



W // **CONSTITUTION**



WELLSPRING CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be Wellspring Community Church of Jenison, Michigan, herein after called the "Church".

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose for which the corporation is constituted:

The establishment and maintenance of the public worship of God, to work in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles, to work in brotherly love and unity through the leading of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of souls, the edification and fellowship of believers, the Biblical instruction of children, and worship of God through singing and preaching of His Word, the Holy Scriptures, and committing to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

ARTICLE III

Organization

The Church's government is vested in the Body, which composes its membership. It recognizes its obligation and privilege to cooperate with other evangelical churches and organizations having the same biblically-based objectives.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

SECTION 1. ADMISSION OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

A. Qualifications: Any person sixteen [16] years of age or older: 1) who confesses a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; 2) who agrees to the Doctrinal Statement of this Church; and 3) who subscribes to its Constitution may be eligible for membership in the body of Wellspring Community Church. We require that this person be a regular attendee of the Church's weekly services for a minimum of six [6] consecutive months before he or she can be considered for membership. ["Six [6] months" will be understood to be an approximate amount of time.]

B. Procedure

- 1. Application:** All requests for membership are made through the Elders. All persons desiring membership must be interviewed in person by at least two [2] Elders and must participate in a membership class.
- 2. Interview:** The Elders will interview the candidate[s] to determine if he or she: a) has a credible confession of personal faith; b) is prepared for the responsibilities of membership; c) is unencumbered by prior church membership; and d) has resolved all discipline issues with one's prior church [where applicable].

- 3. Reception into Membership:** Upon completion of the membership class, agreement with the Membership Covenant [See 1.D. below], and acceptance of his or her personal confession of faith by the Elders, the confirmed candidate will be announced to the congregation when being received into membership. The candidate will officially become a member of Wellspring Community Church upon notification by the Elders.

C. Membership Class: A candidate for membership must participate in a membership class that will be led by one of the Pastors and/or another Elder. The content of the membership class is determined by the Pastor and Elders, and will include a review of the Doctrinal Statement and Constitution of this Church, along with a discussion regarding the responsibilities of membership. The Lead Pastor and/or the Elders reserve the right to waive the membership class requirement in certain situations.

D. Membership Covenant: Any person desiring to become a member of the Church should be willing to covenant with the rest of the Body: 1) to commit to the ministry of this Church; 2) to be faithful to its Doctrinal Statement and ministry; and 3) to be willing to joyfully share his or her gifts, talents, time and resources for the benefit of the whole Body and for the furtherance of the Gospel.

E. Regarding minors whose parent(s) are non-members: An individual [eligible according to Section 1.A.] who is under eighteen [18] years of age may become a member of the Church if his or her parent(s) have given approval of this decision. At his or her interview with the Elders, the candidate must provide them with a letter of permission for membership from his or her parent(s).

SECTION 2. VOTING PRIVILEGES

All members eighteen [18] years and older who are in good standing and not encumbered by any act of congregational discipline [see *Appendix IV*], are entitled, under the laws of the State of Michigan, to vote on all matters of Church business brought to the congregation by the leadership of the Church.

SECTION 3. STEWARDSHIP WITHIN THE BODY

It will be the privilege of the members of this Church to contribute regularly for the support of the ministry out of the abundance of gifts that God has entrusted to him or her. These contributions of resources [gifts, talents, time and money] should not be made out of duty or compulsion, but joyfully with the intent to share with others in the Body from that which God has bountifully supplied as commanded in Scripture [2 Corinthians 9:7].

SECTION 4. PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE BODY

A. Stipulations of Participation: Only those members of “active status” will be eligible to hold office, vote, have a position of teaching, or lead a ministry.

- 1. Definition of Active Status:** A member of the Church will be considered an active participant of this Body if he or she is regularly attending our services and personally contributing to the ministry of this Church.
- 2. Definition of Inactive Status:** A member of the Church may be placed into “inactive status” if he or she has not been regularly attending the services of our Church for a minimum of three [3] months.

a. Procedure: 1) The Elders or their designee will contact the member by letter, phone call, personal visit or email to inform the person that he or she will be placed in inactive status unless he or she resumes regular attendance or responds to the Elders to explain the circumstance of his or her absence..

b. Stipulation of inactive status: A person who is in inactive status will not be allowed to hold an office, vote, have a position of teaching, or lead a ministry until he or she informs the Elder Board of his or her desire to become active again. This person must also demonstrate this desire by willingly resuming regular attendance and participation in weekly services.

c. Exceptions: Any person who cannot attend services due to physical or psychological problems that keep him or her hospitalized or at home for extended periods of time may still remain in active status if he or she so desires. Any person who for extended periods of time during the year lives too far from our meeting place to regularly attend may also remain in active status if he or she so desires. In such cases, it is the duty of this individual to contact the Elders to inform them of the particular situation.

B. Periodic Review: The Elders or their designee will make inquiry periodically into the reason(s) for the non-participation by any member(s). It is at this point that they will make arrangements to contact that member(s) to encourage him or her to attend our services and to participate with the rest of the Body. The Elders will also discuss if a non-participating member(s) that has been contacted needs to be moved to inactive status. They will also decide whether the name(s) of any member(s) in inactive status should be removed. [See Section 6.]

