

CONSTITUTION OF CHRISTCHURCH

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PREFACE:

There are many good reasons why a New Testament Church should have Articles of Faith, a Covenant & Relational Commitments, and a Constitution. Together they can greatly assist us in the efforts of biblically organizing and conducting the ministries which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be readily acknowledged, however, that these documents, despite their usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Spirit of God in a Church. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God, that these articles are set forth.

PREAMBLE

ChristChurch is comprised of followers of Jesus Christ who have united under His Lordship in covenant commitment to one another and to our God. We joyfully and wholeheartedly submit to His authority as it is revealed to us in His holy, inerrant, and infallible written Word.

Having carefully examined the Scriptures regarding the nature and purpose of the church, and the principles whereby it is to be governed, we, the members of ChristChurch set forth the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be “ChristChurch of Macy, Nebraska, Inc.”

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God’s perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to defending the “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

ARTICLE III

Articles of Faith

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833), ChristChurch Constitution, and ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments are accepted by its present

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members and shall be subscribed to and accepted voluntarily by new members as they offer themselves for membership.

We do hereby adopt as the fullest expression of our faith *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*. We believe that this Confession is an excellent summary of the fundamental truths of God's Word. We accept it as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation of what we believe, and as a means of growing together in grace. In this Confession the members of our church will have a body of Divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15).

We do hereby affirm the Apostle's, Nicene, Athanasian, and Chalcedonian creeds and the Canons from the Council of Orange, the New Hampshire Confession of 1833, the 1925 Baptist Faith & Mission, the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy (1978), the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982), the Nashville Statement (2017), the Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (1987), and the (Dallas) Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel (2018).

ARTICLE IV Church Government

Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of this church. His will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. ChristChurch is a congregational church led by a plurality of shepherd-teachers. We recognize that the authority of Christ is vested in the whole congregation (Galatians 1:8–10; Matthew 18:15–20) and that Christ has prescribed that local congregations be led by godly men who have been duly appointed to lead and oversee the church (Titus 1:5–11; 1 Timothy 1:4–5). These shepherd-teachers carefully give spiritual direction to the church for the joy of each member (2 Corinthians 1:24) and the members submissively follow the leadership of and obey the shepherd-teachers so that the shepherd-teachers may do their work with joy (Hebrews 13:17).

Deacons serve the church in various capacities at the direction of the shepherd-teachers, focusing predominately on the physical and material needs of the church.

The church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body. When it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation, and cooperation with local churches of like faith and order, this church may join itself to an association of churches for purposes of fellowship, consultation and cooperation. However, any such voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the rights of this local, autonomous church. Upon recommendation of the shepherd-teachers, such affiliations may be entered by a three-fourths vote of the congregation. Withdrawal from associations may be affected by the same procedure.

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Membership

Section 1: Requirements for Membership

To be considered for membership in this church, a person must be a disciple of Jesus Christ, give biblical evidence of regeneration, and manifest holiness towards God and separation from the world (Acts 2:41-47). Such a disciple must be baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ following his conversion, and commit wholeheartedly to follow Jesus Christ as Lord in accordance with Scripture. Each prospective member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in The New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833) and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments.

The shepherd-teachers shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, character of life and such other evidence, as they deem appropriate.

Section 2: Membership Process

Any believer seeking membership at ChristChurch should communicate their desire to the shepherd-teachers, receive and work through a membership class, and submit the completed forms. Each candidate must also meet with one or more shepherd-teachers for a membership interview and agree to attend membership classes as provided by the shepherd-teachers. A time and place shall be set for a meeting with the candidate, who shall attend and be questioned as to his basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and seriousness of intention to support wholeheartedly the total ministry of this church, and to live for Christ in accordance with ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments.

Individuals who have been disciplined by another church will not be allowed to become members at Bethlehem until they have repented of their sins and made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, or our shepherd-teachers have determined that the discipline of the former church was not biblically appropriate.

The shepherd-teachers may recommend a candidate for membership to the congregation at any members meeting of the church. The candidate may be received into membership upon acceptance of two-thirds of the members present.

Once a candidate is received into membership, he relinquishes their membership in other churches. New members are formally welcomed into the church at the next Lord's Supper Service. They are also encouraged and given the opportunity to share their testimony with the church family. Members shall be required to go through the membership class every seven years.

Prospective members can be received into membership by:

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A. PROFESSION OF FAITH AND BAPTISM — Any person who meets the above stated requirements shall apply for membership to the shepherd-teachers. Candidates will be received upon their baptism by immersion into membership of the church.

