

Faith Community Church

CHURCH DOCUMENTS



Exalting Christ as Lord

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Our Confession of Faith

Section 1

Our Confession of Faith

Article 1: We believe that Scripture, consisting of the 66 books of the Bible, is inspired by God and is infallible, inerrant, and absolutely authoritative over all of life and faith.

Article 2: We believe in God the Sovereign Creator who is the Sustainer and Ruler over heaven and earth. We believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who is infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, omnipotent, omniscient, and righteous in all His ways.

Article 3: We believe that God exists eternally in three Persons, being one in substance and power, equal in glory as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Article 4: We believe in the Holy Spirit who possesses all the fullness of deity as a distinct Person of the Godhead. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers, and seals us unto the day of our redemption.

Article 5: We believe in Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, fully God and fully Man. We believe that in Him all the fullness of God dwells, for all things were created through Him and for Him.

Article 6: We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. As the perfect Lamb of God, He was crucified for our sins, He was buried, and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Article 7: We believe that Jesus Christ, having accomplished our redemption through His death and resurrection, has sat down at the right hand of God, and is appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.

Article 8: We believe that man, created in the image and likeness of God, is distinct from and over all creation. We believe that all human life is formed in the womb by God, is sacred, and should be upheld with dignity and respect.

- Article 9: We believe that God created male and female, who are equal in dignity, essence, and value, but distinct in their role and responsibility in the home and church. We believe that marriage is an institution created and sanctioned by God in which one man and one woman are joined together in a one-flesh union.
- Article 10: We believe that in Adam's disobedience all men are universally sinful by nature and in practice. We believe that according to divine declaration there is no one who understands, or who seeks after God, and no one who does good. All are alienated from God under His wrath and condemnation.
- Article 11: We believe that in salvation God has sovereignly determined to have mercy on those whom He has chosen. These He has saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, having been chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and drawn by the Holy Spirit. We believe that a person is justified through faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone.
- Article 12: We believe that all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, set apart for good works, and sealed until the day of glory.
- Article 13: We believe that all the redeemed have been placed by God into the Church, the body of Christ, for worship, exhortation, fellowship and service for the purpose of building up one another in the faith.
- Article 14: We believe that the Church, which is called the pillar and support of the truth, is to preach God's word faithfully in season and out of season.
- Article 15: We believe that the Church is to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord over all. We believe that we have been commanded to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded.
- Article 16: We believe that Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, will one day return to judge the living and the dead. We believe that there will be a bodily resurrection of the wicked to eternal damnation and of the just to eternal life.

Statement of Faith

Section 2

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Faith Community Church

I. The Word of God

We believe the canon of Scripture, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Bible, to be the complete and revealed Word of God. We believe the Bible to be wholly sufficient as the final authority for the church, the rule of life to the believer, and the standard by which everything must be measured. We believe the Scripture, in all of its parts, were given by the inspiration of God and are without error in the original autographs .

Matt. 5:18, 24:35; John. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21

II. God

We believe there is only one living and true God, who is infinite in being, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, and immutable, Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will for His own glory, and Who is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. He is most loving, gracious, merciful, and long-suffering. We believe in the unity of the Godhead, eternally existing as three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19; 1 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6

A. God the Father

We believe the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father, is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He is the supreme and the only Sovereign of the universe and His sovereign decree extends to all the acts of men. He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. We believe all things have been purposed for His glory. Though He is Creator of all, He is Father only to those who have believed in His Son. We believe that God, being rich in mercy, chose before the foundations of the world those who would be recipients of His grace and predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son. We believe that He saves from sin all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ and whoever comes He will not cast out.

Gen. 1:1-31; Psalm 33:9-11, 115:3; John 15:16; Rom. 8:14-29; Eph. 1:4-11, 3:9, 4:6; 1 Tim. 6:15; John 6:37-44

B. God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and as the second Person of the Trinity is equal with God. We believe that all things were created by Him, through Him, for Him, and in Him all things consist. We believe that at the incarnation Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe that He lived a sinless perfect life here on this earth. We believe that Jesus Christ, as the perfect Lamb of God, accomplished our redemption through His death upon the cross and that today Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest where He intercedes for us as our Advocate.

Mic. 5:2; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9; Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Luke 1:26-35; Isa. 53; John 1:1; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Luke 24:38-39; Heb. 7:25, 9:24; 1 John 2:1-2; Col. 1:16-18

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity, is a distinct Person possessing all the attributes of personality and deity. He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in creation. We believe it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to carry out the will of the Father and the Son. We believe the Holy Spirit's work is to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration to those who are saved. We believe the Holy Spirit immediately indwells each believer at conversion and seals them until the day of redemption. He is the guarantee of the completed work of the Son and decree of the Father. We believe the Holy Scriptures came not by the will of man, but by the Holy Spirit, who moved men to write the words of God, and that it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach believers the Word of God and guide them into all truth.

1 Cor. 2:10-13; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 13; Heb. 10:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; John 16:7-9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13

III. Man

We believe that all men by nature and choice are sinful and lost. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God became a sinful creature and incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death for all mankind. We believe man is universally sinful in nature and practice, as well as by divine declaration; thus alienated from the life and family of God and under the righteous judgment and wrath of God. We believe that men are born spiritually dead and are utterly unable to choose or to do that which is acceptable to God. We believe that the natural man will never seek after God, is enslaved to sin, and is completely blinded to spiritual things.

