

# CONSTITUTION

## Community Bible Church

### Easley, South Carolina

(May 2021)

#### ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church will be Community Bible Church, Easley, South Carolina.

#### ARTICLE II - MISSION STATEMENT

Community Bible Church exists to produce genuine followers of Jesus Christ who join Him in loving God, loving people, and redeeming the world. Matthew 22:37-39; 28:19, 20.

#### ARTICLE III - GOVERNMENT

##### A. Definitions

1. Pastor. One of the men responsible for preaching and teaching, administrative oversight, spiritual care, and associated duties in accordance with Article VIII. The term "Pastor" is identical to the scriptural term "Elder." The plural "Pastors" refers to some or all the Pastors acting as a team.
2. Deacon. One of the men responsible for financial and physical oversight of the church in accordance with Article VIII.
3. Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is comprised of both Pastors and Deacons.

B. The government of this church will be of the congregational type with authority vested in its owners, who will hold title in the corporate name to all properties, and whose vote will be final in all matters pertaining to the church, except as provided otherwise herein. The Pastors, elected by the congregation, will, in the normal course of events, rule and make decisions on behalf of the people. This church will acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Head. Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; I Peter 5:1-5.

## ARTICLE IV - OWNERSHIP

- A. We define an owner as a believer who takes an active, accountable role in the church. Ownership implies that the individual is invested personally and takes an active role to advance the mission of the church.
- B. Owners of this church will be professing, baptized believers who will subscribe to the Articles of Faith and Constitution of this church.
- C. The mode of baptism is not the basis for fellowship in this church, but baptism at this church is by immersion.
- D. Those desiring to hold official offices or positions of authority within the church (i.e., teachers, small group leaders, etc.) must be owners in good standing.
- E. The Process for Ownership.
  - 1. Prospective owners will:
    - a. Read and study the Charter documents including the Articles of Faith and Constitution.
    - b. Fill out an application form.
    - c. Attend an Ownership Class.
    - d. Be interviewed by a Pastor, and then be announced to the congregation as potential owners. (Questions used in the interview process are available upon request.)
    - e. Be presented to the congregation as owners.
  - 2. This process will cover a minimum of three (3) weeks. Objections may be voiced to any Pastor by any owner during this process.
- F. Owners will not be received into this church by letter from other churches, and letters transferring ownership to other churches will not be granted.
- G. Minor children will not be considered for ownership. However, once they reach the age of eighteen (18) they may follow the process for ownership as outlined in section E.
- H. After a period of one (1) year of inactivity (no communication with the church) an owner will be removed from the church ownership list. Any person wishing to reinstate their ownership after this period must reapply through the process outlined in section D E.

## **ARTICLE V - CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

All matters of discipline will be conducted in the spirit and letter of the Scriptures. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.) Such discipline will be entrusted to the Pastors, who will take the case or cases into prayerful consideration and act with wisdom and, if deemed necessary, bring the matter before the church. No action calling for suspension or dismissal will be taken against any person until such owner be informed and the charge cited; and the owner will be given an opportunity to appear at a meeting of the Pastors.

Church discipline is initiated only when a brother or sister is involved in sin that has been addressed and is unrepentant of that sin. The purpose of the discipline is never to hurt or tear down, but to restore and heal. Galatians 6:1-4.

## **ARTICLE VI- MEETINGS**

A. The following will be regular fellowship and worship services:

1. Sunday worship service.
2. Baptismal services, when necessary, normally conducted in conjunction with a Sunday service.
3. The Lord's Supper will be observed at least quarterly.
4. An evangelistic series, Bible conference, missionary conference, or other special services will be held with outside speakers at the discretion of the Pastors as they determine the needs of the church.
5. Other fellowship and worship services, as called by the Leadership Team.

B. Business Meetings:

1. Business meetings will be held as follows: an annual business meeting will be held to determine financial and budget affairs, and for other organizational business, e.g., to elect Pastors and Deacons. Times will be determined by the Leadership Team.
2. Other business meetings may be called by the Leadership Team.
3. The moderator will be designated by the Leadership Team.
4. In all business meetings, twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible voting owners will be considered a quorum. The quorum will be determined by adding the number of owners present to the

- number of owners that have cast an eligible absentee ballot as specified in Article VIII. If the quorum consists of less than fifty percent (50%) of eligible voting owners, a two-thirds majority will be required to pass any measure, except when voting for a new Pastor. Any active owner at least eighteen (18) years of age will be entitled to vote. (See Article IV.)
5. Any proposition the Leadership Team believes to require a congregational vote will be posted in writing and announced verbally for two (2) Sunday worship services prior to the vote, with the vote taken at the third Sunday worship service.
  6. Business meetings will be open to non-owners unless an owners-only meeting is designated by the Leadership Team.

