funds' purpose, procedures for administration, and objective criteria for selection of recipients for financial assistance.

### **9.8 Accounting and Fiduciary Guidelines**

The Trustees and officers of the Corporation shall conduct their affairs with integrity in the sight of God and men, and shall to that end maintain prudent and responsible control and accountability over all funds they receive and ensure that all funds are dedicated to the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes. Toward that end, the Trustees and officers shall implement practices, procedures, and / or policies that position the Corporation to be a model of faithful stewardship and quality internal accounting controls and procedures.

## **Section 10**

### **INDEMNIFICATION**

Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, by reason of the fact that he, his testator or intestate, is or was a Trustee, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, may be indemnified by the Corporation, and the Corporation may advance his related expenses, to the fullest extent permitted by law. The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification specified above; and its Trustees, officers, employees, and agents.

## **Section 11**

### **AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Board of Trustees except for the Statement Of Faith which can only be amended, altered, or repealed through the process described in Section 12.2.

## **Section 12**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Although the final human authority (under Jesus Christ) is in the Board of Trustees, the Board is accountable to the congregation and to Great Commission Churches. Any member of the congregation and any Great Commission Churches representative with a concern that the staff, pastors or Board members have promoted unsound doctrines, violated Board policies, or acted in violation of clear Biblical injunctions or in an unethical manner, may choose to take the following courses of action:

#### **12.1 Grievances**

**12.1.1** The person with the concern is to follow the Biblical pattern in Matthew 18:15-17.

**12.1.2** Unresolved concerns regarding non-pastoral staff or lay ministers of GCCC should be addressed to the pastoral staff privately and, if still unresolved, may be taken to the Board.

**12.1.3** Unresolved concerns regarding pastoral staff or Board members should be addressed to the Board, and, if necessary, to a Great Commission Churches representative in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Great Commission Churches "Procedures for the Appointment and Removal of Ministers" available in the Church Office.

#### **12.2 Changes to the Statement of Faith**

Changes to the statement of faith of the church must be unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees and must be approved by three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the members of the congregation.