SECTION 5. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Any member in good standing is to be entitled to a Letter of Recommendation to any other church of like faith and practice. This application should be made to the church office or to the Elders.

SECTION 6. REMOVAL OF MEMBERSHIP

A. Reasons for removal

- 1. Individual request of a member:** Any member reserves the right to remove his or her name from the membership roll. This may be done through a letter or personal phone call to the church office.
- 2. Death of a member:** Upon the death of a member, the Elders will remove his or her name from the roll.
- 3. Member no longer attending:** If a person(s) is no longer attending the weekly services of Wellspring, and has chosen to not participate in this ministry, the Elders will follow the procedures in *Section 4.A.2.a* above.
- 4. Congregational discipline of a member:** According to the teachings of Scriptures [Matthew 18:15-19; I Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1-10] it is the duty of the Elders at times to consider the removal of individuals from our membership. [See *Appendix IV* regarding the procedural outline for congregational discipline.]
- 5. Active Membership or Regular Attendance at another church:** If a person becomes a member

at another church or actively attends another church so that they do not attend the weekly services of Wellspring for a period of six [6] months, the Elders may remove his or her name from the roll.

B. Procedure for removal

- 1. For those no longer attending:** The Elders will remove members no longer attending weekly services for six [6] months or in inactive status for three [3] months.
- 2. For those under congregational discipline:** After following the guidelines for congregational discipline as outlined in *Appendix IV*, the Elders will bring their recommendation for removal to the voting membership in a congregational meeting. It is the responsibility of the Lead Pastor and the Elders to explain their attempts to resolve the issue with the erring brother or sister. This matter may be open for discussion until a vote is called. A person may be removed from membership by a three-fourths [75%] majority vote from a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the voting membership.

ARTICLE V

Officers

SECTION 1.

A. Qualifications and Eligibility for Officers

1. All officers must subscribe to and believe in the Doctrinal Statement and Membership Covenant [See *Article IV, Section 1.D*] of this Church.
2. All officers must be 21 years of age or over.
3. An officer must be a member for at least one [1] year prior to nomination.

B. Nomination of Officers

1. The membership may submit any suggested nominees to the Elders at least thirty [30] days prior to the annual election. These names will be reviewed by the Elders to determine which nominations are qualified, and present their recommendation for approval to the membership at the annual business meeting.
2. The Elders shall post a list and cause to be published in the Church bulletin the names of the nominees at least two [2] weeks prior to the annual business meeting.

C. Affirmation of Officers

Elders and Deacons shall be affirmed by the membership at the annual business meeting for their respective terms or until such time as a successor is elected and assumes office. [See *Article VII, "Procedure" Regarding Quorum and Voting.*]

D. Discipline of Officers

Any officers whose conduct is such that it might bring reproach upon the Church or who fails to administer his office in a responsible manner [1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:7-9] shall be subject to the discipline of the Church according to the Scriptures with a view toward restoration [Matthew 18:15; II Corinthians 1:5-11].

E. Vacancies

Officer vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the Elders and approved by the membership at the next annual business meeting or at a special business meeting.

SECTION 2. LEAD PASTOR

A. Duties The Lead Pastor is one of the Elders and is an ex-officio member of all teams; he shall have primary responsibility for preaching and teaching, administering of the ordinances, as well as administration and spiritual welfare of the Church. Because of his responsibilities, it shall be the intent of the congregation to employ him full time.

B. Call The Lead Pastor of the Church shall be called unanimously by the Elders and confirmed by a three-fourths [75%] majority vote from a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the membership. The Elders, or a designated team, shall determine the salary of the Lead Pastor.

C. Termination The Lead Pastor's term of office will continue until he resigns or is terminated by the Elders after the Elders have ascertained the support of at least three-fourths [75%] from a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the membership of the church.

SECTION 3. ASSOCIATE PASTORS (ALL PASTORS OTHER THAN THE LEAD PASTOR)

A. Duties The Associate Pastor(s) of Wellspring Community Church must meet the qualifications of Elders in Appendix II, and will assist the Lead Pastor in performing the functions of the ministry. The specific duties of the Associate Pastor(s) are defined by the applicable position description(s) and policies as approved by the Lead Pastor and the Elders.

B. Call An Associate Pastor of the Church shall be called unanimously by the Elders and confirmed by a three-fourths [75%] from a quorum of thirty [30] percent majority vote of the ballots cast by the membership. The Elders, or a designated team, shall determine the salaries of all Associate Pastors.

C. Termination An Associate Pastor's term of office will continue until he resigns or is terminated by a 75% majority vote of seated Elders. Prior to voting on his termination, the Associate Pastor must be provided the opportunity to address the Elders.

D. The Responsibility of the Wife of an Associate Pastor (where applicable): The wife of a Pastor should speak and act in a way worthy of respect, keeping confidentiality out of kindness and love for the good of the church body. She should display the fruit of the Spirit and be dependable in word and deed. [1 Timothy 3:11]

SECTION 4. ELDERS

A. Qualifications for the Office of Elder: SEE APPENDIX II

B. General Policy for the Office of Elder

- 1. Appointment of Elders:** Nominations from the membership will be taken at least thirty [30] days prior to the annual affirmations. These names will be reviewed by the Elders that are

currently serving to determine which nominations are qualified according to previously stated criteria. The names of those qualified individuals will be submitted to the membership for a vote of approval by secret ballot. To be elected to the office of Elder a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the voting membership must approve each nominee by at least a seventy-five [75] percent vote.