Gen. 1:26-27, 2:7; Jas. 3:9; Psalm 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10, 22-23, 5:12; 1 Cor. 1:18, 2:14

IV. Salvation

We believe salvation is a complete act of God involving each person of the Trinity. The Father chooses, the Son redeems, and the Spirit regenerates. We believe salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It is the free-gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or effort of man, but rather, it was entirely secured by the vicarious death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit who quickens the heart of man, thereby enabling him to respond in faith to God's offer of salvation. We believe that those who have experienced the new birth in Christ will demonstrate good works as evidence of genuine salvation. We believe that in salvation man is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, set apart for good works, and sealed until the day of his ultimate glorification in the presence of Jesus Christ.

John 1:12, 3:16; Acts 16:31; Eph. 1:4-11, 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:5-6; Jam. 2:15-26; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 3:20-26, 8:33

V. Security of the Believer

We believe that all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. We believe in an infallible assurance of faith, which is founded upon God's eternal decree and divine truth of the promise of salvation, through inward evidence of saving grace and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

John 5:24, 6:37-50, 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 16, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 John 3:24, 4:13

VI. The Church

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its only scriptural officers are elders (pastors) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

1 Cor. 1:1-3; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11, 8:1, 11:21-23; 1 Cor. 4:17, 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 5:12-13, 11:2; 2 Thes. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-24; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:6; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 28:20; John 14:15, 15:12; 1 John 14:21; 1 Thes. 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23, 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1

A. Gifts

We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of His gifts upon the members of the body and that each and every believer has been given certain spiritual gifts that are to be exercised in the church for the edification and growth of the body. We believe that the gifts of tongues, sign miracles, and healings gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority established. We believe that the Word of God is the sole test for the authenticity of a man's message today, negating the need for such gifts. We believe that no one today possesses those gifts. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will for the sick and the afflicted.

Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-14; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; Jas. 5:14-16

B. Leadership

We believe that Jesus Christ is the one supreme authority for the church. We believe that Christ has ordained the offices of elder and deacon as instruments of leadership and oversight in the local church.

Col. 1:17-18; Eph. 1:22-23, 4:11; Phil. 1:1; Acts 6:1-8, 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5

1. Elders We believe God has ordained the office of elder (also termed pastor, pastor-teacher, overseer, and shepherd) as the spiritual overseers over the flock. We believe they are to be submitted to as ones who must give an account for the souls entrusted to their care. We believe that elders must meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture and that they

should be gifted in such a manner as to provide spiritual oversight and attend primarily to the ministry of the Word of God and prayer.

Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17

2. Deacons We believe that God has ordained the office of deacon to oversee the ministry of the physical needs of the body and the day-to-day operations of the church. We believe they are to serve as co-laborers with the elders in the work of the ministry and be gifted in such a manner as to provide wisdom and mercy in attending to the ministry of the needs of the flock. We believe that these men must meet the qualifications of the office as set forth in Scripture.

Acts 6:1-15; 1 Tim 3:8-13

C. Ordinances

We believe that the two ordinances ordained by Jesus Christ to His church are baptism and communion.

Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19

1. **Baptism** We believe water baptism is an act of obedience to the command of our Lord that demonstrates to all the inward act of conversion. We believe it identifies one with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We practice Christian baptism by immersion as a solemn testimony of the believer. We believe baptism must only be administered to those who have experienced the new birth, but never as a condition for new birth.

Acts 2:37-42, 8:34-38; Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 2:8-9

2. **Communion** We believe that the Lord's Supper is to be administered to the church as a celebration and memorial of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ until He returns. We believe that the wine and the bread are only representations of the body and blood of Christ and are in no manner a means of saving grace. We believe communion is to be practiced only by believers after solemn self-examination and confession.

1 Cor. 11:28-32; Mark 14:22-25

VII. Angels

We believe that angels are created beings of God. They are spirit beings without the power to reproduce. They have great power and are innumerable. We believe they were created to serve and worship God.

Heb. 1:14, 12:22

We believe that Satan (Lucifer) was the most beautiful and powerful of all the angels. However, he fell through pride and unlawful ambition and rebelled against God. Now, depraved in character, he became the leader of a large host of evil angels (called demons) who followed him in his fall from heaven. Satan is responsible for introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve. He is the enemy of God and man, but is doomed to defeat through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire.

Isa. 14:12-15; Rev. 12:9; Gen. 3:1-15; 2 Pet. 2:4

We believe that the angels that did not rebel against God are now fixed in their state of holiness. They are called the elect, holy angels of God who now serve Him and bring glory to God. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation.

Psalms 91:11; 1 Tim. 5:21; Heb. 1:14

VIII. Eschatology

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20, 13:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thes. 4:13-18, 5:1-11; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-58; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29, 6:40, 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:49, 13:37-43, 24:30-31, 25:31-46; Rev. 22:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thes. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28, 4:17; 2 Pet. 3:11-12

Constitution

Section 3

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ARTICLE I

Location of Offices

The name of this corporation is Faith Community Church. It is a Missouri non-profit religious corporation with the principal offices in Platte County, Missouri.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

This corporation is organized expressly and exclusively for religious purposes. The purpose of this church shall be to preach Jesus Christ and the Gospel by a true and faithful ministry of the Word of God so that He might be the hope and praise of every man, for the honor, glory and praise of God alone. This shall include the proclaiming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all men as the sole means of salvation, and teaching the Bible as the inerrant Word of God for the instruction and edification of the body of Christ.

ARTICLE III

Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith of this corporation is that which is found in the "Statement of Faith" document attached to this constitution.

ARTICLE IV

Corporate Membership

Section 1. Corporate Members

The corporation shall have no members. Any action, which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members, shall only require approval of the Board of Elders. All rights that would otherwise vest in the members shall vest in the Board of Elders. They shall serve as the directors of the corporation and as the legal officers of the church and as the governing authority in all spiritual and business matters pertaining to the church.