B. LETTER — Any person desiring to unite with this church, upon letter of recommendation from another evangelical church of like faith and order, shall present such letter, or a promise thereof, to the shepherd-teachers.

C. STATEMENT OF FAITH — Any person desiring to unite with this church, upon their testimony of conversion and baptism as a believer by immersion, shall apply for membership to the shepherd-teachers.

Section 3: Forms of Membership

A. REGULAR — All who are received into the membership of the church on the above mentioned conditions shall be considered members in good standing until such status is changed by one of the conditions set forth in Article V, Section 4.

B. OTHER — The membership status of invalids, shut-ins, Christian workers, and others whose relationship to the church involves special consideration and circumstances, shall be considered by the shepherd-teachers on a case-by-case basis. The shepherd-teachers will then make appropriate recommendations to the church.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

A member may be removed from the membership of ChristChurch by:

A. DISMISSAL — At the recommendation of the shepherd-teachers and the approval of the congregation, letters of dismissal shall be granted to members who apply for them in writing, provided they are in good standing and not subject to or already under corrective discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated.

B. EXCLUSION — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, or requests severance of membership, he may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the shepherd-teachers, subject to the approval of the congregation.

C. TRANSFER — Letters of recommendation shall be granted upon the recommendation of the shepherd-teachers and approval by the congregation to evangelical churches which request them, provided the member in question is in good standing and not subject to or already under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated. Letters of dismissal shall be forwarded and given only to other evangelical churches (Philemon 2).

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D. EXCOMMUNICATION — It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon recommendation of the shepherd-teachers, to remove from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives inconsistently with his profession; or who lives in violation of the law or public morals; or who walks disorderly; or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church (Matthew 10:15ff; 1 Corinthians 5:1ff; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,11,15; Romans 16:17).

E. DEATH

ARTICLE VI

Duties and Privileges of Membership

Scripture instructs Christians to live together in local churches. In order to fulfill Scriptural responsibilities in following Christ according to His will, it is incumbent on every believer to unite with other believers in submission to the lordship of Christ in a local church.

Section 1: Means of Grace

All public and private means of grace, such as honoring the Lord's Day, faithful attendance at the stated meetings of the church, daily systematic reading of the Bible, and private and family worship shall be urged upon our members.

Section 2: Marriage and Family Life

Marriage is ordained by God and is exclusively a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between one man, one woman, and Himself, ChristChurch will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the shepherd-teachers and staff of ChristChurch shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman who have first gone through adequate premarital counseling. Finally, the facilities and property of ChristChurch shall not host any weddings or marriage celebrations except those that are between one man and one woman.

Christians who are married to each other are to relate to each other not only as husband and wife but also as brother and sister in Christ.

Christians who are married to unbelievers should strive to influence their homes for the glory of God by commending the gospel and demonstrating its power in their lives according to apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 and 1 Peter 3:1–7.

Unmarried Christian adults should live faithfully to Jesus Christ in all of their relationships and use the opportunities their singleness affords them for the

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advancement of the gospel and the prosperity of the church according to the apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7.

The church expects its members to follow the Scriptures in home government. God has required that godliness in the home have a high priority in every life. The home holds a central attention in God's Law and is the object of frequent exhortation in the New Testament. Husbands are expected to rule their homes with gentleness but firmness. They are to love their wives sacrificially with a Christ-like love and are to give leadership to the spiritual vitality of the home. Wives must be subject to and respectful of their husbands as to the Lord. Parents should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) by holy example, catechizing, consistent education, and firm, loving discipline (including the careful, measured, biblical use of the rod of correction—Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15). Children must reverently honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1–3). These primary responsibilities, prayerfully executed, will honor the name of Christ in the community and strengthen the cause of Christ in generations to come.

Section 3: Missions and Witnessing

It is the duty of every Christian and of every church of Christ to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to make disciples who will, in turn, make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20). Evangelistic and missionary efforts are the natural consequence of regeneration (Psalm 51:10–14). "Preach the Gospel" is a frequently repeated command of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to witness by word, deed and lifestyle. Personal efforts to make disciples for Christ are expected of every member. Beyond this, we are committed to cooperative efforts for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Section 4: Principles of Giving

It is clearly taught in Scripture that Christians are to support the work of the Lord by systematic, proportionate and sacrificial offerings made through the local church. This is set forth in both positive command and favorable example (Malachi 3:8–11; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; 2 Corinthians 8 and 2 Corinthians 9). Hence we pledge ourselves to contribute regularly, faithfully and sacrificially to the support of this church in recognition that all that we have has come to us from God and He is worthy of being worshipped with gifts and offerings (Psalm 96:8).

