

# **The Constitution of Joy Bible Fellowship**

Adopted February 9, 2005

**Wentzville, Missouri**

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# The Constitution of Joy Bible Fellowship

## Article 1. OUR PURPOSE AND MISSION

### 1.1 Our Purpose

***MAT 22:37-39 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'***

Joy Bible Fellowship exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made and grow in their relationship with Him. God is glorified as we manifest His presence as we do His work (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

The purpose or purposes for which the corporation is organized are:

Accomplishing, assisting and improving the religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent activities or undertakings of itself, individuals and other organizations exempt from Federal Income Tax under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

To engage in such religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent activities as are permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

The corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as set forth in these Articles of Incorporation and in the bylaws, within the meaning of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.)

### 1.2 Our Mission

***Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

The Mission of Joy Bible Fellowship is to fulfill the great commission as proclaimed by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. As we seek to accomplish this mission we are joyfully committed to these Founding Principles.

- **Proclaim the truth and Authority of Gods Word without apology**
- **Glorify God through Christ-centered worship**
- **Preach the Gospel of Jesus with grace & boldness**
- **Love and serve our church family and community**
- **Rely on God's provision in all things through prayer**

## Article 2. DOCTRINE

### 2.1 God

We believe in the only true God (John 17:3), the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity, He is just and right (Deuteronomy 32:4) and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8).

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 5:3-4).

### 2.2 Jesus Christ

We believe in the total deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe Him to be true God and true man (John 1:1-2, 14, 18; 14:8-9; 1 Timothy 3:16; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:16; Luke 1:26-35; Philippians 2:4-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 2:17; 4:15; 1 John 4:2-3). We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnated to reveal God to man and redeem us from our sin and death. This redemption was accomplished through His death on the cross as our representative and substitute. (2 Corinthians 5:21) His literal and physical resurrection out of death secures life everlasting for the redeemed. He is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our high priest, He intercedes for us as our mediator and advocate. (Luke 19:10; John 1:29; 14:8-11; 20:19-29; Acts 1:9-10; Romans 3:25-26; 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 1:13; 7:25; 9:24; 10:5-14; 1 Peter 1:3-4; 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 5:9)

### 2.3 Holy Spirit

We believe in the total deity of the Holy Spirit and that His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14).

The Holy Spirit regenerates the sinner upon belief in Christ, baptizing the believer into one body of which Christ is the head. The Holy Spirit indwells, guides, instructs, fills, comforts and empowers the believer for godly living (Mark 13:11; John 14:26; 16:13; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of God's righteousness and of coming judgment (John 16:8-11). The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in the life of the believer and gives spiritual gifts, as He chooses, to every believer. These God-given abilities equip us for ministry of edification to and for the church. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:6-8)

While we believe that the Scriptures do not teach that certain gifts have ceased, they indicate that use of the gifts vary according to the need that each gift meets. Joy Bible Fellowship does not encourage the use of "sign gifts." Instead, we seek to emphasize the more excellent way of love ( 1 Corinthians 13) as well as zeal for the more edifying gifts (John 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1: 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-13, 12:19; Galatians 5; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

### 2.4 Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (Psalm 119:97-104, 160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-17) and are infallible in their instruction (Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19), eternal in duration (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament are God's complete and sufficient revelation and therefore carry God's authority for the total well-being of mankind (Exodus 20:1-21; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

## 2.5 Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's willful sin man lost his condition of innocence, lost his spiritual life, and became spiritually dead and alienated from God. Consequently, all mankind is sinful. All people are sinners not only by inheritance, but by their own choice and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man and every woman is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 1:26-27; 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; 1:18-19, 32; 5:1-2).

## 2.6 Salvation

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. Salvation by grace through faith is offered to all men. We believe that each person who by faith receives Jesus as personal Savior is justified, or satisfies God's just penalty for sin on the basis of Jesus Christ's shed blood on Calvary. Each person who receives Christ as personal Savior is born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby becomes eternally secure as a child of God. We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes each believing person into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation and that there is no second baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 3:16-18; Romans 3:22-26; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 5:11-13 Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

## 2.7 Resurrection

We believe in the resurrection of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

## 2.8 Heaven, Hell and the Return of Christ

We believe in the "blessed hope": the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, which will be a literal, physical event. He will return in just the same way as His disciples had seen Him depart. His return has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Acts 1:11). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The saved are raised to be with Jesus in His Father's presence eternally, (Matthew 25:34; John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 2:7) the lost are raised to eternal torment in hell in conscious separation from God. (Matthew 8:11; 10:28; 13:49-50; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 12:5; Revelation 21:8).