Section 2. Members of the Fellowship

Nothing contained in Section 1 of this article shall be construed to limit the right of the corporation to refer to persons associated with the corporation as "members" even though such persons are not corporate members and no such reference in or outside of these bylaws shall constitute anyone being a member. The corporation may confer by amendment of its articles or of these bylaws some or all of the rights of a member upon any person or persons who do not have the right to vote for the election of officers or on a disposition of substantially all of the assets of the corporation or on a merger or on a dissolution or on changes to the corporation's articles or bylaws.

ARTICLE V

Church Membership

Section 1. Purpose of the Fellowship

The congregation of Christian believers who have applied for membership and have been duly accepted shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation at Article 8, and in Article II of these bylaws.

Section 2. Active Membership

Active membership in Faith Community Church shall be open to all persons who confess Christ as their Lord and Savior, having been baptized by immersion as a believer, and agree in writing with the Statement of Faith and bylaws of the church.

Section 3. Voting Privileges

Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the corporation, but shall only entitle the member to vote at a meeting of the members on those matters that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for affirmation. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action, and who have passed their eighteenth (18th) birthday. Membership shall not be assignable *inter vivos* by any member nor shall membership vest to any personal representative, heir, or devisee.

Section 4. Applications for Membership

All requests for membership shall be made to the board of elders . Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the Statement of Faith, the Confession of Faith, and a copy of the constitution. At least two of the elders shall meet with the applicant following receipt of the application. Each applicant must adhere to general agreement to the Statement of Faith and the Confession of Faith, subscribe to the constitution, and shall offer a written assent to the same before a duly appointed committee of the Elder Board at a regularly held meeting. Any disagreement with aforementioned documents must be stated in written form.

Section 5. Denial of Membership

If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the Board of Elders determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, does not properly understand the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, has not consented to baptism, or if there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, or if there is a substantial disagreement with the Statement of Faith, Confession of Faith, or Constitution, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the board shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

Section 6. Admission of Applicants

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the Board of Elders, at which service such applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as members.

Section 7. Responsibilities of Members

Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body and shall submit to the loving rule of the elders.

Section 8. Church Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders (or a duly appointed committee of the board at the sole discretion of the board). If the Board of Elders (or a duly appointed committee of the board at the sole discretion of the board) determines—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Timothy 5:19, and Titus 3:10—that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the elders shall inform the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders (or a duly appointed committee of the board), then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members, who are under discipline by the church as defined in the previous paragraph, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

Section 9. Removal from Roll

Active church membership shall be maintained through regular participation in worship services of the church. A member of this church who shall willfully, without plausible reason or excuse, absent himself from the services of this church for a period of one (1) year shall be removable at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

Section 10. Regular Meetings

A regular Annual Meeting of the church members shall be held at the principal office of the church (as the same shall be from time to time designated in the minutes of the board) no later than February of each year. At such regular Annual Meeting, the members shall consider reports of the affairs of the corporation, and transact such other business as the elders determine shall be brought before the meeting including, but not limited to, the affirmation of those selected to serve in the office of elder and/or deacon.

Section 11. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by a quorum of the members of the Board of Elders.

Section 12. Notice of Meetings

Notice of regular meetings shall be posted in the church bulletin or given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall also be published in the regular church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting. Emergency meetings may be called by a consensus of the elder board with a 24-hour notice being issued by email.

Section 13. Quorum

At all meetings of the members, whether regular, special, or adjourned, the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 14. Voting Rights

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the corporation, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of the corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal. Said property of the corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE VI

Elders

Section 1. Powers

Subject to the limitations of the articles and these bylaws and of pertinent restrictions of the Corporation Code of the State of Missouri, all the activities and affairs of the corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to these same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the board shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated by these bylaws:

- (A) To select and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, deacons, staff, and employees of the corporation; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- (B) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the corporation as are required to fulfill the purposes of this corporation as are more fully set out in the Articles of Incorporation, thereof and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the corporation and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these bylaws, as they may deem best. The elders shall have the right to acquire, either by gift or purchase, and to hold, own, sell, mortgage, or encumber in any manner, lease, and improve real estate and personal property.
- (C) To adopt, make and use a corporate seal, and to alter the form of such seal from time to time as they may deem best.
- (D) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of this corporation.
- (E) To administrate the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- (F) To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of the corporation and to cause to be executed and delivered, in the corporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities.
- (G) To carry on a business and apply any such profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage.

Section 2. Number of Elders

The authorized number of elders shall be determined by the Board of Elders according to need and availability of qualified candidates. They shall serve as directors of the corporation, and may appoint other non-elders to serve as directors in the absence of a sufficient number of directors needed as required by the state laws of incorporation.

Section 3. Nomination, Selection, and Tenure of Office

Members of the Board of Elders shall each be vested with equal authority to govern.

- (A) Recommendations to fill or add to the Board of Elders shall be proposed by any member of the Elder Board. If the candidate is recommended with general unanimity by the board, the name(s) will be submitted to the church membership for affirmation at the annual meeting or a special meeting called by the Board of Elders. The board shall publicly post the name(s) of the candidate(s) for elder at least 3 weeks prior to a meeting of the church membership. A 2/3 majority vote is needed for affirmation. Elders who are affirmed shall assume office immediately and serve for an indefinite period of time. The board may choose to compensate, amend, or terminate compensation of an elder at its discretion.