#### **ARTICLE VII - FINANCES**

- A. The church is supported by voluntary contributions from its owners who are commanded to give as each purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. Giving to fellow believers, the poor and needy, and to Kingdom work is a good and appropriate response to our love of Christ.
- B. No paid performances or sales will be used to finance the normal operation of the church. Such sales or fundraising activities are permissible only for special projects for the church. Any such fundraising must be approved by the Pastors.
- C. An annual budget shall be prepared and presented by the chairman of the Deacons and voted on by the owners at an annual business meeting. The budget will be posted at least two (2) Sunday worship services prior to the business meeting.
  1. All undesignated tithes and offerings will be disbursed as follows:
    - a. General budget and building shall not exceed ninety percent (90%) and home and foreign missions shall not be less than 10 percent (10%) of the total budget.
    - b. Permanent missions' support and discretionary missions' support from the total missions' income will be at the discretion of the missions committee.
  2. The annual budget may not exceed the previous year's undesignated giving income plus an amount equal to the average

- change (increase or decrease) in undesignated giving income over the preceding five (5) years.
3. During the budget year, the Leadership Team may disburse an aggregate of five percent (5%) of the current year's budget amount for non-budgeted expenditures without congregational approval provided actual income exceeds budgeted income at the time of the expenditure in an amount greater than the expenditure.
  4. Outstanding indebtedness for fixed assets will not exceed two and one-half times the annual income of the current fiscal year (CBC's fiscal year is April 1<sup>st</sup> - March 31<sup>st</sup>). A vote for such indebtedness must be accepted by an eighty percent (80%) vote of the eligible owners at an officially called business meeting.
- D. Records of all financial transactions will be kept by the Church Coordinator, who will submit a monthly financial report to the chairman of the Deacons.
- E. The Leadership Team is responsible for all properties and financial dealings of the church.
- F. Two officers of the corporation or representatives from the Leadership Team may be appointed to represent the church in major transactions and to sign legal documents, including documents that obligate the church financially (e.g., land purchases, contracts, etc.).

## **ARTICLE VIII - LEADERSHIP**

- A. Teaching Pastor
1. A Teaching Pastor must be male and must meet the Scriptural qualifications for his calling as outlined in I Timothy 3.
  2. A candidate for Teaching Pastor must be heard at not less than two regular worship services. His wife\* and minor children\* must accompany him to at least one of those services. He and his wife\* must meet with the Leadership Team. (\*if applicable)
  3. A Teaching Pastor will be accepted by an eighty percent (80%) vote of the eligible owners present at a duly called business meeting.
  4. It will be the primary duty of a Teaching Pastor, as an under-shepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, to preach and teach the Word. Additional duties will be articulated per the job description specific to this position.

5. CBC will normally have a plurality of Teaching Pastors.

#### B. Executive Pastor

1. The Executive Pastor must be male and must meet the Scriptural qualifications for his calling as outlined in I Timothy 3.
2. A candidate for Executive Pastor must have demonstrated the ability to teach. He and his wife\* must meet with the Leadership Team. (\*if applicable)
3. An Executive Pastor will be accepted by an eighty percent (80%) vote of the eligible owners present at a duly called business meeting.
4. It will be the primary duty of the Executive Pastor, as an under-shepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, to provide administrative oversight of the church and its ministries. Additional duties will be articulated per the job description specific to this position.
5. CBC will normally have one (1) Executive Pastor.
6. The Executive Pastor will be an *ex officio* member of every committee at CBC.

#### C. Additional Pastors

1. Any additional Pastor, including a Shepherding Pastor, must be male, must meet the Scriptural qualifications for his office as outlined in I Timothy 3, and must have passed an ordination process. (Note: Ordination to Pastor is available at CBC. The Biblical Examination Questions utilized in the review are available upon request.)
2. A candidate for Shepherding Pastor must have demonstrated the ability to teach and must have been an active owner of CBC for at least six (6) months.
3. An additional Pastor will be accepted by an eighty percent (80%) vote of the owners present at a duly called business meeting.
4. It will be the primary duty of a Shepherding Pastor, as an under-shepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, to provide spiritual care to the owners and regular attenders of the church. Duties of other Pastors will be determined by the Leadership Team, and, if paid, will be articulated in the job description specific to the position.
5. CBC will normally strive to have at least as many Shepherding Pastors as it has paid Pastors.