## 2.9 The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a created being. Having willfully rebelled against God, he became the author of sin and the cause of the fall of man. He is the openly declared enemy of God and man. His ultimate defeat is assured, and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire with the multitude of his followers.

Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10

## 2.10 Church

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer becomes part of His body, which is the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those throughout the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:16; Matthew 28:18-20). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church - under the oversight of elders and other supportive leadership (Matthew 18:19; Acts 14:23; 16:4; 1 Timothy 5:17-19; Titus 1:5). The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 3:12-15).

## 2.11 Missions

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world (Matthew 28:19-20; 9:37-38; 10:5-7; Acts 13:2-5).

### ISSUES FOR CLARIFICATION

## 2.12 Assimilation and Church Membership

Because the church constitutes God's primary vehicle for working in this age, it is vital that all believers identify with, function in, and submit to the leadership of, a local church (Heb. 13:17). Believers are to edify one another with their spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11), regularly assembling together (Heb. 10:24-25) that they might devote themselves to the teaching of God's Word, fellowship, celebration of the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Because of the emphasis that Scripture puts on this kind of involvement in the local church, our ministries will seek to foster in God's people a deepening love for, and commitment to, the church, as well as a biblical understanding of what it means to function as the church.

## 2.13 Baptism and Communion

We believe that Christian baptism by immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Although baptism is not required for salvation, it is commanded of all believers and is for believers only (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 18:8). Scripture shows that a person was baptized after personally receiving forgiveness of sin by accepting Jesus Christ. The waters of baptism are a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life that happens when a person becomes a new creation in Christ (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-4). Communion is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death and a reminder – through the bread and the cup – of the Savior's broken body and shed blood. Communion is to be a time of confession of sin and should be preceded by careful self-examination (1 Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-16; Luke 22:19-22; Corinthians 10:16-17,21; 11:20-29).

## 2.14 Creation and God's Sovereignty

We believe God created the universe in a literal six days, and that, before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16). God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom and supreme authority. (Isaiah 43:6-7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11)

We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life. (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

We believe God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6).

## 2.15 Salvation and Security

It is God's divine decision to save a person (John 6:37, 44, 65; Romans 8:29-30; 9:11-18; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3) and it is God's kindness, forbearance and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). The Bible also teaches that each person is responsible to embrace or reject Jesus as Savior and Lord and that God welcomes all who come to Him by faith apart from works (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 15:7; 20:9-18; John 6:37; John 7:37; Romans 10:9-13; Acts 16:30-34; 17:30). Both of these two truths – God's sovereignty in salvation and man's decision to embrace Christ – are taught in the Scriptures. Their co-existence is a mystery and is completely understood only

in the mind of our omniscient God. All glory for the salvation of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25).

Those who are born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ persevere in the faith (John 15:4-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; 1 John 4:13; 2 John 1:9). God is faithful to His people, empowering them to persevere in the faith (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:19-20).

We believe that everyone who is born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ is assured of salvation from the moment of conversion (Ephesians 1:13-14). This assurance relies on God's decisive and faithful grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation, but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), and His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16:30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29), having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

## 2.16 Process of Sanctification and Maturity

We believe that every saved person is set apart (sanctified) to God in three ways. First, he is completely sanctified in his positional standing before God, in Christ. Second, progressive sanctification, wherein the Christian is empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to progressively gain victory over the old sin nature. Progressive sanctification is brought about wholly by God's grace as we yield to God's will and conform to His Word. Third, the believer will ultimately be fully sanctified when he shall see the Lord and be "like Him" (John 17:17; Ephesians 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 1 John 3:2-3)

A person committed to a relationship with Christ focuses on a personal walk with Him, worship of Him and work for Him. The maturing Christian will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become complete in Christ. We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2; Colossians 1:28). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church. We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

## 2.17 Worship

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence.

Worship glorifies God through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46) and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12). Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to: - lift high the name of Jesus Christ (John 4:22-26; 12:32; 14:6; Philippians 2:9-11);

- lead God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyric (Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 95:1-2); - prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (Psalm 95:6-9; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42); - pursue

excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3,1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4),

## **2.18 Church Planting Philosophy**

The church exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made and grow in their relationship with Him and likeness to Him. God is glorified as we manifest his presence as we do His work (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31). In seeking to act upon the church's purpose, we recognize the extraordinary value in multiplying the reach of the ministry by planting local churches and by associating with existing local churches. God is glorified when Joy Bible Fellowship and other churches associate with one another in order to foster relationships that edify, protect, encourage and support.