- (B) The Elder Board may, at its discretion, establish internships to assist and/or train for the work of the ministry. These positions may be compensated or uncompensated. Interns may meet with the board at the board's discretion. Interns will not have the right to vote or affect the policy of the board. Compensation deemed reasonable or desirable for an intern shall be established by the board. The Elder Board reserves the right to dismiss an intern at any given notice. Compensated interns will receive two weeks compensation in the event of dismissal.

Section 4 Preaching Pastor.

The preaching pastor shall be selected by the board and confirmed by the members of the church at its Annual Meeting or at a special members' meeting, and such confirmation shall be constituted by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of all the votes cast. He shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: The elders reserve the right to dismiss the preaching pastor upon giving him one month's written notice of its intention to dismiss. The preaching pastor must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a preaching pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the preaching pastor and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise. The preaching pastor, serving as a member of the Elder Board, is an *ex officio* member of all councils and committees and shall be responsible to the Board of Elders.

Section 5. Qualifications

An elder must be a qualified, baptized, male member of Faith Community Church. He must evidence the qualifications prescribed for that office in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Pet. 5:1-4. Further, an elder must affirm the church documents of Faith Community Church including the Statement of Faith, the Confession of Faith, and the Constitution. In addition, an elder must affirm the following four statements: The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, The Nashville Statement on Biblical Sexuality, and the Dallas Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel. Any objections to the aforementioned documents/statements must be supplied to the Elder Board in written form for consideration. The Elder Board shall be responsible to thoroughly investigate the proposed candidate for this office to ensure the church that he meets all of these qualifications.

Section 6. Vacancies

Any elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the chairman of the board or the secretary of the board, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of such resignation. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected before that time. A vacancy or vacancies in the board shall be deemed to exist in case of the death, resignation, or removal of any elder.

Section 7. Removal of Elders

Any elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the board if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the elders (or a duly appointed committee of the board at the sole discretion of the board), in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matt. 18:15-18 and 1 Tim. 5:19. When an elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Tim. 5:20.

Section 8. Place of Meetings

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary provided in these bylaws, any meeting (whether regular, special, or adjourned) of the Board of Elders of the corporation may be held at any place within or without the state of Missouri.

Section 9. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the board shall be held as called or given notice.

Section 10. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called at any time by order of the chairman or vice-chairman or the secretary of the Board of Elders or by a quorum of the members of the Board of Elders.

Section 11. Notice of Special Meetings

Special meetings of the board shall be held upon a forty-eight-hour notice given personally or by telephone or other similar means of communication. Any such notice shall be addressed or delivered to each elder or at such elder's address as it is shown upon the records of the corporation or as may have been given to the corporation by the elder for such purpose of notice. Emergency meetings may be called in shorter order by a consensus of the elder board.

Section 12. Quorum

Except as otherwise provided herein, a majority of the elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum except when a vacancy or vacancies prevents such majority, whereupon a majority of the elders in office shall constitute a quorum, provided such majority shall constitute either one-third of the authorized number of elders or at least two elders, whichever is larger, or unless the authorized number of elders is only one. A majority of the elders present, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn any meeting to another time and place. Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a pastor, or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the members of the board.

Section 13. Participation in Meetings by Conference Telephone

Members of the board may participate in a meeting through use of conference telephone, email or similar communications equipment, so long as all members participating in such meeting can communicate with one another.

Section 14. Adjournment

A majority of the elders present, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn any elders' meeting to another time and place. Notice of the time and place of holding an adjourned meeting need not be given to absent elders if the time and place be fixed at the meeting adjourned, except as provided in the next sentence. If the meeting is adjourned for more than forty-eight (48) hours, notice of any adjournment to another time or place shall be given prior to the time of the adjourned meeting to the elders who were not present at the time of the adjournment.

Section 15. Action without Meeting

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the board may be taken without a meeting if a majority of all members of the board shall individually or collectively consent. The action will be included in the minutes of the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Section 16. Rights of Inspection

Every elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records, and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the corporation of which such person is an elder, for a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as an elder.

Section 17. Fees and Compensation

Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Faith Community Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation. The amount of any compensation, salary, or benefits shall be the sole responsibility of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VII

Deacons, Councils and Committees

Section 1. Deacons

- (A) The deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-13. The deacons shall be devoted to caring for the physical needs of the saints. Further, the deacons may be called upon to assist at communion and baptismal services and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. A deacon shall be a man of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach.
- (B) Candidates for deacon shall be recommended to the Elder Board by any elder after consultation with the sitting Deacon Board. Any member of the church may make recommendations to the Elder Board or Deacon Board. After consulting with the Deacon Board, the elder making the recommendation will nominate a candidate to the Elder Board for approval. The Elder Board reserves the right to approve, disapprove, or add to the list of recommended candidates. The names of the candidates approved by the Elder Board shall be published not less than three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting of the church members or a special members meeting. To be affirmed, a candidate must receive a 2/3 vote of affirmation from the congregation. Deacons who are affirmed shall assume office immediately and shall serve for an indefinite period of time. The Deacon Board shall be subject to an annual review by the Elder Board.
- (C) Any deacon may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the board if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified after thorough corroborating investigation by the elders (or duly appointed committee of the board at the sole discretion of the board), in accordance with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scriptures.

Section 2. Councils and Committees

To promote efficient handling of board matters, the Elder Board may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the board. All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the board. Each member of the Elder Board is an ex officio member of all councils and committees.

The general functions of councils and committees are:

- (A) To bring considered recommendations to the board concerning ministries.
- (B) To provide a wider base of counsel to the elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

ARTICLE VIII

Officers

Section 1. Officers

The officers of the corporation shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Elders. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign, be removed, or become otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his successor shall be elected and qualified.