- 2. Terms of Elders:** Any man affirmed to the office of Elder will serve one [1] term of three [3] years. Upon completion of this term, he may be nominated and affirmed for another three [3]-year term. After completing this second term, he may not serve another term until at least one [1] year has elapsed.
- 3. Choosing of Officers:** At the first regular meeting following the annual affirmations of officers, the Elders shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary from among their members. The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of all meetings and furnish a copy of the minutes of each meeting to each member of the Elders.
- 4. Elder Meetings:** A regular meeting of the Elders shall be held each month. Special meetings shall be called at the request of the Lead Pastor, the Chairman of the Elders, or at least three [3] of the Elders. A simple majority [51%] of the Elders shall constitute a quorum.
- 5. Duties of the Elders:** The Elders of this Church are responsible for the oversight of this congregation and its assets. The Lead Pastor and the Elders together lead this congregation in its mission to glorify God, to disciple the brethren, and to take the Gospel message to the world. The focus of their ministry is to lead the flock as they pray, study and teach the Word, and administrate the business of this Church [cf. Acts 6:4; 20:17; I Timothy 5:17; I Peter 5:2-3]. The function of the Elders is primarily pastoral [Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2], educational [I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9], officiative [James 5:14ff], representative [Acts 20:17], and administrative [I Timothy 5:17; I Peter 5:2-3].

6. The Biblical Role of the Elders

- a. Shepherd the flock:** Serving in all humility, Elders are to provide direction, guidance, and protection to the people of this Church. They are to look out for the best interest of the flock as they instruct them in the truths of God's Word and warn them of false teaching and harmful influences from our culture [I Peter 5:1-3].
- b. Lead by example:** Elders are to provide a Scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life – with a single purpose, to glorify God [I Peter 5:3].
- c. Teach and exhort:** Elders are to see that the flock is fed through a preaching and teaching ministry that is both Biblically accurate and relevant to the particular audience. This includes the oversight of the teaching content for every level of discipleship ministry that occurs among our Body [e.g., children's church, youth ministries, small groups, Bible studies, etc.] [I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9].
- d. Refute those who contradict the truth:** Elders are to confront those who teach things that contradict our Doctrinal Statement or who continue in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Thus, Elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community [Titus 1:9].

e. Oversee the process of congregational discipline: The Elders are to oversee Church discipline upon the person[s] whom through his or her patterns of speech or behavior or through his or her actions have committed sin against the Lord and against this local Church. The Elders are to carry out this discipline with three primary motives: first, to act in ways that honor our holy God; second, to discipline the person[s] for the purpose of seeing them repent and be restored; and, third, to prevent anything that might cause disunity or divisions among our body [Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-5; I Thessalonians 5:14-15].

f. Manage the business of the local Church: Elders are to oversee the life of the Church, with the assistance of other leaders who model Christ-likeness [I Timothy 5:7].

g. Pray for the sick: Elders are to pray for the spiritual and physical well being of members of the congregation [James 5:14].

7. The Responsibility of the Wife of an Elder (*where applicable*): The wife of an Elder should speak and act in a way worthy of respect, keeping confidentiality out of kindness and love for the good of the church body. She should display the fruit of the Spirit and be dependable in word and deed. [1 Timothy 3:11]

8. Discipline of Individual Elders

a. Discipline: If a man, while serving in the office of Elder, exhibits speech or conduct that might cause serious division among our Body or might bring reproach on the Church, he shall be subject to the discipline of the Church according to principles given us in the Scriptures. The goal of this discipline will be three-fold: 1) to bring glory to the name of Christ; 2) to promote purity and unity at the leadership level; and 3) to restore the erring brother.

b. Removal: The Lead Pastor and the Elders shall meet together to discuss the validity of the accusations. If it is determined that such accusations are true, then the Lead Pastor and the Elders will determine whether there is significant cause [e.g., obvious failure to meet the standards found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9] for removal of the individual from office. If the Lead Pastor and the Elders decide on a recommendation for removal of that Elder, they will call for a congregational vote as soon as it can be arranged according to the rules set forth in *Article VII, Section 3.C*. An individual may be removed from the office of Elder by a seventy-five [75] percent vote from a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the voting membership.

c. Vacancies: Elder vacancies will be filled by an appointment made by the Lead Pastor and Elders. The individual[s] appointed must be approved by a seventy-five [75] percent vote from a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the voting membership at the next annual business meeting or at a special business meeting called by the Elders.

SECTION 5. DEACONS

A. Qualifications for the Office of Deacon: SEE APPENDIX III

B. General Policy for the Office of Deacon

1. Appointment of Deacons: Nominations from the membership will be taken at least thirty [30] days prior to the annual meeting. These names will be reviewed by the Elders to determine who is qualified according to previously stated criteria. The names of those qualified individuals will

be submitted to the membership for a vote of approval by secret ballot. To be affirmed to the office of Deacon a quorum of thirty (30) percent of the voting membership must approve each nominee by at least a seventy-five (75) percent vote.