# **Article 3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

## **3.1 Elders**

The elders of the church are the Board of Directors of the Corporation. The elders are responsible before God to fulfill four primary functions in His Church: 1) guarding, 2) oversight, 3) being a godly example, and 4) shepherding. The spiritual authority for leadership and shepherding the flock rests in this body of men.

Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5

### **3.1.1 Appointment of Elders**

Qualified candidates shall first be nominated by a two-thirds vote of the existing elders. Candidates shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the church membership present at the annual business meeting or a special business meeting. The size of the Elder Council shall be recommended to the congregation by the Elder Council as the elders perceive the needs of the church body. The number of lay elders shall always be at least one greater than the number of pastoral staff elders. See article 3.2 for appointment of pastoral staff.

### **3.1.2 Qualifications of Elders**

Elders shall have been members for at least one year and shall, in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications of an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

### **3.1.3 Duties of Elders**

The elders shall be accountable for the oversight of all ministries and matters of the church body, whether spiritual, practical, financial, or governmental. Their duties shall include the design and execution of the church program, approval of funds appropriations, supervision of all sub-organizations, examination of candidates for membership, assisting in the dispensing of the ordinances, and other functions appropriate to their Biblical role as overseers and spiritual shepherds of the church body.

### **3.1.4 Term of Office**

The term of office for elders shall not exceed three years except for pastoral staff elders. When a term of office expires the officer may serve successive terms.

### **3.1.5 Dismissal of Elders**

These officers may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council or by a two-thirds vote of the church membership present at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include improper conduct, differing doctrinally from Article 2, slothfulness, or failure to maintain any of the Biblical qualifications of an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1.5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

## **3.2 Senior Pastor**

### **3.2.1 Qualifications of Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor should be gifted primarily as a preacher/teacher and as a shepherd. Senior Pastor automatically serves as an elder He shall agree with the church's doctrinal statement, as outlined in Article 2 (Doctrinal Statement) of this constitution, and in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications for an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5 :1-3.

### **3.2.2 Duties of Pastor**

The Senior Pastor's primary responsibility shall be to provide spiritual shepherding, oversee the dispensing of the ordinances, be a member of the Elder Council, and prepare and deliver spiritual food which will produce growth and maturity in believers. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Council from the point of his installation. The Pastor shall, when necessary or expedient, act as the Elder Council's representative to coordinate the ministries of the church. He has direct responsibility for worship, shepherding by the elders, preaching, adult education, counseling, and supervision of church office and staff.

### **3.2.3 Selection of Senior Pastor**

Prospective pastoral candidates shall be selected by the Elder Council. Having examined his qualifications, experience, and references, the Elder Council must agree unanimously to present a candidate to the church membership where an 80% affirmative vote of those present at a business meeting will suffice to issue a call to that candidate. Only one candidate may be presented at a time.

### **3.2.4 Resignation and Dismissal of Senior Pastor**

The Pastor may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council and a two-thirds vote of the church membership at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include improper conduct, differing doctrinally from Article 2, slothfulness, evidence that the Lord is no longer blessing his ministry, or failure to maintain any of the Biblical qualifications of an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1.5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

If the Pastor voluntarily resigns, it is requested that at least 60 days notice be given. All resignations must be submitted in writing to the Elder Council for their consideration.

## **3.3 Associate Pastor**

Associate pastors shall be responsible for directing and coordinating their respective programs within the church. They shall preside over their program committee meetings, and secure and supervise personnel necessary to carry out needed functions. The elders may appoint an associate pastor to serve as either an elder or a deacon. If appointed as an elder, an associate pastor shall immediately become a member of the Elder Council, serving in a non-voting capacity for six months. Voting rights as an elder shall then be granted by a two-thirds vote of other elders upon verification of elder qualifications. An associate pastor whose primary responsibility is youth ministry shall be referred to as Youth Pastor.

### **3.3.1 Selection of Associate Pastors**

Associate pastors shall be appointed by the Elder Council and confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a business meeting. After serving six months, his qualifications shall be verified and confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council.

### **3.3.2 Resignation and Dismissal**

These officers may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council or by a two thirds vote of the church membership present at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include any of those listed in section 3.2.4. If an associate pastor voluntarily resigns, it is requested that at least 30 days notice be given.