Section 2. Subordinate Officers

The Board of Elders may appoint, and may empower the chairman to appoint, such other officers as the business of the corporation may require, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in the bylaws or as the Board of Elders may from time to time determine.

Section 3. Vacancies

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the bylaws for regular election or appointment to such office, provided that such vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis.

Section 4. Inability to Act

In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer of the corporation and of any person herein authorized to act in his place, the Board of Elders may from time to time delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any other officer or other person whom the board may select.

Section 5. The Chairman

The chairman shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the corporation and shall, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, have general supervision, direction, and control of the activities and officers of the corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Elders, which are to be conducted according to the scriptural principles such as set forth in Phil. 2:2-8. He shall be an ex officio member of all the standing committees, if any, and shall have powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders or the bylaws.

Section 6. Vice-Chairman

In the absence or disability of the chairman, the vice-chairman shall perform all the duties of the chairman, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the chairman. The vice-chairman shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed for him by the Board of Elders or the bylaws.

Section 7. Secretary

The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, a book of minutes at the principal office or such other place as the Board of Elders may order, of all meetings of the members, the board and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at the meetings, the board and committees' meetings, and the proceedings thereof. The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office in the state of Missouri the original and a copy of the corporation's articles and bylaws, as amended to date. The secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the board and any committees thereof required by these bylaws or by law to be given, shall keep the seal of the corporation in safe custody, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as prescribed by the board. The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the corporation, a church membership register, or a duplicated membership register, showing the names of the members and their addresses.

Section 8. Treasurer

The treasurer shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the corporation, "taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration ... for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:20-21). He shall select "men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3) to implement and accomplish this responsibility. The treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any elder. The treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Elders. He shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the corporation as may be ordered by the Board of Elders, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the chairman and the elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of the corporation, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders. He shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports at each regular board meeting and at the Annual Meeting of members.

ARTICLE IX

Ordination, Licensing, and Commissioning

Section 1. Ordination

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the Board of Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

Section 2. Licensing

The license is issued by the Board of Elders and is given in recognition of a man's call to that ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church. Licenses will be evaluated and issued on a yearly basis.

Section 3. Commissioning

When local-church certification is required for ministry where ordination would be unnecessary or inappropriate, a person is commissioned by the Board of Elders to minister. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains in effect and as long as the person maintains the qualifications for ministry.

ARTICLE X

Settlement of Disputes

Section 1. General

In any dispute arising between church members, elders, deacons, or staff pertaining to any matter of spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Board of Elders of the church (or a duly appointed committee of the board). A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another before himself and striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3).

ARTICLE XI

Other Provisions

Section 1. Endorsement of Documents, Contracts

The Board of Elders, except as in the bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the Board of Elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the corporation by any contract or agreement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount. Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, contract,

conveyance, or other instrument in writing and any assignment or endorsement thereof executed or entered into between this corporation and any other person, when signed jointly by the chairman or vice-chairman, and the secretary and the treasurer of this corporation shall be valid and binding on this corporation in the absence of actual knowledge on the part of the other person that the signing officers had no authority to execute the same.

Section 2. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended and new and additional bylaws may be made from time to time at any time by the Board of Elders in the exercise of the power granted to said Board of Elders in these bylaws.

Section 3. Record of Amendments

Whenever an amendment or new bylaw is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original bylaws, in the appropriate place. If any bylaw is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in said book.

ARTICLE XII

Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds

Section 1.

The corporation shall receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the corporation was formed (as shown by the Articles of Incorporation). However, nothing contained herein shall require the Board of Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine in its discretion that receipt of such money or property is contrary to the expressed purposes of the corporation as shown by said articles.

Section 2.

The corporation shall hold, manage, and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the expressed purposes of this corporation.

ARTICLE XIII

Corporate Records and Reports

Section 1. Records

The corporation shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business in the state of Missouri, as fixed by the Board of Elders from time to time.

Section 2. Inspection of Books and Records

Every elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind, and the physical properties of the corporation, and also of its subsidiary organizations, if any.

Section 3. Fiscal Year of the Corporation

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year, beginning on the first day of January and ending on the last day of December.

ARTICLE XIV

Dissolution

Upon dissolution of this corporation, the Board of Elders shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to another corporation with purposes similar to that identified in Article II of these bylaws and Article 7 of the Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE XV

Miscellaneous Provisions

Section 1. Instruments in Writing

All checks, drafts, demands for money and notes of the corporation, and all written contracts of the corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, as the Board of Elders may from time to time by resolution designate.

ARTICLE XVI

Marriage and Sexuality

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

Section 1. Marriage Policy

Our statement of faith expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. As such, this local church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution and must be in agreement with our statement on marriage and sexuality. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically

and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations will be made by the Elder Board of Faith Community Church. Either the bride or the groom must be a member in good standing of Faith Community Church.

No person shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

Section 2. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that God created both male and female and that every image bearer is responsible to live their life according to the biological nature in which they were created. Any attempt to claim an identity contrary to one's biology at the chromosomal level is rebellion against God and His good design.

We believe that marriage is an institution that was created and sanctioned by God. Therefore, the only authoritative definition of "marriage" comes from God's Word. Marriage, according to the Scripture is the covenantal joining of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive one-flesh union. The ultimate purpose of this union is to be a representative of the covenantal relationship between Christ and His Church.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman within the confines of the covenant of marriage. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage.