- 2. Terms of Deacons:** Deacons will be affirmed to a 2-year term of service. They can be renewed indefinitely by the Elder Board and affirmed by the congregation to additional 2-year terms of service. Extended service in a ministry area provides an opportunity for an individual to gain expertise in that area, bringing excellence and with the opportunity to execute long-term vision. This should be encouraged where Deacons have the capacity to do so.
- 3. Choosing of Officers:** The Elders will appoint two officers who will serve in the role of deacon: The Treasurer who will lead the Finance Advisory Team and the Deacon Administrator who will organize the deacon team.
- 4. Duties:** A Deacon glorifies God by modeling for, teaching, and encouraging the congregation how servant leadership impacts our mission of making disciples. Some of the ways they will help to fuel the mission and ministry of Wellspring is by: Leading and organizing teams of volunteers, assisting the staff in completing the work of the ministry delegated to them by the Elders, helping to shape ministries by serving as a part of the organizational leadership, serving as a communication conduit by being kept up to date through participation in leadership gatherings, providing initial input on decisions voicing the perspective of the ministry, helping to identify problems in the church body that are causing disunity, and collaborate with other church leaders to resolve them.
- 5. The Responsibility of the Wife of a Deacon (where applicable):** The wife of a Deacon should speak and act in a way worthy of respect, keeping confidentiality out of kindness and love for the good of the church body. She should display the fruit of the Spirit and be dependable in word and deed. [1 Timothy 3:11]
- 6. Discipline of Individual Deacons**
 - a. Discipline:** If a man, while serving in the office of Deacon, exhibits speech or conduct that might cause serious division among our Body or might bring reproach on the Church, he shall be subject to the discipline of the Church according to principles given us in the Scriptures. The goal of this discipline will be three-fold: 1) to bring glory to the name of Christ; 2) to promote purity and unity at the leadership level; and 3) to restore the erring brother.
 - b. Removal:** The Lead Pastor and the Elders shall meet together to discuss the validity of the accusations. If it is determined that such accusations are true, then the Lead Pastor and Elders will determine whether there is significant cause [e.g., obvious failure to meet the standards found in I Timothy 3:1-13] for removal of the individual from office. If the Lead Pastor and the Elders decide on a recommendation for removal of the Deacon, they will call for a congregational vote as soon as it can be arranged according to the rules set forth in *Article VII, Section 3.C*. An individual may be removed from the office of Deacon by a seventy-five (75) percent vote from a quorum of thirty (30) percent of the voting membership.
 - c. Vacancies:** Deacon vacancies will be filled by an appointment made by the Lead Pastor and Elders. The individual[s] appointed must be approved by a seventy-five (75) percent vote from a quorum of thirty (30) percent of the voting membership at the next annual business meeting or at a special business meeting called by the Elders.

ARTICLE VI

Church Teams

The Elders shall appoint members annually to such teams as are needed to effectively carry out the purpose of the Church.

The Lead Pastor, the Chairman of Elders, the Vice-Chairman, and the Secretary of the Elders shall assign an Elder annually to each of the teams.

ARTICLE VII

Procedure

SECTION 1. RULES

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary manual of the Church. If any part of Robert's Rules of Order shall be found to be inconsistent with, or contradictory to the Constitution of the Church, the Constitution of the Church shall govern.

SECTION 2. VOTING

All affirmations of Elders and Deacons shall be by secret ballot. All other voting at any called or special meeting of the Church shall be conducted by voice to visible vote unless a secret ballot is requested by any member.

A simple majority vote of the members voting shall determine all votes except when otherwise stated.

A two-thirds [66%] majority of the members voting shall be necessary to amend the Constitution where a quorum of thirty [30] percent of the qualified voters has been established.

Absentee ballots will be furnished upon request of members for all elections of Elders and Deacons and specifically announced business, if absence is unavoidable. The request for such ballot must be made to an Elder by the Sunday prior to the business meeting, and the sealed ballot is in an Elder's hand prior to the vote.

SECTION 3. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A.** A Business Meeting of the members of Wellspring Church shall be held annually.
- B.** At the annual business meeting, the annual budget of the Church for the fiscal year will be presented to the membership for a vote of approval.
- C.** Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Elders. Notice of the purpose and time of special meetings shall be read at the services on two [2] consecutive Sundays or written notice given at least seven [7] days prior.

SECTION 4. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall begin on September 1 and come to an end on the last day of August of the following calendar year.

SECTION 5. CONGREGATIONAL DISCIPLINE: SEE APPENDIX IV

ARTICLE VIII

Auxiliaries

Any organization or group whose membership is primarily for a Church activity, shall be considered an auxiliary of the Church and shall be subject to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church. As an auxiliary organization, it shall exist only in cooperation with the Lead Pastor and Elders.

ARTICLE IX

Amendment of Bylaws

The Bylaws may be amended or repealed and new Bylaws adopted by the majority vote of the members at the annual meeting or by a special meeting of the membership when properly informed of the amendment.

ARTICLE X

ANNUAL ACCOUNTING PERIOD

The annual accounting period for this Church will correspond to the fiscal year of the Church [*Article VII, Section 4*].

ARTICLE XI

Property

SECTION 1. PROPERTY

A. The Church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property.

B. In the event of "dissolution" which means the complete disbanding of the Church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity, the Church property shall be applied and distributed as follows:

1. All liabilities and obligations of the Church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefore;
2. assets held by the Church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; and

3. the remaining assets shall become a donation to another non-profit organization as appointed by the Elders.