We give because we have been given much in Jesus Christ. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Section 5: Christian Liberty

We shall require of each other in our daily responsibilities and relationships loyal obedience to all those moral precepts established in the Word of God (Hebrews 10:24,

25). However, where God has not prohibited certain practices in His Word, the Christian has liberty to participate in them with discretion and care. The following principles must always guide the Christian's exercise of liberty:

A. FEAR OF GOD — As the servant of Christ, all actions must be motivated by love to God, and all objects must be used for His glory. The term "liberty" is often used as a cloak of malicious self-indulgence, which is sin (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 4:4,5; 1 Peter 2:15,16).

B. LOVE OF BRETHREN — Though no man may dictate to the Christian's conscience, the welfare of fellow saints must always deeply affect his decisions. In a spirit of serving the brethren, he must do that which he judges will edify them and prevent their stumbling (Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Corinthians 8:9).

C. COMPASSION FOR THE UNCONVERTED — Use of liberty must always be regulated by its effect upon sinners, and that behavior chosen which is likely to win some (1 Corinthians 9:19–22).

D. WATCHFULNESS OVER THE SOUL — Though free in conscience to use all of God's creation, carefulness in practice is demanded because of remaining lusts. Where the Christian judges himself weak through lust, he must abstain in order to persevere in the faith (1 Corinthians 9:23–27).

Section 6: Support of Church Officers

It is the duty of every member to respect the appointed officers of the church. Church members should recognize that the shepherd-teachers and deacons who serve among them do so by the authority of God's Word and for the spiritual welfare of the whole body. Therefore every member should encourage and pray for the shepherd-teachers and deacons in their respective ministries.

Specifically, members should be ready to assist the deacons in protecting the unity of the church and caring for the practical needs of the membership and community at large. This includes a sacrificial willingness to use personal gifts and resources in caring for others. It also includes helping the deacons be aware of needs in the church and community, and cooperating with them in practical ways to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities (Acts 6:1–7).

It is the duty of every member to recognize that God gives to His church men to serve as spiritual leaders who give oversight to local congregations. These shepherd-teachers of the church are to be "esteemed very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13). Members are to submit to and follow them because they keep watch over the souls of the congregation as those who must give an account to God for their ministry (Hebrews 13:17a). Every member is admonished by God's Word to encourage the shepherd-teachers to fulfill their duties "with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17b).

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Church members are called to follow the example of the shepherd-teachers as far as warranted by the Word (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:7), to stand by them, in all their trials and afflictions, defending them in all good causes, as far as in them lies (2 Timothy 1:15, 4:16), and to avoid exposing their weaknesses, remembering that the prosperity of the Gospel depends much on their good report.

Furthermore, no member is to receive an accusation against an shepherd-teacher unless it is supported by evidence that can be validated by two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

Section 7: Controversy

Any matter involving controversy within this church, within the officers, or between the congregation and the officers, if it threatens to cause dissension and injury to the welfare of the church, must be called to the attention of the shepherd-teachers as soon as possible by any member of the congregation aware of the situation. If the shepherd-teachers fail to resolve the difficulty so as to allay dissension, any such matter may be taken to a Council of Appeal as prescribed in Article 3 of the By-Laws, or as detailed in Chapter 26:15 of *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*.

ARTICLE VII Church Discipline

The Christian life is a life of discipleship, which means that it is to be characterized by godly discipline. This includes self-discipline which involves training oneself for godliness (1 Timothy 4:7) as well as the corporate discipline that comes through being united to a local church. Church discipline is both formative and corrective.

Section 1: Formative Discipline

Formative church discipline comes through the teaching of God's Word, the example of Christian living, and the mutual ministry of every member of the body of Christ. It has as its goal the instruction of disciples, the transformation of their lives, and their edification in love (Ephesians 4:11–13; Romans 12:1–16; 1 Corinthians 12:4–27). Formative discipline has a sanctifying influence. Every member should be satisfied with his God-given ministry, and thus we shall all grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:7–12). Formative discipline utilizes the gifts and talents of each member, whether young or old, for the edification of all.