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

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

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

ARTICLE XVII

Statement on Women in Ministry

We believe that God created both men and women in His image with equal dignity and value but with distinctions in their roles. These distinctions are part of God's good design and are to be celebrated and embraced. In marriage God has uniquely designed men to lead and women to be helpmeets to their husbands. This structure does not imply inferiority but order. Likewise, in the church God has called only qualified men to lead and shepherd His flock as under-shepherds of Jesus Christ. According to the Apostle Paul, women are not to teach or have authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:12). This prohibition by God upon women is not punitive but protective as it frees women from bearing burdens they were not designed to bear.

This in no way implies that women do not participate in the life of the church or the advancement of the gospel. The Bible is full of examples of ways God has used women in His redemptive purposes. In fact, all believers, men and women alike, are called to be faithful proclaimers of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world (Eph 4:12; 1 Pet 2:9) and are to give themselves to loving, encouraging, and strengthening members of the body. Single women are uniquely gifted with the opportunity to devote themselves more fully to these purposes.

However, in God's good design, a woman's (specifically married women) primary ministry is to her home. God has entrusted her with the responsibility of being a support to her husband, a caretaker of the home, and with the high call of rearing her children in such a manner as to pass on the faith as an inheritance to the next generation (2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-15). Further, women have the responsibility to minister to one another for the encouragement of faithfulness in these roles that God has given them. The primary place this is found is in Titus 2:3-5:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

In keeping with God's designed purposes for women, in the life of FCC women are not to hold office nor assume any formal position of "Bible Teacher" or preacher. Further, we believe that the only time in which the Body is to be segregated on the Lord's Day is for the purposes of addressing issues that pertain uniquely to God's design for the sexes. Any women's classes held on Sunday mornings will be in keeping with these purposes. Beyond that, we encourage women to meet with one another to talk about and learn from the Bible. We believe that women may facilitate studies for each other from materials written by trusted authors. At FCC we are committed to biblical literacy for both men and women in the church.

ARTICLE XVIII

Statement on the Practice of Head Coverings in the Church

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of the use of head coverings for believing women in the gathered assembly of the local church. The practice itself comes from an understanding that 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is addressing a uniquely Christian custom, prescribed by the apostles of Christ, that is universal in its application for all Christians in all cultures in all times. Those who hold this position have varying views as to the particulars of how this is to be observed faithfully. Differences in the type of head covering, the purpose of the head covering, the times in which a head covering must be worn, and exactly who should wear them (married women, single women, young girls, etc.), are all discussions that take place among those who observe this practice in some form. But the uniting factor among them is that 1 Corinthians 11 is a prescriptive text for what is appropriate attire for Christian women during worship in the gathered assembly.

We applaud this desire to be obedient in all things, even in practices that go against the cultural grain of our time. Every Christian should make it their aim to submit themselves to all that Christ commands of us (Matthew 28:20) and to live their lives according to a conscience that is informed by Scripture (Romans 14:23). To that end, we encourage those who are convinced of Scripture that this is a universal practice to obey their consciences and live out their faith before God.

However, our position as a church is that 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is not a prescriptive text for the practice of head coverings for worship in the local assembly. Rather, we believe that careful exegesis of this passage shows that the principle issue at stake is the maintaining of the distinctions between the sexes in keeping with God's creational design. The prohibition against the removal of head coverings was an application of this principle rooted in cultural norms. We do not believe, as it is claimed, that Paul was arguing for a principle of head coverings that is rooted in creational order. Such an argument would create all kinds of conundrums in Biblical history (e.g. Eve's nakedness and the priestly turban worn by Aaron). Rather, the principle that is rooted in creational order is the distinction of the sexes reflected in the home, church, and even in societal norms. Paul's entire rebuke was addressing the question raised by the Corinthians who were trying to flatten the distinctions by asking if their women may remove their head coverings and pray and prophesy like a man. The rhetorical and obvious answer was 'no' (1 Corinthians 11:13 & 16). To do so was to upend the wisdom of God's design most clearly on display among His people in His church. Therefore, the principle at stake was not head coverings themselves, which was a cultural expression that distinguished the sexes, but forsaking the very differences between men and women as designed by God and reflected in cultural norms. No culture has better demonstrated the chaos, confusion, and destruction of attempting to eliminate these distinctions than our own.

The appropriate response and application to this passage is not the resurrection of a cultural practice that is now foreign to our own (much like the washing of feet or greeting with a kiss), but rather it is to embrace who God made us to be as male and female. Men are to embrace masculinity. Women are to embrace femininity. And those distinctions are to be reflected in our behavior, speech, roles, and, yes, even our appearances. All who love Christ should strive to live in such a way that reflects God's design to the world around them. This especially includes embracing the roles and authority of the home and the

church as designed by God (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 11:1-5; 1 Timothy 2:11; Titus 2:3-5) and doing nothing in our cultural expressions that would undermine such distinctions. God's wisdom is on display in this creational design even to the angels (1 Corinthians 11:10).

For these reasons, we will therefore *not* require the wearing of head coverings for participation in worship. However, we will honor those who choose to participate in this practice due to their conscience on the matter. This, we believe, is a matter best handled by all believers according to the principles of Romans 14: "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (v5) and "The faith that you have keep between yourself and God" (v22). In other words, while this is a matter of dispute and difference among us, it should not divide us.

To that end, in the spirit of Romans 14, we would encourage all to refrain from active proselytizing on this issue among our body. Our unity as believers is not settled or rooted in head coverings, or liturgy preferences, or participation in certain foods or drink, or any other disputable matter. Our unity is rooted and settled in the Gospel. Our unity is in the truth that we have a Savior who has come down from heaven to give His life as a ransom for many, who rose from the grave defeating death, and is coming back one Day to judge the living and the dead. By His faithfulness we have been reconciled to God, adopted as His children, and made to be co-heirs together with Christ with whom we will spend an eternity. Until then, we ought to take special care not to destroy our unity over disputable matters and rather to seek to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2).