## **3.4 Deacons**

In Acts 6:1-6 we find that deacons were established when the need arose within that New Testament congregation. The elders knew they should be devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Deacons were appointed to be responsible for other ministry needs that would be a distraction to the elders. Deacons assist the elders by helping to provide oversight in areas such as, Children's Ministries, Discipleship, Outreach, Missions, Mercy, Music, Facilities, Fellowship, Finance, Women's, and Youth Ministries. A pastor or elder may provide direct oversight of any of these ministry areas in lieu of a deacon.

### **3.4.1 Appointment of Deacons**

Qualified candidates shall be appointed by the Elder Council and confirmed by a majority vote of church membership present at a business meeting. The Elder Council shall appoint a head deacon who shall preside over deacon board meetings and to coordinate the various duties to be performed. The elders shall also appoint a Deacon of Finance.

### **3.4.2 Qualifications of Deacons**

Deacons shall have been members for at least one year, and shall, in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications for a Deacon as stated in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Because the deacon's function is one of service and not spiritual authority, either men or women can be appointed

### **3.4.3 Duties of Deacons**

The Deacons shall administer programs of service as delegated to them by the elders (Acts 6:1-6). Coordinators, such as Sunday School Superintendent, may be appointed as required.

### **3.4.4 Deacon of Finance**

A Deacon of Finance shall be appointed to direct the planning, controlling, and reporting of church finances, along with supervising the receiving, counting, depositing, recording, and investing of funds. He shall obtain any information necessary from other deacons to develop fiscal-year church budgets. He shall develop controls to insure adherence to budgets and seek to streamline all financial systems while maintaining sound accounting practices. A minimum of two people shall be present during the counting of money received in offerings.

The Deacon of Finance shall submit the proposed fiscal-year church budget to the Elder Board at least six weeks prior to the annual business meeting. All matters of financial disbursements not covered in the approved church budget must be submitted to the Deacon of Finance. He will examine the financial feasibility of such requests and, with input from the deacons or other committees concerning the practical feasibility, shall present his findings to the Elder Board. A majority vote of the Elder Board shall be final in every case.

### **3.4.5 Term of Office**

The term of office for deacons shall not exceed three years except for pastoral staff elders. When a term of office expires the officer may serve successive terms.

### **3.4.6 Dismissal of Deacons**

A deacon may be dismissed from office by a majority vote of the Elder Council. Grounds for dismissal may include failure to maintain any of the Biblical qualifications of a Deacon as stated in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, or improper conduct.

## **3.5 Coordinators**

### **3.5.1 Appointment**

Coordinators may be appointed to assist a Deacon and may be assigned specific duties normally reserved for that Deacon. Coordinators shall be appointed by a Deacon and then confirmed by a majority vote of the Elder Board.

### **3.5.2 Qualifications**

All coordinators shall be members of good reputation.

### **3.5.3 Term of Service**

The term of service for a coordinator shall be one year, after which he may be reconfirmed.

### **3.5.4 Duties**

Coordinators are responsible for all duties outlined in this constitution and in their job descriptions given by the deacon in their area of ministry.

### **3.5.5 Dismissal**

A coordinator may be dismissed at the discretion of his deacon, after which the dismissal must be reported to the Elder Board.

## **3.6 Teachers**

### **3.6.1 Eligibility**

Teachers are subject to the same eligibility requirements as members; see Article 3.9

### **3.6.2 Appointment**

Teachers shall be appointed by elders, deacons, or their coordinators. Teachers who are not members shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the Elder Council.

## **3.7 Meetings**

### **3.7.1 Prayer at Meetings**

All meetings, regardless of their nature, should include prayer in order to seek the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit in discerning the will of God.

### **3.7.2 Church Business Meetings**

Notification of all church business meetings shall be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Twenty-five percent of the church membership shall constitute a quorum. Only members eighteen years of age and older shall be eligible to vote on any appointments or referendums at a business meeting. A simple majority of eligible voters present shall be required to decide any issue, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. All votes on appointments or referendums shall be cast by secret ballot.

### **3.7.3 Annual Business Meeting**

The annual business meeting should be held during the month of March. All business proposals must be presented through the Elder Council and placed on the agenda two weeks prior to the annual meeting. This meeting shall include: a review and acceptance of the minutes of the previous annual meeting, a review of the new annual report and other necessary business, approval of elders and/or deacons, and confirmation of the fiscal-year church budget. Changes to the budget during the year shall be proposed in accordance with Article 3.4.4 paragraph 2 (Deacon of Finance) and confirmed by the congregation at a Special Business Meeting.