As members of this church we recognize our obligation to honor, serve, worship, praise and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do (1 Corinthians 10:31). Jesus Christ is the head of the church and, therefore, its Lord and Lawgiver (Ephesians 1:22; Isaiah 33:22). Those who truly love Him will endeavor to keep His commandments (John 14:15). In His Holy Word our Lord calls believers to perform certain duties toward one another. Some of these duties are:

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- A. To love one another sincerely in deed and truth (John 13:34, 35; Romans 12:9; 13:8–10; 1 John 3:18).
- B. To labor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).
- C. To work for the edification and spiritual benefit of the whole body so that we all may grow to spiritual maturity as a holy temple in and for the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 4:12, 29; 2:21, 22).
- D. To watch over one another for good (Philippians 2:3,4).
- E. To pray with and for one another (James 5:16).
- F. Not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, for the celebrating of divine worship, and thereby to promote one another's spiritual benefit (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42).
- G. To contend unanimously for the faith and truth once delivered to the saints, in the purity thereof, according to the Holy Scripture (Psalm 93:5; Zechariah 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:33–40; 11:2).

The above duties, when faithfully performed by every member, will have a positive, formative effect upon the whole assembly. With the blessing of the Holy Spirit we will all be enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The following section is provided in the event of the failure of formative discipline as set forth above.

Section 2: Corrective Discipline

Corrective discipline is called for when any member is guilty of disorderly or divisive conduct or holding to heretical doctrine which is contrary to the church's standard of life and doctrine as expressed in *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*, or Covenant & Relational Commitments which are based on the Word of God. Reasonable efforts shall be made through personal counsel and admonition to resolve difficulties, correct errors, and remove offenses before any further action is taken. Where possible all such communication should be face to face.

When individual and private counsel and admonition have failed, the matter must be brought to the attention of the shepherd-teachers, who will then shepherd the process according to the instructions of God's Word (Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15–18) and *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*. In extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the

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shepherd-teachers, a matter may be taken directly to the church, according to the apostolic instruction of 1 Corinthians 5 and Titus 3:10–11.

The goal of such discipline should be:

1. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Hebrews 12:1–11; Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1);
2. The instruction in righteousness and welfare of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24–25);
3. The purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6–7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2);
4. The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10–14); and
5. And supremely the glory of God which is manifested when His holy character is reflected to the watching world (Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12).

The following are elements of corrective discipline:

A. **SUSPENSION** — If a member has publicly sinned, but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonitions of church officers, then severe discipline, such as excommunication, would be improper. Nevertheless, serious offenses may not be overlooked altogether, lest God's enemies multiply their blasphemies, lest other saints be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender is harmed by a failure to test his own soul and appreciate the gravity of his offense. Therefore, at the discretion of the shepherd-teachers, less severe terms may be imposed upon a member —such as public rebuke, or suspension of membership. The latter consists of a temporary suspension of the rights to attend the Lord's Table, to serve publicly in the church or vote in congregational meetings. Those who submit to such discipline are to be wholly forgiven and received as brethren. All such actions shall be reported to the congregation.

B. **EXCLUSION** — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, or requests severance of membership, he may be excluded from the membership at the recommendation of the shepherd-teachers and vote of the congregation.

C. **EXCOMMUNICATION** — The most serious step a church can take in corrective discipline is to remove a member because of unrepentant sin. In extraordinary situations when a member has sinned publicly, scandalously, or divisively and without biblical repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8–12), the shepherd-teachers may call upon the church to

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excommunicate that member immediately (1 Corinthians 5:4–5; Titus 3:10–11). In other situations that call for corrective discipline, when restoration is not secured by the processes required in Matthew 18:15–18, further steps must be taken to correct offenders. Written charges shall be given to the accused offender if he requests a hearing with the shepherd-teachers. The shepherd-teachers shall meet with the accused, unless the person refuses to appear. After a fair and impartial hearing of all the witnesses accessible, and all facts ascertainable, the shepherd-teachers must form a judgment. If they believe the accused to be guilty and deserving of severe biblical discipline, they shall make a recommendation that the offender be excommunicated at a duly called congregational meeting. The congregation shall have the right to excommunicate a member by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting. The vote will be taken by a show of hands or by standing. Excommunication always has as its end the glory of God, the purity of the body of Christ and the restoration of the offending party.