6. A Shepherding Pastor will serve in perpetuity so long as he remains an owner of CBC. He is eligible for sabbatical by request to the other Pastors. After a sabbatical exceeding one year, he must present himself to the congregation confirming his continued qualifications to serve in this office.

#### D. Pastoral Responsibilities

1. Pastors should be men of experience, blameless in life, strong in faith, and able to teach. They should exhibit sobriety and holy living that reflect the Gospel. They should rule their own houses well. They should have a good reputation with those outside the church.
2. Pastors will be responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church, guarding the flock so that no doctrinal error or corruption of morals overtakes it. They will exercise government and proper church discipline. They will visit the people of the church, especially the sick and mourning. They will nourish and guard the flock by teaching the truth of the Word of God. They will set a worthy example to the flock by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. They will pray with the people both publicly and privately.
3. Pastors will have oversight of pulpit supply.
4. Pastors will have oversight of the worship program of the church.
5. Pastors will have oversight of the mission's program of the church.
6. Pastors will be responsible to administer water baptism.
7. Pastors will be responsible to examine each applicant for ownership.
8. Pastors will be responsible to form a committee to search for and examine a prospective Teaching Pastor, Executive Pastor, or additional Pastor.
9. Pastors will be responsible to nominate candidates for the office of Shepherding Pastor.

#### E. Dismissal of Pastors

1. A Pastor may be dismissed by an eighty percent (80%) vote of eligible owners present at any duly called business meeting per Article VI.
2. A meeting to dismiss a Pastor may be called by twenty-five percent (25%) of the church owners by petition or by one-third of

the Leadership Team. Such meeting must follow the guidelines of a duly called business meeting as outlined in Article VI.

3. If dismissed, the services of a Teaching Pastor, Executive Pastor, or paid additional Pastor will be terminated immediately. Salary and other benefits will continue for a maximum of forty-five (45) days or until he has obtained a full-time paid position, whichever comes first.

#### F. Deacons

1. A Deacon must be male, must meet the Scriptural qualifications for his office as outlined in I Timothy 3, and must have been an active owner of CBC for at least six (6) months.
2. Deacon elections will normally take place in odd-numbered years. The Deacons will be responsible to nominate candidates for the office of Deacon, subject to the approval of the Pastors. Candidates should be men of spiritual character, honest repute, brotherly spirit, sound judgment, and service.
3. Deacons will be elected by a majority vote of the owners present at the annual organizational business meeting.
4. A Deacon will serve a single term of four (4) years. At the end of his term, he must normally wait an additional two (2) years before resuming service as a Deacon.
5. A Deacon may be dismissed by majority vote of the Leadership Team. At the discretion of the Leadership Team, the term of a Deacon that is dismissed or resigns may be filled at a duly called business meeting.
6. It will be the primary duty of the Deacons to provide financial and physical oversight of the church and its ministries.
7. No official Deacon meeting may occur without a majority of Deacons present, either in person or virtually.
8. The Deacons will be responsible to supervise all collection and disbursement of church funds and the record-keeping of the Church Coordinator. The Deacons will be responsible for the maintenance of all church property.
9. The Deacons are a service-oriented team under the supervision and authority of the Pastors. The Deacons will be responsible to carry out the ministry tasks for the people on behalf of the Pastors.

If for any reason it is impossible to secure Deacons, the duties of the office will fall to the Pastors.

#### G. Church Coordinator

1. The Church Coordinator may be a paid staff position. If unpaid, the individual must be an owner in good standing and approved by the Leadership Team. If this position is filled by an owner, the individual will serve a four-year term.
2. The Church Coordinator will keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the church and a record of the ownership list.
3. The Church Coordinator will keep a complete and accurate record of all contributions and disbursements of the church.
4. The Church Coordinator will submit a complete report of financial operations to the Leadership Team monthly and will submit a complete report for the annual organizational business meeting.

#### H. Interns and Assistants

1. An Intern or Assistant will be called by the Leadership Team and will perform the duties prescribed by the Leadership Team.
2. An Intern that wishes to be ordained must go through the steps outlined in Article IX, then be voted into office according to the process outlined in this Article.

#### I. Leadership Team

1. The Leadership Team will be responsible for the agenda and conduct of the annual organizational business meeting as outlined in Article VI.
2. At the discretion of the Leadership Team, absentee ballots may be approved for any vote that requires a duly called business meeting. Owners will be responsible to request an absentee ballot in advance from the Church Coordinator or designee. Absentee ballots must be returned prior to the business meeting.
3. The Leadership Team will be responsible for administering the Lord's Supper.
4. All employees, staff members, teachers, and officers, whether paid, will be directly responsible to the Leadership Team.

### **ARTICLE IX - ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY**

- A. Community Bible Church has authority as a local church body to ordain candidates for pastoral ministry.

- B. A candidate seeking ordination in this church must approach the Pastors for permission to be examined. The Pastors must decide whether to grant permission based on the character, spiritual gifts, maturity, and education of the candidate.
- C. If permission has been granted, a date for examination will be set.
- D. The Examining Board will consist of Pastors and any other ordained minister(s) the candidate wishes to attend, subject to the approval of the Pastors.
- E. The candidate's examination will include, but is not limited to, the following topics:
  1. The qualifications set forth in Scripture (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) and his personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
  2. Knowledge of Bible content.
  3. Knowledge of Theology.
  4. Knowledge of Church Polity/ Discipline.
- F. Upon passage of the examination a date will be set for an ordination service. This service will contain, but is not limited to, an address to the candidate and the congregation by a Pastor and prayer for the candidate by each member of the Examination Board. Upon completion of this service the candidate is considered officially an ordained minister and is entitled to all rights and privileges thereto.

### **ARTICLE X - ORDINANCES**

The ordinances are the physical, outward pictures of the inward spiritual realities of Christ's work in the believer's life. Due to the deeply symbolic and spiritual nature of the ordinances, they are to be partaken of in faith and sincerity of heart befitting such holy occasions.

- A. Water Baptism: It is an act of obedience that signifies that one has been united to Christ. It is the public profession of the saving grace of God in the life of the believer.
- B. The Lord's Supper: It is the public ceremony reminding us of the broken body and shed blood of Christ on behalf of sinful mankind. It is for the believer a testimony of his faith in Christ alone for his salvation. The Lord's Supper is open to all professing believers who have examined themselves and are living in obedience to Christ.

## **ARTICLE XI - DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION**

- A. In the event of the dissolution of Community Bible Church, the assets of the corporation will be given and paid over to a 501(c)(3) corporation of like faith and practice. Said corporation will be determined by a majority vote of the owners of the corporation present at a duly called business meeting for said dissolution.
- B. Notice of dissolution will be sent, in writing, to each owner at least forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled meeting, and public notice will be given at least forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting.
- C. All recommendations for recipients of the corporation assets will be placed, in writing, by an owner of the corporation to the Leadership Team no less than thirty (30) days prior to the dissolution meeting. No other recommendations will be considered.
- D. It will be the duty of the Leadership Team to examine all recommendations submitted to it and to make its own recommendations to the congregation concerning the distribution of the church assets.
- E. Said recommendation from the Leadership Team will be made available, in writing, to the congregation fifteen (15) days prior to the dissolution meeting.
- F. The decision as to the recipients of the assets of the corporation will be the mutual consent by secret ballot of the majority of the owners present at the dissolution meeting.
- G. The Leadership Team, in the stead of the owners of the corporation, will assume the responsibility of wrapping up the dissolution, and will seek and obtain legal assistance to complete said proceedings.

## **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

- A. Any owner may present an amendment to this Constitution, in writing, to the Leadership Team.
- B. Major amendments (i.e., those related to policy or practice) must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the owners present at a regular business meeting.
- C. Minor amendments (i.e., those that do not change meaning or intent) may be approved by the Leadership Team. Minor amendments must be announced to the congregation.

Dear Prospective Church Owner:

We are thrilled that you are considering becoming an owner of Community Bible Church. Any person who testifies to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and is willing to follow our statement of faith can unite with this fellowship.

- To become an owner you must complete and submit the application in this booklet after having read the church's Articles of Faith and Constitution.
- In response to your application, a Pastor will interview you regarding your testimony of salvation and answer any questions you may have concerning Community Bible Church. The interview responses will be presented to the Pastors as a whole for approval of ownership. Once the Pastors approve of the ownership application, you will be considered officially an owner of CBC.
- On a designated Sunday, you will be presented to the congregation as a new owner of Community Bible Church.

While we try not to put undue stress on ownership as a requirement for fellowship or involvement at Community Bible Church, we do require anyone assuming a teaching or leadership role to be an owner of the congregation.

Once again, we are delighted that you are considering joining our fellowship, and we ask that you make this decision prayerfully and in accordance with the Holy Spirit's leading in your life.

Your fellow laborers in Christ,

1. CBC Pastors