### **3.7.4 Special Business Meetings**

Special church business meetings may be called by a majority vote of the Elder Council, or if petitioned in writing by over 50% of the church members eighteen years of age and older.

### **3.7.5 Elder Council Meetings**

The Elder Council shall meet at least once each month. A head elder (President) and an alternate (Vice President) shall be appointed each year. The Head Elder will serve as President of the corporation, and will preside at meetings of the Elder Council. He is responsible for coordinating bylaw revisions, nominations, annual meetings, and leadership conferences. The alternate (vice president) assists the Head Elder with these duties. Two thirds of the elders must be present to constitute a quorum. Additional meetings may be called, as required, by the Head Elder or his alternate. All decisions shall be by majority vote unless otherwise specified in these bylaws.

The Elder Council shall appoint an elder or deacon to be Church Clerk. He will serve as the Secretary of the Corporation and shall keep a proper record of all congregational business meetings and Elder Council meetings. He is responsible for conducting necessary correspondence, and maintaining custody of all vital papers and documents of the church. His appointment shall be for one year.

The Council of Elders may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the telephone meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.

The Council of Elders may conduct business and vote by e-mail if all the elders consent to conduct business in such a manner. In the event business is conducted by e-mail, then copies of all e-mails shall constitute the minutes of any such business, and shall be placed in the record of minutes.

## **3.8 Church Employees**

### **3.8.1 Other Paid Positions**

Certain paid positions may be established by the Elder Council as deemed necessary. Candidates shall be submitted to the congregation along with a job description. They shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting.

### **3.8.2 Resignations and Dismissals**

Any employees who resign are requested to give at least two weeks notice. Dismissal of these employees shall be by action of the Elder Council.

## **3.9 Membership**

### **3.9.1 Eligibility**

To be eligible for membership a person must be able to give assurance of having received Jesus Christ as his personal savior, be willing to abide by the bylaws of this church, be in agreement with our essential doctrines in Article 2 (The Essentials) and not teach contrary to any of our doctrines as outlined in Article 2 (Doctrine).

### **3.9.2 Approval**

A person must be approved for membership by the Elder Council, and be accepted by the congregation at one of its public meetings upon recommendation of the Elder Council. The congregation shall be notified two weeks prior to the candidate's acceptance. Any questions from the congregation concerning the eligibility of candidates for membership should be made known to the Elder Council during this two-week interim.

### **3.9.3 Responsibility of the Believer**

Members should recognize that believers in Jesus Christ are responsible to God to worship and fellowship regularly with the local church body, as well as other Biblical responsibilities such as regular prayer, Bible study, witnessing, giving, exercising spiritual gifts, etc., for the edification of the body of Christ.

### **3.9.4 Discipline**

The authority for all church discipline shall be vested in the Elder Council.

### **3.9.5 Dismissal**

A person may be dismissed from membership as disciplinary action for improper conduct. Dismissals of this type require a majority vote of the church membership present at a business meeting.

### **3.9.6 Removal from Membership Roll**

Members' names may be removed from the roll after a one-year absence if they have not notified the church of their desire to continue membership.

## **3.10 Ceremonies**

### **3.10.1 Ceremonies and Activities**

Joy Bible Fellowship reserves the right to oversee the performance of all ceremonies and activities involving members and non-members, as well as the use of church facilities for these events. These events, such as marriages, ordinations, dedications, funerals, installations, memorials, membership acceptances, etc., and all informal activities shall not be in violation of Biblical imperatives. The church property and premises shall also be used in a manner consistent with scriptural guidelines.

### **3.10.2 Ordination**

This church may give its endorsement, through ordination, to men called by God into the ministry.

## **3.11 Amendments to the Bylaws**

### **3.11.1 Method of Amendment**

Proposals to amend these bylaws may be initiated by the submission of a rough draft of the proposed amendment by any member to the Elder Council. A three-fourths affirmative vote of the elders is required to present the proposal for congregational approval.

### 3.11.2 Approval of Amendment

The proposed amendment, in final draft wording, must be made available to the congregation by the Elder Council two weeks prior to the date of the business meeting along with an explanation of the need for the change. A two-third affirmative vote of the members present who are age 18 years or older at the business meeting is then required for approval.

### 3.12 Dissolution

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered. No Substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these bylaws, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) BY A CORPORATION EXEMPT FROM Federal Income Tax under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.)

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payments of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purpose of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or such organization or organizations as said Court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.