D. RESTORATION — It is the joyful duty of the church to forgive and restore to membership those persons who give satisfactory evidence of being repentant (2 Corinthians 2:6–8; 7:11). The shepherd-teachers shall meet with and seek the restoration of those who have been excluded or suspended when they (the shepherd-teachers) have judged that the aims of the discipline have been accomplished. Such action is to be reported to the church. Upon recommendation of the shepherd-teachers the congregation shall have the right to restore an excommunicated person by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VIII Church Officers

Section 1: General Statement

Jesus Christ alone is the head of His church. However, as head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to seek to discover from among members in good standing those men to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing. The Lord's appointment is recognized by not only the inward conviction of the individual involved, but also by the approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required, and by Scriptural definition of the office.

While it is always the desire of the congregation to come to one mind regarding those who should be appointed to serve as office bearers in the church, no less than 75% of all votes cast shall be required for the election of an officer. (See "Elections" — Article 2 of By-Laws.)

Shepherd-teachers are ordained by Christ to lead in the administration of local churches (Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1–7; 14:23). Deacons are appointed to care for the temporal needs—physical and material—of the congregation.

Section 2: Shepherd-Teachers

The shepherd-teachers shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of shepherd-teacher set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:6–9, *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*. Candidates for the office of shepherd-teacher shall excel in prayer, evangelism, meekness and humility, sacrificial generosity, absence of materialism and covetousness, lavish hospitality, joyful peacemaking, patient suffering, all the other “one anothers” of the ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments, and all other expressions of Christ’s love as they exhort their flock, “Imitate me, as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

No shepherd-teacher shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. Subject to the will of the congregation, the shepherd-teachers shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the shepherd-teachers shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock. (This includes maintaining an accurate church role.) Unless providentially hindered (or out-of-town on vacation), it is the expectation of all shepherd-teachers to attend and participate in the services of the church and to pray together weekly. Only shepherd-teachers can teach Sunday School classes and Bible studies for those thirteen years of age and older.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as shepherd-teachers. All candidates for shepherd-teacher shall have completed a curriculum (a light-weight version of a Master’s of Theology degree) designed by ChristChurch, and shall retake it every ten years. First-time candidates shall also pass both a verbal and open-Bible, timed written exam and shall give evidence of their ability to teach. No person shall serve as a shepherd-teacher who has not attained to the age of thirty and who has not been a member of ChristChurch for less than three years.

There shall always be a plurality of shepherd-teachers (except in the first five years of ChristChurch’s existence), and each shepherd-teacher shall have one vote. The number of shepherd-teachers shall be odd, and there shall be at least one shepherd-teacher for every ten regular attenders of ChristChurch. Vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall make up no more than one-third of the shepherd-teacher board (except in the first five years of ChristChurch’s existence). The shepherd-teachers shall be elected to one term lasting three years. Afterward they may be reaffirmed by the congregation for another three-year term. A shepherd-teacher shall not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms without at least a consecutive three year absence before serving again. A shepherd-teacher shall not serve more than four three-year terms in a lifetime. The terms of the shepherd-teachers shall be staggered so that only one-third are elected at a time. A shepherd-teacher's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal by a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation.

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The shepherd-teachers shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.

The shepherd-teachers are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our essential convictions. The shepherd-teachers may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The shepherd-teachers may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of vocational shepherd-teachers. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

The shepherd-teachers shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member. In addition the shepherd-teachers shall have primary responsibility for the employment and dismissal of all non-shepherd-teacher staff members.

In view of the fact that the responsibilities of shepherd-teachership are numerous and great, Scripture makes provision for the financial support of shepherd-teachers. 1 Corinthians 9:14 mandates the support of those shepherd-teachers whose primary task is the preaching of the Word. Thus a congregation may support more than one shepherd-teacher in the various duties of that office but should place priority on the teaching function. Those serving in the teaching function, the vocational shepherd-teacher(s), should, as far as possible, be adequately maintained in material necessities, so as to be disentangled from the cares of an additional vocation.

The shepherd-teachers shall elect a chairman of shepherd-teachers' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Nebraska, the shepherd-teachers shall appoint men in good standing to serve as the officers of the corporation. (See "Church Corporation" — Article 6 of By-Laws.)

Section 3: The Vocational Shepherd-Teacher(s)

A candidate for vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall already be a current shepherd-teacher who, if appointed after the first five years of ChristChurch's existence, shall already have served one three-year term. The shepherd-teachers shall examine the qualifications of the candidate by looking into the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the soundness of his doctrine, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his training and preparation, and the blessing of God upon his labors for Christ. The

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candidate for vocational shepherd-teachership shall also give evidence of their ability to teach and preach. Scripture does not require previous experience, a specific personality, or any particular educational degree for vocational shepherd-teachership.