C. In the event of schism within the Church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, the title of all Church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group which abides by this Constitution, as determined by the Elders.

ARTICLE XII

Staff

SECTION 1. STAFF

A. Ministers: The Church holds the authority to ordain, license, or commission staff members or other key ministry leaders as Ministers of the Gospel.

1. A Minister of the Gospel is a legal designation
2. Ordained pastors, as defined in Appendix I.A.2, are assumed to be classified as Ministers of the Gospel.
3. Licensed staff members, as defined in Appendix I.A.3, are assumed to be classified as Ministers of the Gospel.
4. Commissioned staff members, missionaries, or lay leaders, as defined in Appendix I.A.4 are assumed to be classified as Ministers of the Gospel.

B. Staff compensation: All staff compensation will be determined by the Elders or their designee. This duty can be designated to a team.

APPENDIX I

A. ORDINATION, LICENSING, AND COMMISSIONING

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to address how Wellspring Community Church recognizes and approves pastoral and other ministry staff representatives. The ministers associated with Wellspring Community Church are officially classified as either ordained, licensed, or commissioned leaders. This tri-fold classification is to be distinguished from office holders of the Wellspring Community Church Board (i.e. Elders, Deacons). It is a recognition of gifting and service with the bestowal of varying levels of authority. While this is not the only way non-Elder/Deacon leadership can be classified (the Scriptures do not present one template to follow), there are some Scriptural resources which can help bring shape to each. Included with the following brief biblical descriptions of Ordination, Licensing, and Commissioning are links of each to a similar situation observed in Scripture, requirements for each classification (answering the question, “What does it take to be ordained, licensed, and commissioned?”), process suggestions for attaining each category, and examples of those who would be included in each category.

2. ORDINATION

- a. **Biblical Description** – As one appointed by Paul and Elders through the laying on of hands, Timothy is typically seen as the prime example of an ordained leader (1 Timothy 4:14). This laying-on of hands was both a recognition and a bestowal of gifts to be used in church-building pastoral work. Ordination is a lifetime appointment.
- b. **Requirements** – Because Titus was charged to appoint Elders and Deacons (Titus 1:5), it would follow that an Ordained Pastor should meet these requirements himself. This position is reserved for biologically-born men (1 Timothy 2:12¹) who, according to the church, have been called to lifelong vocational ministry.
- c. **Process** – The Elders and Ordained Pastors of a church should initiate and pursue the ordination process for those gifted and qualified, since it is folly for one to pursue the position oneself (Proverbs 25:6-7). Paul notes two areas which should be under special consideration for ordained leaders: life and doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16). There should not be an age requirement (1 Timothy 4:12) except for what might be established for eldership. Especially striking in Paul’s writing to Timothy is the implicit role of a mentor with whom he has served and who knows well both his strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the ordination process should include a mentor who is either a current Elder or a Pastoral Staff Representative who can vouch for their life and doctrine in the context of ministry. In addition, the candidate for ordination should undergo an extensive interview by a group of five or more Ordained Pastors and/or Elders focused on his personal Christian experience, call to the ministry, educational training, doctrinal belief, reputation, and demonstrated efficacy in Christian service. The candidate will give evidence of agreement with the provisions of the Church constitution with respect to doctrine, independence of the local church, and Scriptural qualifications for church leadership. The ordination will be approved upon a two-thirds vote of the Elders. It is recommended that a process be established for accountability in regard to life and doctrine after ordination.
- d. **Example** – Full-time biologically-born male pastors deemed capable of the position of Lead Pastor of a congregation.

¹This verse is best translated, “I do not permit a woman to teach in such a way as to exercise authority over a man...” The two infinitives, “to teach/have authority” are clearly related [see parallel grammatical arrangement between “to live and to please God” in 1 Thess 4:1 – the former is the arena for the latter: “to live in such a way that pleases God”].

3. LICENSING

- a. Biblical Description** – “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” [1 Timothy 5:22²]. This classification is recommended for those moving into the candidate phase of ordination and/or lay ministry. Licensing will serve as a one-year renewable designation in order to allow individuals preparing for ordination to perform spiritual leadership duties at Wellspring Community Church. In addition, individuals serving in contexts where ordained pastoral leadership is not needed in the foreseen future may also be considered. Examples of this would include both individuals serving within Wellspring Community Church ministries as well as ministries outside Wellspring Community Church.
- b. Requirements** – The Wellspring Elders determine when an individual shows the gifting to be considered for ordained status or for serving as a lay minister. The following are criteria that will be considered when determining one’s suitability for licensure. The individual should:
- Demonstrate a clear call and commitment to lifelong ministry
 - Have a theological degree or be enrolled in a theological seminary for purposes of training
 - Currently be performing spiritual leadership duties, including having effectively taught for a minimum of one year
 - Display evidence of spiritual humility and willingness to submit to the authority of the Elders
- c. Process** – The candidate for licensure should be interviewed by the Elders about his call to ministry and should provide testimony of his walk with the Lord. The candidate must receive a two-thirds approval of the Elders.
- d. Examples** – Biologically-born male pastoral staff representatives, ministry staff, or others connected to the church who are being considered for ordination. A lay minister could be licensed in contexts where there is no need for long-term ordained leadership [for example, a chaplain at a homeless shelter].

4. COMMISSIONING FOR PASTORAL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OR RESIDENTS

Because Wellspring Community Church does not ordain women, the Elders recognize the spiritual leadership of women called to serve in the capacity of a Pastoral Staff Representative through commissioning.

- a. Biblical Description** – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 says the congregation should “esteem very highly in love” those who “labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.” This text points to a distinct group of individuals who consistently do the work of ministry in a leadership role and who are able to provide guidance for a group or individuals who need admonishment. Ephesians 4:11-12 further posits this point: “It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”
- b. Requirements** – While not subjected to the same requirements of eldership as an ordained leader, commissioned individuals are those who are capable of wise group leadership as well as individual admonition.
- c. Process** – Because biblical instruction [which includes smaller group and one-on-one contexts] is an important part of ministry for a commissioned Pastoral Representative, a test of life and doctrine, conducted by ordained Wellspring Pastors and Wellspring Elders, should be included in the commissioning process. It is recommended that Wellspring commission individuals for an indefinite term, which will end if they leave Wellspring and serve elsewhere or if there is a failure in the area of life or doctrine that necessitates such accountability. The candidate must receive a two-thirds approval of the Elders.
- d. Example** – Female pastoral staff representative deemed capable of affinity-group ministry. A male deemed capable of affinity-group ministry may also be commissioned as a pastoral staff representative.

² Though Paul utilizes this command in relation to Eldership, the usage of “laying on of hands” in the Old Testament in regards to numerous leadership positions would imply that the principle holds for other leadership positions in the church as well.

5. COMMISSIONING FOR MISSIONARIES

- a. **Biblical Description** – Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church at Antioch for missionary endeavors [Acts 13]. The command of the Spirit to the church was general: “Set [them] apart for the work to which I have called them” [Acts 13:2].
- b. **Requirements** – The requirements for missionary commissioning are established and adjusted as deemed necessary by the Missionary and Outreach Team. Commissioning is subject to the approval of the Missionary and Outreach Pastoral Staff member and is generally only available for those who are members of Wellspring Community Church.
- c. **Process** – The Missionary and Outreach Pastoral Staff member presents candidates for commissioning to the Elders for approval. The candidate must receive a two-thirds approval of the Elders.
- d. **Example** – Missionaries supported by Wellspring.

APPENDIX II

A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF ELDER

TITUS 1:9

“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

The Elders of Wellspring Community Church shall be biologically-born male members in good standing whose character, wisdom, knowledge of Scripture, spiritual maturity and devotion to Christ are commonly recognized, and thus provide reason for them to be considered qualified to lead this congregation and to oversee the care of the needs of its individual members.

I TIMOTHY 3:1-7; 5:22; TITUS 1:6-9

“Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. [If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands ...”

“An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

1. Free of accusation

Having proven his character, an Elder must wisely avoid any speech or actions that might bring accusations of hypocrisy and wrongdoing.

2. A one-woman man

An Elder must behave in an appropriate manner and show utmost respect to all women and girls. If married, he must demonstrate himself to be a devoted husband.

3. Temperate

An Elder must model simplicity as Christ did as he wisely avoids extremes or excesses in both behavior and speech. He must show moderation in the indulgence of appetite or desires.

4. Self-controlled

The man serving as an Elder should be known as one who is able to control his tongue, who does not easily give in to temptation, who has the maturity and wisdom to act appropriately in given situations, and who will choose to do right when no one is watching.

5. Worthy of respect

An Elder must be mature in faith, yielded to the Spirit of God, respected for both his Biblical wisdom and his good character.

6. Hospitable

The Elder and his family should be willing to open their home to minister to members of the congregation who are under their care.

7. Able to teach

An Elder must have an adequate understanding of the faith and enough confidence in his knowledge of the Scriptures, so that he can communicate the teachings of the Word to those whom the Lord puts under his care.

8. Not one to abuse substances

An Elder must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit his personal liberty for the sake of others [e.g., voluntary abstinence from the consumption of alcoholic beverages].

9. Not violent, but gentle

An Elder should be known as one who is gentle and not easily angered or quick to argue. He should never have the reputation of one who uses violence, threats, or intimidation to get his way.

10. Not quarrelsome

An Elder should not be known as one who is prone to argue, or one who uses arguing to intimidate others into submitting to his position.

11. Not overbearing

An Elder should not have the reputation of one who is arrogant or one who seeks to dominate the leadership structure. He should not be one whose personality is harsh and overwhelming or who pushes aside those who get in his way.

12. Not quick-tempered

The man serving as an Elder should not have a reputation for being easily angered or easy to lose his composure. No one should serve as Elder who is prone to speak or act inappropriately while angry.

13. Not pursuing dishonest gain

An Elder should have a reputation for honesty and integrity in all dealings. His motivation for service must always be pure.

14. Not a lover of money

An Elder must not be greedy, stingy, or preoccupied with the accumulation of material things. Instead, he should be a model of generosity.

15. Effectively manages family and household

An Elder must have good parenting skills demonstrated in and household consistent patterns of appropriate behavior in their children and in the adequate supervision of the affairs of the home. [The support of one's wife is necessary if a man is going to serve in this office; he and his wife must be mutually committed to the responsibilities that this office brings.]

16. Not a recent convert

There should be an appropriate amount of time after one's conversion before he is ready to serve in leadership as Elder.

17. Proven character

Consistency over time will demonstrate the credibility of one's faith and character. An Elder's character must have been tested and proven to be worthy of the office before his election to the office.

18. Good reputation with outsiders

An Elder should be known by those in his community workplace as one who is worthy of respect. He should not speak or act in ways that would dishonor the name of Christ or this local Church.

19. Loves what is good

An Elder must desire the will of God in every situation. He must not rejoice in evil, but instead should seek those things that are good.

20. Upright

Elders must be fair and impartial. Their decisions should be based on Scriptural principles and not influenced by unethical pressures from others.

21. Disciplined

An Elder should be known as a man who is diligent in prayer and in the study of the Word. He should not have a reputation of laziness or gluttony. His daily life should reflect his commitment to the Lord.

22. Devout

An Elder should be known as one who fears the Lord and strives to please Him.

23. Holds firmly to the trustworthy message

An Elder must have an adequate understanding of the doctrines of the Christian faith. He must be confident in his convictions and not easily swayed, in order that he may encourage others and stand up against those who would challenge the truth of the Word.

Additional Note: *Article V, Section I.A.* addresses the qualifications agreed upon by this Church for the election of any officer. Thus, any nominee for the office of Elder must meet these criteria.

APPENDIX III

A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF DEACON

ACTS 6:2-4:

“So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

A Deacon at Wellspring Church is a biologically-born male member who is at least 21 years of age. He must be a member of at least one year. He has been called, accepted, and commissioned to serve in a specific role for a season. This role is based on both the needs of the church, the individual’s skills, and his spiritual gifts. If the role in which they are serving is eliminated, the Elders may offer them a new position, or they may end their term prematurely.

I TIMOTHY 3:8-12:

“In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.”

1. Worthy of respect

A Deacon must be mature in faith, yielded to the Spirit of God, respected for both his Biblical wisdom and his good character.

2. Not a double-talker

A Deacon must demonstrate consistency and integrity in his speech. He should not be prone to telling one thing to one person and something else to another. Instead, he should be committed to always speaking the truth in love.

3. Not one to abuse substances

A Deacon must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit his personal liberty for the sake of others [e.g., voluntary abstinence from the consumption of alcoholic beverages].

4. Not pursuing dishonest gain

A Deacon must have a reputation for honesty and integrity in all dealings. His motivation for service must always be pure.

5. Holding to the deep truths of the faith

A Deacon must have an adequate understanding of the doctrines of the Christian faith. He must be confident in his convictions and not easily swayed.

6. Proven character

Consistency over time will demonstrate the credibility of one’s faith and character. The character of a Deacon must have been tested and proven to be worthy of the office.

7. Free of accusation

Having proven his character, a Deacon must wisely avoid any speech or actions that might bring accusations of hypocrisy and wrongdoing.

8.A one-woman man

A Deacon must behave in an appropriate manner and show utmost respect to all women and girls. If married, he must demonstrate himself to be a devoted husband.

9. Effectively manages family and household

A Deacon must have good parenting skills demonstrated in consistent patterns of appropriate behavior in their children and in the adequate supervision of the affairs of the home. [The support of one's wife is necessary if a man is going to serve in this office; he and his wife must be mutually committed to the responsibilities that this office brings.]

Additional Note: *Article V, Section I.A.* addresses the qualifications agreed upon by this Church for the election of any officer. Thus, any nominee for the office of Deacon must meet these criteria.

APPENDIX IV

A. COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works [Heb. 10:24].

Like all of our Relational Commitments, the principles and practices described below apply to all Covenant Members of Wellspring Church.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISCIPLINE ARE SIGNS OF GOD'S LOVE

God has established the church to reflect His character, wisdom, and glory in the midst of a fallen world [Eph. 3:10-11]. He demonstrates His love for His church in that He sent His Son to die for her [Rom. 5:8; Eph. 5:25]. His purpose for His church is to present her as a gift to His Son; thus Scripture refers to the church as the "bride" of Christ [Rev. 19:7]. For this reason the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are continually working to purify the church and bring her to maturity [Eph. 5:25-27].

This does not mean that God expects the church to be made up of perfectly pure people. He knows that the best of churches are still companies of sinners who wrestle daily with remaining sin [1 John 1:8; Phil. 3:12]. Therefore, it would be unbiblical for us to expect church members to live perfectly. What we can do, however, is confess our common struggle with sin and our mutual need for God's mercy and grace. We also can spur one another on toward maturity by encouraging and holding each other accountable to love, seek after, and obey God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love others as we love ourselves [Mark 12:30-31; Heb. 10:24-25].

We sometimes refer to this process of mutual encouragement and accountability as "discipline." The Bible does not present church discipline as negative, legalistic, or harsh. True discipline originates from God Himself and is always presented as a sign of genuine love. "The Lord disciplines the one he loves" [Heb. 12:6]. "Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law" [Ps. 94:12]. "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline" [Rev. 3:19].

God's discipline in the church, like the discipline in a good family, is intended to be primarily positive, instructive, and encouraging. This process, which is sometimes referred to as "formative discipline," involves preaching, teaching, prayer, personal Bible study, small group fellowship, and countless other enjoyable activities that challenge and encourage us to love and serve God more wholeheartedly. On rare occasions, God's discipline, like the discipline in a family with growing children, also may have a corrective purpose. When we forget or disobey

what God has taught us, He corrects us. One way He does this is to call the church to seek after us and lead us back onto the right track. This process, which is sometimes called “corrective” or “restorative” discipline, is likened in Scripture to a shepherd seeking after a lost sheep.

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray [Matt. 18:12-13].

Thus, restorative or corrective discipline is never to be done in a harsh, vengeful, or self-righteous manner. It is always to be carried out in humility and love, with the goals of restoring someone to a close walk with Christ [Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1], protecting others from harm [1 Cor. 5:6], and showing respect for the honor and glory of God’s name [1 Pet. 2:12].

2. MOST CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE IS PRIVATE, PERSONAL, AND INFORMAL

God gives every believer grace to be self-disciplined. “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control” [2 Tim. 1:7; cf. Gal. 5:23]. Thus discipline always begins as a personal matter and usually remains that way, as each of us studies God’s Word, seeks Him in prayer, and draws on His grace to identify and change sinful habits and grow in godliness.

But sometimes we are blind to our sins or so tangled in them that we cannot get free on our own. This is why the Bible says, “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” [Gal. 6:1]. In obedience to this command, we are committed to giving and receiving loving correction within our church whenever a sin [whether in word, behavior, or doctrine] seems too serious to overlook [Prov. 19:11].

If repeated private conversations do not lead another person to repentance, Jesus commands that we ask other brothers or sisters to get involved. “If he will not listen, take one or two others along” [Matt. 18:16]. If informal conversations with these people fail to resolve the matter, then we may seek the involvement of more influential people, such as a small group leader, Sunday school teacher, church leader, or Elder. If even these efforts fail to bring a brother or sister to repentance, and if the issue is too serious to overlook, we will move into what may be called “formal discipline.”

3. FORMAL DISCIPLINE MAY INVOLVE THE ENTIRE CHURCH

If a member persistently refuses to listen to personal and informal correction to turn from speech or behavior that the Bible defines as sin, Jesus commands us to “tell it to the church” [Matt. 18:17]. This first involves informing one or more church Pastors/Elders about the situation. If the offense is not likely to cause imminent harm to others, our Elders may approach the member privately to personally establish the facts and encourage repentance of any sin they discover. We intend to give the member every reasonable opportunity to explain and defend his or her actions. If the member recognizes his sin and repents, the matter usually ends there, unless a confession to additional people is needed.

If an offense is likely to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division or disruption, our Elders may accelerate the disciplinary process and move to protect the church [Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11].

As the disciplinary process progresses, our Elders may impose a variety of sanctions to encourage repentance, including, but not limited to, private and public admonition, withholding of the Lord’s Supper, removal from office, withdrawal of normal fellowship, and, as a last resort, removal from membership [Matt. 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Matt. 18:17; 1 John 5:16].

If the straying member does not repent in response to private appeals from our Elders, they may inform others in the church who may be able to influence that individual or be willing to pray for him or her, or people who might be harmed or affected by that person’s behavior. This step may include close friends, a small group, a Sunday school

class, or the entire congregation if our Elders deem it to be appropriate [Matt. 18:17, 1 Tim. 5:20].

If, after a reasonable period of time, the member still refuses to change, then our Elders may bring the situation before the congregation, with the recommendation that the member be removed from membership and normal fellowship. If the congregation supports that recommendation, we will treat the member as an unbeliever.

This means that we will no longer treat the member as a fellow Christian. Instead of having casual, relaxed fellowship with the member, we will look for opportunities to lovingly bring the gospel to him or her, remind him or her of God's holiness and mercy, and call him or her to repent and put his or her faith in Christ [Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20].

We realize that our natural human response to correction often is to hide or run away from accountability [Gen. 3:8-10]. To avoid falling into this age-old trap and to strengthen our church's ability to rescue us if we are caught in sin, we agree not to run away from this church to avoid corrective discipline. Therefore, we waive our right to withdraw from membership or accountability while discipline is pending against us. Although we are free to stop attending the church at any time, we agree that a withdrawal while discipline is pending will not stop the process of discipline until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibilities to encourage our repentance and restoration, and to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, as described in these Commitments [Matt. 18:12-14; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:17].

If a member leaves the church while discipline is in effect or is being considered, and our Elders learn that he or she is attending another church, they may inform that church of the situation and ask its leaders to encourage the member to repent and be reconciled to the Lord and to any people he or she has offended. This action is intended both to help the member find freedom from his or her sin and to warn the other church about the harm that he or she might do to their members [see Matt. 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 3 John 1:9-10].

Loving restoration always stands at the heart of the disciplinary process. If a member repents, and our Elders confirm his or her sincerity, we will rejoice together and gladly imitate God's forgiveness by restoring the person to fellowship within the body [see Matt. 18:13; Luke 15:3-7, 11-32; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Col. 3:12-14].

People who have been disciplined by another church will not be allowed to become members at Wellspring until they have repented of their sins and made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, or our Elders have determined that the discipline of the former church was not Biblically appropriate.

As we pursue the blessings of accountability and church discipline, we intend to hold fast to the promise of Scripture: "He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" [Heb. 12:10-11].

NOTE: Adapted for Wellspring Church from Bethlehem Baptist Church