For a full treatment on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, please see the sermon preached on September 4, 2022 entitled *Headship, Head Coverings, and the Unity of the Church* by Pastor Logan Cauthen.

Vision and Philosophy of World Missions

Section 4

Global Missions Vision & Priorities of Faith Community Church

GLOBAL MISSIONS VISION

In obedience to Jesus Christ's "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:19-20), Faith Community Church (FCC) is committed to God being glorified and the wonders of His salvation declared among the nations through the proclamation of the Gospel, individual discipleship, and the biblical planting and building up of local churches outside of the United States since by Christ's blood He has "ransomed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9)

GMC PURPOSE

The Global Missions Committee (GMC) has its purpose the advancement of FCC's Global Missions Vision, especially within unengaged unreached people groups in geographic areas outside of the United States as outlined by the following Priorities.

PRIORITIES & COMMITMENTS

The priorities set forth below will help guide the GMC as we pray for, work for, and designate funds and resources toward the accomplishment of FCC's Global Missions Vision. The GMC will meet monthly. As part of our monthly meetings, we will pray for our missionaries while also determining the best way to use church funds and resources to support the following priorities behind FCC's Global Missions Vision:

1. Biblical Church Planting.

- A. We are committed to the establishing of New Testament Churches which consist of local congregations of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its Scriptural officers are elders and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the offices of elder and deacon are limited to men as qualified by Scripture. A church meets regularly for worship, prayer, the study of God's inerrant Word, and fellowship. Members of the church minister to one another's needs, hold each other accountable, and exercise church discipline as needed. Members encourage one another and build each other up in holiness, maturity in Christ, and love.

- B. We are committed to the planting of autonomous congregations by empowering, training, and equipping national believers to lead Christ's church in their context. When this training is complete, and the new church is established, the church planting missionary should move on to a new field of service.
 - C. We are committed to take part in establishing Christ's church in areas of the world where it has not yet been established. (Romans 15:20-21) Unreached and unengaged peoples and places are those among whom Christ is largely unknown and the church is relatively insufficient to make Christ known in its broader population without outside help. FCC is particularly committed to engaging unreached Muslim people groups in the regions of North Africa and the Middle East.
- 2. Sending missionaries – we are committed to preparing members of FCC to be sent out among the unreached for the work of church planting.
- 3. Supporting missionaries – considering our calling and commission to our brothers and sisters within the Body of Christ (Romans 12:3-13, I Cor. 12:12-27) we are committed to meeting the needs of those who are being sent out from FCC. This includes pastoral care, accountability, encouragement, physical and financial resources.
- 4. We are committed to educate, inform, and lead the congregation regarding the Global Missions Vision to increase FCC's capacity to send and support church planting workers among the unreached.
- 5. We are committed to support missionaries outside the membership of FCC that we have historically partnered with. This level of support will be less in the amount of time and resources than to those who are members of FCC.

Policies & Procedures For the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

Policy Adopted June 25, 2020

Section 5

Purpose

It is the purpose of Faith Community Church in all things to exalt Christ as Lord. In keeping with this, FCC seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the preschooler, children, youth, and mentally disabled persons entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those preschoolers, children, and youth and their families to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at Faith Community Church. There are supplementary documents for each specific ministry that deals with children or teens.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and mentally disabled persons.

Definitions

1. "Preschooler," "child," "children," "youth," and "minor" shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
2. "Adult" shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. "Worker" shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
4. "Teenage Worker" shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen (14) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
5. "Child Abuse" shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor.
6. "Criminal Background Check" (CBC) is the procedure used by a qualified agency to check the background of workers for criminal activity.

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Worker Enlistment

1. All paid employees of Faith Community Church will be required to complete an employment application.
2. Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, each worker desiring to work with minors will also be required to complete a 'Worker with Minors Application, which is specifically designed for workers who will be working with minors.
3. After an application is received, prior employment, volunteer service, and personal references will be checked.
4. Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with minors.
5. Criminal background checks will be performed on all paid employees and volunteers that work with minors. Only qualified representatives of the church will have access to the criminal background check report.
6. After reviewing the applications of the applicant, checking references, and receiving a criminal background check report, all information will be kept in the employee personal file, along with the reference checks and applications. A separate file will be maintained on each worker, whether paid or volunteer.
7. No volunteer will be allowed to work with minors unless they are a member of the church for six (6) months or otherwise approved by the elder board.
8. FCC shall notify the qualified agency if an internal grievance (applicant dispute) is filed by an applicant because of incorrect information or other reasons related to criminal histories provided by the agency.

Worker Training

Each new worker will be given training in what child abuse is and how to recognize it. New workers will also be required to view a child abuse prevention video and read FCC's policies and procedures along with the volunteer handbook of the ministry they are volunteering in. This will help workers identify child abuse if they observe improper behavior or see signs which may lead to abuse.

Worker with Minors Background check

Employees, teachers of minors, and volunteers of activities or programs for minors of Faith Community Church will be required to provide personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the

personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the result of the security background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship, or supervising of any activities or programs with minors:

Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide
- Aggravated assault
- Crimes related to the possession, use or sale of drugs or controlled substances
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual assault (rape)
- Aggravated sexual assault
- Injury to a child
- Incest
- Indecency with a child
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child
- Possession or promotion of child pornography
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor
- Employment harmful to children
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure
- Enticing a child

All charges for these crimes, or charges or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by those trained by the church for reviewing applicant transcripts. Only qualified persons may view information obtained on the criminal history record transcript.