The call of the vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall not be subject to the reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Section 2 above for shepherd-teachers. His call shall be defined as per Article 2, Section 3 of By-Laws. The vocational shepherd-teacher(s) ordained during the first three years of ChristChurch shall complete by the third year a curriculum (a light-weight version of a Master's of Theology degree) designed by ChristChurch and passed both a verbal and open-Bible, timed written exam or, in lieu thereof, developed said curriculum and exams.

The vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall be a shepherd-teacher and shall perform the duties of a shepherd-teacher described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching, teaching, and prayer (Acts 6:4, 18:5) in which he is to grow weary (1 Tim. 5:17; see also 3:2; Titus 1:9) as he labors “not...know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2), and out of the abundance of knowing Christ intimately through prayer and His Word (Eph. 3:14-21) to make Him known. The job of the preacher is to go from the presence of God to deliver His message to the people, and then to return to the presence of God. He is to go up on the mountain for hours a day in prayerful worship, meditation, and intercession so that the aroma of God drips from him and his face shines with the Shekinah glory. He cannot be a “flame of fire” (Heb. 1:7) and a “burning and a shining light” (Jn. 5:35) without setting himself ablaze with God’s glory by spending hours feasting upon His holiness. A preacher cannot set a feast of the beauties of God in the Person of Christ for his listeners without having daily feasting on it himself.

The vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall be first among equals among a plurality of shepherd-teachers with equal responsibility for shepherding (albeit perhaps in difference capacities) their flock (Acts 14:23, 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 4:14; Titus 1:5). He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution, *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, or the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*. In the absence or incapacity of the vocational shepherd-teacher(s), the shepherd-teachers shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated. If at any time the vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall make application to be released from his office, or if the congregation shall choose by a three-fourth majority vote to dismiss him, the relationship between the vocational shepherd-teacher(s) and church may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, if it is mutually agreed upon.

Section 4: Deacons

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The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13, Acts 6:1–7, *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*. Candidates for the office of deacon shall excel in prayer, evangelism, meekness and humility, sacrificial generosity, absence of materialism and covetousness, lavish hospitality, joyful peacemaking, patient suffering, all the other “one anothers” of the ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments, and all other expressions of Christ’s love as they exhort the congregation, “Imitate me, as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. Unless providentially hindered (or out-of-town on vacation), it is the expectation of all deacons to attend and participate in the church services and weekly pray together. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. All candidates for deacon shall have completed a curriculum (a light-weight version of a Master’s of Theology degree) designed by ChristChurch, and shall retake it every ten years. First-time candidates shall also pass both a verbal and open-Bible, timed written exam. No person shall serve as a deacon who has not attained to the age of twenty-five and who has not been a member of ChristChurch for less than three years.

There shall always be a plurality of deacons (except in the first five years of ChristChurch’s existence), and each deacon shall have one vote. The number of deacons shall always be odd, and there shall be at least one deacon for every fifteen regular attenders of ChristChurch. Female deacons shall be called deaconesses. The deacons shall be elected to one term lasting no more than three years. Afterward they may be reaffirmed by the congregation for another three-year term. A deacon shall not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms without at least a consecutive three years gap before serving again. A deacon shall not serve more than four three-year terms in a lifetime. The terms of the deacons shall be staggered so that only one-third are elected at a time.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, preserve unity, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons are responsible for the disbursement of funds received by the church for benevolent needs. The deacons shall assist the church in maintaining a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the shepherd-teachers at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons, with the advice and consent of the shepherd-teachers, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees.

Section 5: Initial Elections of ChristChurch

Notwithstanding sections 2, 3, and 4 of Article VIII to the contrary, immediately after shepherd-teachers and deacons, respectively, shall be assembled in consequence of the very first election of ChristChurch, they shall be divided as equally as may be into

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three classes. The seats of the shepherd-teachers and deacons, respectively, of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the first year, of the second class at the expiration of the second year, and of the third class at the expiration of the third year, so that one third may be chosen annually. Members of the first and second classes (respectively) shall remain eligible to then consecutively serve two consecutively full three-year terms.

Additionally, the following requirements for all candidates for shepherd-teachers and deacons shall be suspended for the first three election cycles of ChristChurch:

- (a) Have completed a curriculum (a light-weight version of a Master's of Theology degree) designed by ChristChurch by the time they are elected;
- (b) Pass both a verbal and open-Bible, timed written exam; and
- (c) Be a member of ChristChurch for three years

Section 6: Missionaries, Evangelists, & Prophets

While missionaries, as church planting shepherds-teachers, must be able to teach, the remaining qualifications for each of these offices are simply that of a mature saint (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). Candidates for these offices shall excel in meekness and humility, sacrificial generosity, absence of materialism and covetousness, lavish hospitality, joyful peacemaking, patient suffering, all the other "one anothers" of the ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments, and all other expressions of Christ's love as they exhort the congregation, "Imitate me, as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

The church shall recognize individuals gifted and willing to serve in these callings, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These individuals shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart to their respective roles. Unless within the first three years of ChristChurch, candidates for these offices shall have completed a curriculum (a light-weight version of a Master's of Theology degree) designed by ChristChurch. The candidates shall pass both a verbal and open-Bible, timed written exam, and the candidates for missionary and evangelist shall give evidence of their ability to teach and preach.

No candidate shall stand for election who has not attained to the age of thirty and, unless within the first three years of ChristChurch, who has not been a member of ChristChurch for less than three years. Their indefinite term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal by a three-fourths majority vote of the congregation. These individuals are able to hold more than one office unless otherwise prohibited in this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX Ordination Service

In a regular worship service of the church, the Pastor shall question newly elected officers (shepherd-teacher, deacon, missionary, evangelist, prophet) as follows:

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A. Do you believe the Scriptures as written in the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and do you accept them as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice, promising to live wholly under their authority?

B. Have you personally adopted and will you cheerfully, whole-heartedly, and unqualifiedly submit to and defend *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*, ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments, and Constitution and By-Laws of this church, promising to carry out your responsibilities in accordance with these guiding documents?

C. Do you accept the Office of _____ (shepherd-teacher, deacon, missionary, evangelist, prophet) readily, and do you promise to perform its duties of caring for the flock of God in the fear of His Name?

Then the hands of the existing shepherd-teachers shall be placed on the heads of the new officers and prayer offered in their behalf. Following this, the people shall be exhorted to esteem and obey those whom God has placed over them.

ARTICLE X Shall Nevers

ChristChurch shall never end or suspend in-person services, prayer meetings, business meetings, and other ministries of the church.

ChristChurch shall never live-stream any service or business meeting but shall only make publicly available two days after the event.

ChristChurch shall never have more than 250 regular attenders. If the Lord should so bless us numerically, ChristChurch will choose to plant a daughter church(es) rather than simply grow in quantity rather than quality.

ChristChurch shall never go to two or more Sunday morning services.

ChristChurch shall never have satellite/campus churches.

ChristChurch shall never make an altar call or utilize a “sinner’s prayer.”

ChristChurch shall never count conversions, for we won’t know that until heaven.

ChristChurch shall never pass an offering plate.

ChristChurch shall never go into debt.

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ChristChurch shall never become driven by entertainment or social outreaches.

ARTICLE XI Finances

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. The shepherd-teachers, in conjunction with the finance committee, shall be responsible for the orderly administration of the annual budget and all financial disbursements and receipts. Before the members meeting in November, the shepherd-teachers shall work in conjunction with the finance committee to prepare a budget that will finance the mission and ministries of the church. When this budget is approved by a vote of the congregation, it shall be considered the basis for the current liabilities. No adjustments are to be made to the budget that exceed 2% of the annual budget without the consent of the congregation.

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

No less than ten percent of all undesignated monies received by the church shall be designated for domestic and foreign missions.

ARTICLE XII Amendments

Amendments to *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*, ChristChurch Constitution & By-laws, and ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments may be proposed by either two-thirds vote of the shepherd-teacher board or of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting. Said proposed amendments shall: (a) have been distributed by the officers in written form at least two weeks prior to such vote; and (b) shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The proposed amendments shall pass if ratified by a three-fourths of the members present and voting at two separate congregational meetings held twelve months apart.

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ARTICLE I Meetings

Section 1: Notice of Meetings

Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on the two successive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by using reasonable due diligence to notify each member of the time, place and purpose of the congregational meeting.

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Section 2: Number of Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be held every two months for the reception of reports and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting. The adoption of a budget shall take place at the members meeting in November.

Section 3: Method of Calling Meetings

It shall be the right and responsibility of the shepherd-teachers to call all congregational meetings. A written request to call a special congregational meeting, stating clearly its purpose, signed by 20% of the members of the church in good and regular standing and presented to the shepherd-teachers, shall require the shepherd-teachers to call such a meeting. When special congregational meetings are called, there must be notice given to the congregation as to the purpose. The shepherd-teachers shall meet at the call of their Chairman, or at the request of any 20% of their members; the deacons shall meet in the same manner.

Section 4: Responsibility for Meetings

The shepherd-teachers shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made. All meetings of ChristChurch shall follow the principles outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. There are to be no private recordings or broadcasts of congregational meetings—members will have access to hear any recordings upon request. The chair of each meeting shall see that minutes are recorded and delivered to the clerk.

Section 5: Quorum for Transaction of Business

The voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational meeting shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business. All church officers shall be voted upon by written ballot. A quorum for shepherd-teachers and deacons meetings shall be sixty-percent of their total number.

Section 6: Voting Age

Any member of the church eighteen years of age or over, in good and regular standing, shall have the right to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.

ARTICLE II Elections

Section 1: Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an

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integral part of the election process; Nominations should proceed with the support of the shepherd-teachers; All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as shepherd-teachers, deacons, missionaries, evangelists, and prophets shall be presented by the shepherd-teachers at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least six weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The shepherd-teachers should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the shepherd-teachers. Members who cannot in good conscience affirm a candidate should express their objection to the shepherd-teachers as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving no less than three-fourths of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective positions immediately upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3: Calling of the Vocational Shepherd-Teacher(s)

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling a shepherd-teacher must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential vocational shepherd-teacher (s) and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the shepherd-teachers that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted, unqualified assent to *The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* and the *Supplemental Confession of Faith of ChristChurch Macy (2022)*, ChristChurch Constitution and the ChristChurch Covenant & Relational Commitments. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected and called as vocational shepherd-teacher(s) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting. The nominee(s) shall be elected by no less than three-fourths of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The elected vocational shepherd-teacher(s) shall assume their respective positions immediately upon election, unless another dates has been specifically designated.

ARTICLE III Council of Appeal

A Council of Appeal may be formed in two ways:

- The shepherd-teachers may call upon the church to establish such a council.

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- The church may call for the establishment of such a council by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

The Council shall consist of the shepherd-teachers and/or deacons and an equal number of other members in good standing to be chosen by the congregation. The congregation shall also appoint a chairman from those on the Council to preside at its meetings.

A quorum for a Council of Appeal shall be four of the officers, four laymen, and the chairman. If a member of the Council is unable to attend a meeting after the judicial process has begun, he may thereafter sit and hear the case but will be disqualified to vote on the final issue of the case.

The resolution of any matter shall require a two-thirds vote of a Council of Appeal. When a final decision of the Council of Appeal is announced to the congregation, that decision is final and the case is ended. The church should receive this decision in humility and prayer.

ARTICLE IV Clerk and Treasurer

Section 1: Duties of the Church Clerk

The Clerk shall keep a record of all business transacted at the various meetings of the church, keep an accurate record of the membership, and carry on all necessary and related correspondence for the congregation. The Clerk shall also determine the number of regular attenders for purposes of electing shepherd-teachers and deacons by averaging attendance at the Sunday morning service over the twelve weeks leading up to the annual church meeting in November. The Clerk shall be annually appointed by congregational vote.

Section 2: Duties of the Church Treasurer

The church Treasurer is to be responsible for the keeping of an accurate financial record of all funds identified with the church, reconciling monthly statements, monitoring and safeguarding church accounts, attending to any filings required by the Internal Revenue Service, as well as maintaining records of individual contributions. The Treasurer shall be annually appointed by congregational vote. Eligible candidates to the office of Treasurer must consist of either:

A member in good standing possessing abilities in financial stewardship and accounting practices, willing to voluntarily serve in this position.

A paid Certified Public Accountant to handle or oversee the proper discharge of all the above referenced duties.

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The Treasurer shall work with and report to the shepherd-teachers and Finance Committee. An assistant Treasurer may be appointed to assist in these duties. The Treasurer shall ensure that a financial audit is conducted at least every 5 years by a certified public accountant.

ARTICLE V Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be comprised of certain shepherd-teachers and up to 3 additional members who are appointed annually by the congregation. Their duties include working with the shepherd-teachers to prepare and recommend to the congregation an annual budget. After it has been approved by the congregation, this committee shall work in conjunction with the shepherd-teacherteachers to oversee the administration of the budget.

ARTICLE VI Church Corporation

In compliance with the laws of the State of Nebraska for Corporations Not for Profit, this church shall have at least 3 (but not more than 7) men to serve as trustees of the corporation. There shall be a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Clerk, and a Treasurer for purposes of carrying out their required services.