Specific Acts and Omissions in Violation of The Policy

The following acts of omissions are violations of this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to the ministry director/coordinator who is in charge of the activity or program, after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.

- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of the Church.
- Mental or emotional injury to a minor.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Faith Community Church.
- The consumption of or being under either the influence of illegal or illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vape products while leading or participating in a function for minors at the church.

Worker Supervision

1. Faith Community Church will adopt the “two adult” rule, which means no adult shall be left alone with a child in the performance of normal tasks and responsibilities, and requires a reasonable ratio of adult workers to be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of children.
2. Church staff and volunteer directors will supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.
3. An identification system shall be adopted so that the adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick up the child. Permission slips will be available for adults to sign, authorizing the release of the child(ren) to other adults.
4. In counseling sessions with minors, parental permission shall be obtained prior to a pastor, teacher, counselor meeting privately with a minor, or the two adult rule shall be used in that instance. Prior permission may be granted by parents to cover a particular time period (i.e., a school year) for their child to receive counseling from a particular pastor, teacher, or counselor.

Occasional Volunteer Workers

1. Those who only volunteer occasionally must also go through the volunteer screening process.
2. Teenagers at least fourteen (14) and under seventeen (17) years of age wanting to serve as teen workers in any capacity with activities, studies, or programs for babies, preschoolers, or children will need to fill out the teenage worker volunteer application along with the ministry volunteer reference check. They will be exempt from a criminal background check. Only female teenagers fourteen (14) years old and older will be allowed to work in the nursery. The volunteer application also requires parental or guardian consent for eligible participation in volunteering for these opportunities.

Supervision of Volunteers

1. Parental permission shall be obtained in advance for involvement in church sponsored programs, activities or whenever an adult might be spending time alone with a child in an unsupervised situation.
2. A door shall always remain open if there are no windows to the room.
3. Use a “check-in/check-out” procedure for nursery aged children and younger.
4. Educate all volunteers and paid workers with minors as to FCC’s policies and procedures concerning this matter.

Child Abuse Prevention Reporting

Any person having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be subject to abuse or neglect shall report the person’s belief in accordance with this procedure. Non-accusatory reports (reports that identify the victim of abuse or neglect whether the person responsible for the abuse or neglect is known or not) shall be made to the proper authorities.

- 1) Fully comply with the child abuse reporting statute.
- 2) FCC should also immediately contact the insurance company to report the occurrence and should contact its attorney.
- 3) In instances where child abuse is confirmed and a member of the ministerial staff is the perpetrator, the immediate supervisor should be contacted and advised.
- 4) This procedure is not only required as a condition of your job or volunteer position, but it is also required by law.
- 5) Upon the first suspicion of an instance of child abuse, the following steps should be taken immediately:
 - a. Do not treat the suspicion as frivolous.
 - b. Commence the investigation immediately and conclude it as soon as possible.
 - i. If a sponsor or volunteer of minors suspects a case of child abuse, he or she is required by law to report his/her suspicions within 24 hours to proper authorities. It is the policy of Faith Community Church that it also be reported immediately to one of the paid staff elders of the church.
 - ii. The elder receiving the initial report will be responsible for confirming the facts reported and the condition of the child, on the same day on which the first report was made. Use the “Reducing the Risk Application Checklist” to complete the church/staff responsibilities involved with the occurrence.
 - iii. Data concerning the child; name, parent or guardian name, address and other pertinent information will be obtained through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff members.
 - iv. After the information is secured, the elder will contact the proper authorities.

- v. On the same day that the case is first reported verbally to the local agency, the report will be documented online at Missouri's Department of Social Services website.
 - c. Maintain confidentiality of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize confidentiality of the victim and any accused.
 - d. Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
 - e. Suspend any accused from the performance of duties involving children until the investigation has been completed.
 - f. Inform the victim and the victim's family of the steps that are being taken and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigations. If child abuse is confirmed, ask the victim and the victim's family what action they would like to take in the matter, and fully cooperate to address their request within the bounds of a legal and prudent response (church legal counsel may assist in this determination).
 - g. In instances where child abuse is confirmed, the church should immediately dismiss the worker from that position.
 - h. In instances where the evidence is inconclusive, the church must take action depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim's family's request.
 - i. The elders of the church will keep the congregation informed of the investigation with respect to matters which are not confidential, so that the congregation will hear about the investigation from within the church rather than from the news media.
- 6) When necessary, take steps to plan for a response to the media. The elders of FCC will designate a contact person for the media. That contact will emphasize to the media FCC's position on child abuse and its concern for the victims involved. The contact will explain the steps the church is taking to address the present occurrence and how it seeks to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment of other children.

Insurance

The church shall obtain a sufficient level of liability insurance coverage that would cover child abuse and sexual misconduct claims. If available, the church should have the levels of coverage which are required for limited immunity.

Conclusion

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there is a more significant reason – to protect children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on children. If the only reason for safety is to protect the organization, the church has missed God's love for children.

Some people may think that our church really does not have to worry about these type of safety problems. Remember, it is much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

We must not be unwise regarding children's safety. We must watch and be ready. There can be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. We as a congregation of the church of Jesus Christ must always be ready to protect children from harm and our workers of children from false accusations.

Faith Community Church desires to be a "church that cares" through the implementation of the above policy. Adoption of these provisions will enable Faith Community Church to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and its guests. These provisions will enable us to carry on the work of Christ and to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord.