

SOUTH CREEK CHURCH

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

INCORPORATED: 02-06-03
LAST DATE AMENDED: 01-19-04

ARTICLE I -- PREAMBLE

We, the leadership and membership of SOUTH CREEK CHURCH in Springfield, Missouri, in order to fulfill our God-ordained purpose, and to protect our church's structure and Statement of Faith, do declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws. We also recognize that at best this written document is a fallible human instrument, but the Bible, God's Word, is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. Therefore, if it is ever determined by the elders/pastors that this Constitution and Bylaws are at odds or in conflict with the Bible, this document is to be amended and brought into conformity with the Word of God. It is always to be remembered that the Bible is the sole, final authority for this church, and not denominational traditions, man-made rules or past experiences.

ARTICLE II -- NAME, INCORPORATION, AND LOCATION

The name of this corporation is SOUTH CREEK CHURCH, INC. Hereafter in this document, the words "church" and "corporation" shall be used synonymously. This church is a Missouri, non-profit, religious corporation with its principal offices in Greene County, Missouri.

ARTICLE III -- PURPOSE STATEMENT AND FUNCTIONS

This corporation is organized exclusively for religious and charitable purposes common to a pastoral church ministry as defined by Scripture. The biblical purpose of this church can be stated as follows: *SOUTH CREEK CHURCH exists to glorify God by leading people to obey God's Word* (Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 3:20-21; Revelation 4:11).

This church will pursue its biblical purpose through the following five functions:

Function #1 – WORSHIP or MAGNIFICATION – We *celebrate* God's presence in worship in order to magnify His name (Matthew 4:10; John 4:24).

Function #2 – FELLOWSHIP or MEMBERSHIP – We *incorporate* God's children into the membership since the church is a caring family (Ephesians 2:19; Philippians 2:1-2).

Function #3 – DISCIPLESHIP or MATURITY – We *educate* God's people through instruction so they arrive at Christ-like maturity (Colossians 1:28; Matthew 28:19-20).

Function #4 – SERVICE or MINISTRY – We *demonstrate* God's love by serving others and equipping them to serve according to their spiritual giftedness (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Function #5 – EVANGELISM or MISSIONS – We *communicate* God's grace by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with non-Christians (Luke 24:46-48).

ARTICLE IV -- PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

It is always to be the intent of the elders/pastors at SOUTH CREEK CHURCH to maintain a biblical philosophy of ministry. A biblical philosophy of ministry is a set of non-negotiable, scriptural principles that guide all the choices and decisions of that ministry. If our purpose is *to glorify God by leading people to obey God's Word*, as evidenced in worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and evangelism, then it logically follows that in order for this to occur, the leadership must be committed to teaching the whole counsel of God's Word thoroughly, accurately, and with precision (Acts 20:27). God's people cannot successfully practice the principles of Scripture they do not know. When this kind of teaching happens the following is to be expected:

Result #1 – A HIGH VIEW OF GOD – God is absolutely sovereign and holy, and He expects His Church to be God-centered (seeking to please God), not man-centered (seeking to please man) (1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 3:20-21; Galatians 1:10).

Result #2 – A SUFFICIENT VIEW OF SCRIPTURE – This is the heart attitude that says God’s Word is so authoritative that whatever it commands us to do, we must do. Since the Bible is sufficient for every spiritual need (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Peter 1:3-4) it does not need to be integrated with psychology or other worldly philosophies to be spiritually effective.

Result #3 – A LOW VIEW OF MAN – Mankind is totally depraved (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 3:10-18). Man was created to glorify God, but because of sin, he seeks to glorify himself (Romans 1:21-23, 3:23). Unsaved sinners are alienated from God, and as a result, they seek fulfillment from the world’s evil system (1 John 2:15-17) to meet their felt needs, rather than their real needs.

Result #4 – A CORRECT VIEW OF THE CHURCH – The church is not owned by its leadership or membership, it is owned by God. Therefore, God’s will is to be pursued in all things, and not the will of man. This means that the church must be seen as a Body, not as a business; and as an organism, not as an organization. The church is not an end in itself; it is one of the means to the end, which is the glorification of God.

Result #5 – A RESPECTFUL VIEW OF LEADERSHIP – Elders/pastors must be viewed with honor as servant leaders under the Lordship of Christ. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, but elders/pastors are the under-shepherds. They are not “hired hands” that are leaders in title only, but not in practice. Nor do they work for the church; actually, they work for God. Their job is not to follow the will of the membership, but rather to follow the will of God as expressed in His Word. As these godly, loving, biblical men follow Christ, the church is commanded by God to submit and follow them (1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

ARTICLE V -- CORE VALUES

The following is a list of spiritual realities that are of great importance to this church. This set of convictions, which we plan to give a great deal of time, money and effort to implementing, represents the direction SOUTH CREEK CHURCH is moving toward. As we pursue these standards with quality and excellence, these core values will increasingly describe this church:

Core Value #1 – POWERFUL WORSHIP – We want to offer believers the opportunity to encounter God’s presence in a biblical, exciting, vibrant, life changing way, as they praise and worship Him.

Core Value #2 – SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY – We want the believers who comprise this church to be so committed to the Word of God that they have the reputation of living and proclaiming the truth.

Core Value #3 – BIBLICAL TEACHING – We want to teach the Bible practically and expositively, book by book and verse by verse, so as not to neglect or over emphasize any part of Scripture.

Core Value #4 – PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP – We want to systematically train people, one on one, in the doctrines of Scripture, until they become spiritually mature.

Core Value #5 – QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP – We want to be extremely careful about who is elevated to positions of leadership, since a church never rises above the level of its leadership. This will require the constant training and development of people to be leaders.

Core Value #6 – CARING FELLOWSHIP – We want this church to be a community of faith, so filled with love, that the Christians joyfully and spontaneously live out the “one anothers” of Scripture.

Core Value #7 – UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE – We want this church to be a place where non-Christians can come with all of their confusion, depression, disappointments, hurts, heartaches, troubles and trials, and find hope in Jesus Christ.

Core Value #8 – GRACE ORIENTED – We want this church to focus on the *direction* of people’s lives, not their *imperfections*, since no Christian is perfect. *Perfection* is the standard, but *direction* is the test. We recognize that God does have a higher standard for Christians, than He does for non-Christians. God expects the saved to obey Him, while He assumes the lost will not. At the same time, His standard is not made up of man-made rules, legalism or traditions, but of loving precepts designed for our good.

Core Value #9 – SMALL GROUPS – We want this church to grow smaller as it grows bigger. This is the only way to keep people connected as numerical growth happens.

Core Value #10 – FAMILY FRIENDLY – We want the structure and programming of this church to meet the needs of busy families in our culture.

Core Value #11 – LOVING ACCOUNTABILITY – We want this church to be a place where believers care about how they live and how others in the fellowship live. We want it to be a hospital for sinners, who want to get better, not a religious social club where people are indifferent to personal holiness.

Core Value #12 – NOUTHETIC COUNSELING – We want this church to be a place where people can receive the highest quality biblical counseling.

Core Value #13 – FERVENT PRAYER – We want this church to be what Jesus wants it to be, and that is “a house of prayer” (Matthew 21:13).

Core Value #14 – POSITIVE CHANGE – We want this church to embrace change, since Christianity is about change. Without change there can be no growth of any kind. Not all change results in progress, but without change there can be no progress.

Core Value #15 – CREATIVE MINISTRIES – We want believers in this church to think of ways they can meet not only the *felt needs* of others, but also *real needs* physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Core Value #16 – SACRIFICAL GIVING – We want this church to understand the importance and blessing of generously giving to support ministry and missions.

Core Value #17 – RELATIONAL EVANGELISM – We want the believers in this church to develop friendships with non-Christians that can be used by God to influence the lost with the gospel.

Core Value #18 – TRUE REVIVAL – We want this church to be a place where God would be pleased to trust us with true, biblical revival, and spiritual awakening.

Core Value #19 – WORLD MISSIONS – We want this church to be committed to the selection, sending, and support of individuals as missionaries to other cities, countries, and cultures, provided they are scripturally qualified.

Core Value #20 – CHURCH PLANTING – We want this church to be committed to the starting of new churches locally, nationally, and internationally.

ARTICLE VI – AUTONOMY

This church is not subordinate to any other ecclesiastical body, and as long as it shall exist, it will insist on its sovereign right to control all its affairs, both spiritual and material, independently of the control of any other organization. Any affiliation it may have with any individual or group shall be deemed purely voluntary. The continuance of any such affiliation shall be subject to the unanimous decision of the elders/pastors.

ARTICLE VII – AFFILIATION

The elders/pastors of SOUTH CREEK CHURCH have unanimously decided to affiliate with the Greene County Baptist Association, located in Springfield, Missouri; the Missouri Baptist Convention, located in Jefferson City, Missouri; and the Southern Baptist Convention (along with its Cooperative Program), with headquarters located in Nashville, Tennessee. These affiliations are for ministry and missions endeavors, and in no way limit SOUTH CREEK CHURCH from partnering or cooperating with any other conservative, orthodox, Christian individual or group.

ARTICLE VIII – THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS

SECTION A: ABORTION

We teach that conception is an act of God (Genesis 29:31, 30:22; Psalm 51:5, 139:13-16), and that He considers unborn infants as living human beings (Exodus 21:22-23; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:51). Therefore, it is our position that God views abortion as murder, and as such, is sin.

SECTION B: FAMILY ROLES

We teach that the family is a God-ordained institution (Genesis 2:18-25), where men are to be the godly, loving, serving, providing, protecting, heads of their families (1 Corinthians 11:1-2; Ephesians 5:23-31); where women are to love their children and follow the godly, loving leadership of their husbands (Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:3-5); where parents together are to train up their children in righteousness (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4); and where children are to follow and obey the godly, loving instruction of their parents (Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 6:1-3).

SECTION C: MARRIAGE

We teach that a biblical marriage is between one man and one woman, and is intended for life (Genesis 2:21-24; Matthew 19:1-12). Further, we acknowledge that it is God's will for believers to enter into marriage only with other believers (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14), therefore, the elders/pastors will only conduct marriage ceremonies where both individuals are professing Christians, and provided there is no other scriptural reason why the marriage would be unbiblical. Since each couple is unique, each couple will undergo pre-marital counseling to the satisfaction of the elder/pastor conducting the marriage ceremony. This church also has the responsibility of helping people to be successful in their marriages.

SECTION D: DIVORCE

This church has the responsibility to reach out in love and help those who have gone through the tragedy of divorce to pick up the pieces of their lives and start over again. If someone has had an unbiblical divorce in the past, we will not hold that against him or her when considering him or her for church membership. It must be noted, however, we believe God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), but because of the hardness of individuals' hearts (Matthew 19:7-8), God does permit divorce under two circumstances. These two conditions constitute biblical grounds for divorce:

- (1) When a professing believer is married to an unbeliever, and the unbeliever wants a divorce (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).
- (2) When a couple is married, and one of the partners unrepentantly commits immorality, then the innocent partner may seek a divorce (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:9).

In situations where there is child or spouse abuse, the misuse of alcohol, the use of illegal drugs, or other serious threats to the safety and well being of the family, the elders/pastors would counsel that physical separation from the offending party would be in order until such a time as the offending individual gets the spiritual counseling and help he or she needs, as evidenced by a positive, sustained change in his or her behavior. Furthermore, if an individual has had an unbiblical divorce, Scripture says they are to be reconciled to their former spouse or else remain unmarried (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). The exception to this would be if the former spouse gets remarried to another person, in which case, reconciliation would then be scripturally impossible (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), so that remarriage would then be an option for the other person (1 Corinthians 7:8-9).

SECTION E: REMARRIAGE

This church has the responsibility to reach out in love and help those who have been remarried to be successful in their current marriage. If someone has had an unbiblical remarriage in the past, we will not hold that against him or her when considering him or her for church membership. It must be noted, however, the Bible teaches that God only permits remarriage in the following circumstances:

- (1) Remarriage following the death of a spouse (Romans 7:2-3).
- (2) Remarriage following a biblical divorce (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).

Since God's Word places guidelines on remarriage, the elders/pastors of this church will only perform remarriage ceremonies where there are scriptural grounds for doing so. Furthermore, if someone has had an unbiblical remarriage, the elders/pastors would counsel that person to stay in that marriage and make it work. Getting a divorce will not correct this situation, as two wrongs never make a right.

SECTION F: CHURCH ORDINANCES

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These two ordinances are to be observed as frequently as the elders/pastors deem necessary. Believer's baptism by immersion is the public testimony of a Christian's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38-42); and is a picture of the believer's spiritual union with Christ (Romans 6:1-11). Therefore, for baptism to be valid, it must take place after one is saved for the picture to be true of him or her. The elders/pastors of this church are willing to baptize any individual who is saved, whether or not he or she is seeking membership in this church. The elders/pastors may have anyone of their choosing assist them in any way with a baptism service. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration of Christ's death until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). Participation in the Lord's Supper in this church is open to any saved individual, living a godly lifestyle, whether he or she is a member of this church or not, and regardless of his or her denominational affiliation. The elders/pastors may have anyone of their choosing assist them in any way with a Communion service.

SECTION G: BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

The leadership and membership of this church are free to use any orthodox Bible translation they please, however, in deciding doctrinal matters the elders/pastors shall use the New American Standard Bible (NASB), while paying very close attention to the original languages.

ARTICLE IX -- CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Church is not a democracy but a theocracy; therefore, the primary authority in this church rests in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church (Matthew 16:18). This authority has also been transmitted to and is expressed within God's Word as to all matters of faith and practice. The elders/pastors exercise secondary authority as they apply the principles of God's Word in unanimity to the doctrinal, ministerial, spiritual, material, and financial issues of the church (Matthew 4:4, 16:18; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Scripture makes it very clear that the church is to be led and governed in unanimity by a plurality of godly elders/pastors, who are male in gender, equal in authority (which is given to them by God), and called by Christ to be the under-shepherds of His Church. They are to oversee the care and total welfare of the church, which includes the making of administrative decisions. However, there will be occasional times when the elders/pastors involve the membership in decisions by asking for the congregation's input and advice, as well as giving periodic reports to the membership (Acts 14:23, 15:1-6, 16:4; 1 Timothy 3:1, 4, 5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

ARTICLE X -- ELDERS

SECTION A: DEFINED

In the Bible the words "elder" [*presbuteros*], "bishop" [*episkopos*], "overseer" [*episkopos*], "pastor" [*poimen*], and "shepherd" [*poimen*] are used interchangeably to refer to the same position of church leadership (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-5). The term "elder" refers metaphorically to someone who is mature, "bishop" or "overseer" to someone who administratively manages the work of an organization, and "pastor" or "shepherd" to someone who nurtures and feeds a flock of sheep. Taken together these three Greek terms, *presbuteros*, *episkopos*, and *poimen*, give us a composite description of church leadership. The elders or bishops or overseers or pastors of a church are to be spiritually mature men (male in gender) who lead and feed God's flock. For the purposes of this corporation, there shall be no distinction between elders and pastors.

SECTION B: POWERS

All the activities and affairs (spiritually, materially, and financially) of this corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the elders/pastors, who are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock, as well as being the official agents and trustees of the corporation. The elders/pastors shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated by these Bylaws:

- (1) To select, appoint, and remove all the agents, elders/pastors, employees, officers, small group leaders, staff, teachers, and trustees 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.
- (2) To open, utilize, and close checking and savings accounts for the purpose and functions of the corporation.
- (3) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the corporation as are required to fulfill the purpose and functions 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.
- (4) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purpose and functions of this corporation, including but not limited to, the preparation of annual budgets and annual calendars.
- (5) To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and functions of the corporation and to cause to be executed and delivered, in the corporate name, contracts, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, loans, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities.

- (6) To carry out all the ministerial functions of the church, including but not limited to, baptisms, communions, funerals, weddings, counseling, preaching and teaching.
- (7) To grant licensure and/or ordination to biblically qualified individuals, and to revoke licensure and/or ordination in cases of disqualification from ministry.
- (8) To settle disputes. Any dispute arising between church members, elders/pastors, or staff pertaining to any matter of spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, shall be resolved by the unanimous decision of the remaining elders/pastors of the church.
- (9) To make all decisions on behalf of the church. Decisions shall be reached in unanimity after prayerful consideration, and a spirit of humility, with each elder/pastor regarding one another before himself. The elders/pastors are to take any and all such other actions reasonably necessary to fulfill the letter and the spirit of this Constitution and Bylaws. While this congregation shall provide input and information to the leadership when polled by the elders/pastors, it shall not participate in any majority-rule voting to make decisions.
- (10) To select and/or approve all curriculum used in any church related class, group or setting.

SECTION C: RESPONSIBILITIES

The obligations of elders/pastors include shepherding the flock, leading by example, preaching, teaching, counseling, exhorting, refuting doctrinal error, confronting and dealing with unrepentant sin, caring for and managing God's church, praying for the sick, appointing leadership, and appointing and approving ministries (Acts 4:36-5:2, 20:28-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:1-3; Titus 1:5-9, 2:15; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

SECTION D: QUALIFICATIONS

The requirements for being an elder/pastor at this church include membership in SOUTH CREEK CHURCH, a sense of divine calling (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1), fulfillment of all biblical requirements (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5), nomination by the membership (the exception to this is an elder/pastor who is coming to be a part of this church from another congregation), and unanimous approval by the current elders/pastors (Acts 14:19-23; Titus 1:5).

SECTION E: SELECTION

Whenever there is a need for additional elders/pastors, as determined unanimously by the current elders/pastors, the current elders/pastors shall meet this need by either recruiting from without or within this congregation.

If they pursue candidates from without, they shall find and select them on their own, in unanimity, from among other churches and/or schools, after prayerfully and carefully investigating the candidate's calling, character, conduct, credit history, education, experience, and giftedness, as well as whether or not they have a criminal record. After this process is finished, assuming everything is appropriate, the new elder/pastor shall be on probation for a period of time as determined by the current elders/pastors, until they are certain of his compatibility with this congregation. During this time, while the new elder/pastor will be allowed to attend elder/pastor meetings and give input and advice, he will not participate in the actual decision making in the elder/pastor meetings. The new elder/pastor will also be publicly recognized at a public worship service, and if necessary, will be presented with licensure and/or ordination at a later date after a period of observation.

If they pursue candidates from within, the current elders/pastors shall notify this congregation of the need for nominations to be made along with the biblical requirements for nominees. Nominations will be collected from the congregation, and the current elders/pastors shall review and investigate and interrogate the nominees as seems best to them (checking their calling, character, conduct, credit history, education, experience, and giftedness, as well as whether or not they have a criminal record).

The current elders/pastors shall then unanimously select and approve from among the nominees who will be the new elder/pastor, then there shall be a public recognition of this new elder in a public worship service, with a presentation, if necessary, of licensure and/or ordination at that time or at a later date.

Furthermore, just because someone has served as an elder/pastor at another church prior to becoming a member of SOUTH CREEK CHURCH, does not guarantee that they are eligible to serve in that capacity here, nor are the elders/pastors obligated in any way to allow them to do so.

SECTION F: REMUNERATION

The elders/pastors, on behalf of this church, may choose to financially support an elder/pastor, part-time or full-time, who serves this church where time and work demands necessitate it (1 Timothy 5:17-18). The decision to financially support an elder/pastor and the nature and amount of said financial support shall be made by the unanimous decision of the elders/pastors. Salaried elders/pastors have no more authority than non-salaried elders/pastors.

SECTION G: NUMBER AND MEETINGS

The number of elders/pastors, both lay and vocational, shall be as many as is deemed necessary by the elders/pastors. Regular or special meetings of the elders/pastors may be held anywhere, anytime, and for any reason, inside or outside the State of Missouri. All elders/pastors are expected to attend the meetings, unless providentially hindered. The number, frequency, and length of meetings shall be determined by the elders/pastors. Elders/pastors may participate in a meeting through the use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, so long as all members participating in such a meeting can clearly hear one another. Each elder/pastor shall receive notice of any meeting.

SECTION H: TERM AND REMOVAL

Elders/pastors shall serve indefinitely. However, they can be relieved of their responsibilities and/or office voluntarily by written resignation, or involuntarily by failing to fulfill their duties, or involuntarily by church discipline. Any elder/pastor may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the elders/pastors, by the unanimous decision of the remaining elders/pastors, if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated, or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the other elders/pastors in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. When an elder/pastor is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, or if he refuses to repent of some particular sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20.

ARTICLE XI – DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

SECTION A: DEFINED, POWERS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The office of a deacon and/or deaconess [*diakonos*] is the position of an exemplary servant, who is deserving of high honor and respect (1 Timothy 3:13), and whose example of service the members of the church are to imitate. However, SOUTH CREEK CHURCH does not use deacons and/or deaconesses in a traditional, Baptist way, but rather, in a biblical way. Their position is not a position of policy or decision making authority within the church, nor is their job to serve as a group of advisors to the elders/pastors, even though there will be times when the elders/pastors may ask for their input or opinion on a particular matter or issue. Furthermore, it is not their responsibility to run and control the elders/pastors or the church.

Their role is to serve under the direction and authority of the elders/pastors, undertaking areas of service that would otherwise prohibit the elders/pastors from performing their primary biblical responsibilities and spiritual ministries, such as praying and preparing to preach or teach, etc. (Acts 6:1-7; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The deacons' and/or deaconesses' primary ministry is the meeting of physical needs among the congregation, such as helping widows and orphans, etc. Because service needs change, no specific, ongoing responsibilities of deacons and/or deaconesses are mentioned in Scripture; therefore, their role must be flexible.

SECTION B: QUALIFICATIONS

The Bible does not require that a church have deacons or deaconesses, but it does require that if a church has deacons or deaconesses that they be scripturally qualified. The requirements for being a deacon or deaconess at this church include membership in SOUTH CREEK CHURCH, a sense of divine calling (Acts 6:1-7), fulfillment of all biblical requirements (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Titus 2:3-5), nomination by the membership, and the unanimous approval by the elders/pastors.

SECTION C: SELECTION

Whenever there is a need for deacons and/or deaconesses, the elders/pastors shall meet this need by recruiting from within the congregation. The elders/pastors shall notify this congregation of the need for nominations to be made along with the biblical requirements for nominees. Nominations will be collected from the congregation, the elders/pastors shall review and investigate and interrogate the nominees as seems best to them (checking their calling, character, conduct, credit history, education, experience, and giftedness, as well as whether or not they have a criminal record), the elders/pastors shall then unanimously select and approve from among the nominees who will be the new deacon and/or deaconess, then there shall be a public recognition of this new deacon and/or deaconess in a public worship service.

Furthermore, just because someone has served as a deacon or deaconess at another church prior to becoming a member of SOUTH CREEK CHURCH, does not guarantee that they are eligible to serve in that capacity here, nor are the elders/pastors obligated in any way to allow them to do so.

SECTION D: NUMBER AND MEETINGS

The number of deacons and/or deaconesses shall be as many as is deemed necessary by the elders/pastors. Regular or special meetings of the deacons and/or deaconesses may be held anywhere, anytime, and for any reason, inside or outside the State of Missouri, as determined by the elders/pastors who may decide to be present or not present when the deacons and/or deaconesses meet. All deacons and/or deaconesses are expected to attend the meetings, unless providentially hindered. The number, frequency, and length of the deacons' and/or deaconesses' meetings shall be determined by the elders/pastors. The deacons and/or deaconesses along with the elders/pastors may participate in a meeting through the use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, so long as all members participating in such a meeting can clearly hear one another. Each deacon/deaconess shall receive notice of any meeting.

SECTION E: TERM AND REMOVAL

Deacons and/or deaconesses shall serve as long as determined by the elders/pastors. They can be relieved of their responsibilities and/or office when the ministry to which they were called no longer exists, or voluntarily by written resignation, or involuntarily by failing to fulfill their duties, or involuntarily by church discipline. Any deacon and/or deaconess may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the elders/pastors, by the unanimous decision of the elders/pastors, if he or she is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated, or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including Acts 6:3; Romans 16:1-2;

1 Timothy 3:8-13; Titus 2:3-5), after thorough corroborating investigation by the elders/pastors in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18.

ARTICLE XII -- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A: REASON

Church membership is more than having a name on a list in the church's office stating that someone is a member. Membership is a covenant relationship between one professing believer and a group of believers. Formal membership in a church is when one professing believer unites and identifies with a group of professing believers for the purpose of mutual, loving accountability, and for opportunities of service.

SECTION B: REQUIREMENTS

Membership at SOUTH CREEK CHURCH shall be open to all persons 12 or older, regardless of past denominational affiliation, who confess Christ as their Lord and Savior, and who have been baptized by immersion following their salvation experience. Membership at SOUTH CREEK CHURCH involves six-steps:

Step #1 – COMPLETION OF THE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Step #2 – INTERVIEW WITH AN ELDER/PASTOR

Step #3 – COMPLETION OF THE MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Step #4 – SIGNING OF THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Step #5 – UNANIMOUS APPROVAL BY THE ELDERS/PASTORS

Step #6 – ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CHURCH FAMILY

SECTION C: RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of all church members include attending worship services and regularly participating in the fellowship of the church, learning how to be more Christ-like, praying and interceding for the needs of the leadership and membership, giving material and financial support, serving the Body of Christ by using their spiritual gifts in a personal ministry, providing nominations for elders/pastors and deacons and deaconesses when requested by the elders/pastors, supplying advice and input to the elders/pastors when they request it, giving and receiving loving accountability, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with their family and friends, and submitting to the godly, loving, biblical leadership of the elders/pastors.

SECTION D: REJECTION AND REMOVAL

If upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the elders/pastors determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, or an unwillingness to complete all six steps required for membership as outlined in ARTICLE XII -- SECTION B of these Bylaws, membership shall be denied. This decision by the elders/pastors shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court of law from that decision. Members can be removed from the membership roll by a written request for withdrawal of their membership (this can only be done when a person is not under church discipline), by the transfer of their membership to another orthodox, Bible believing church (this can only be done when they are a member in good standing and not under church

discipline), by physical death, by an act of church discipline, or by inactivity in worship attendance for three months or longer (exceptions to this would include a lack of attendance for health related matters, military service, attending school or college in another town or state, or work).

ARTICLE XIII -- CHURCH DISCIPLINE

SECTION A: PURPOSE

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 lovingly 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 who unrepentantly err in doctrine, or who unrepentantly engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the elders/pastors, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18.

SECTION B: PROCESS

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. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval.

If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the elders/pastors. If the elders/pastors determine, by unanimous consent -- after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19 -- 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/pastors 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 and to pray for them. 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 and prayer, then (4) by unanimous consent of the elders/pastors, 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 elders/pastors, then by unanimous consent of the elders/pastors, he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the elders/pastors in the exercise of their discretion, and by unanimous consent, may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred: Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole Church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5); where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the elders/pastors, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders/pastors (Romans 16:17);

Or where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct, including gossip or subversive behavior, and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11). The leadership and membership 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 of law because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at any stage of church discipline.

Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, 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. The same is true in regard to transferring memberships.

In the event the member to be disciplined is an elder/pastor, then the disciplined elder/pastor shall not be entitled to participate in the decision making process concerning his possible discipline, with the exception of telling his side of the story to the other elders/pastors.

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and unanimous approval of the elders/pastors, a member, non-member regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being (physically, emotionally, or spiritually) of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with the church discipline of that person.

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders/pastors, the names of any members who have not attended a Sunday morning worship service at SOUTH CREEK CHURCH for a period of three months or longer may be removed from the membership rolls. Further, if the elders/pastors determine that a member's attendance is insincere and only an attempt to maintain their membership status, while not being truly committed to the church's leadership and/or membership, the elders/pastors by the unanimous approval of the elders/pastors, may remove the name of that member from the membership roll.

ARTICLE XIV – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION A: CORPORATE OFFICERS

The officers of the corporation shall be a Chairman/President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The corporation may also have, at the discretion of the elders/pastors, other officers as needed. The Chairman/President must be an elder/pastor. The Secretary and Treasurer may or may not be elders/pastors, however the elders/pastors may decide. A single elder/pastor may hold more than one office at a time. In the event there is a vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, church discipline, health problems, or any other cause, the remaining elders/pastors shall appoint individuals to fill the need. In the case of absence or inability to act by any officer of the corporation and/or by any person herein authorized to act in his or her place, the elders/pastors may from time to time delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any other officer or other person whom they may select.

SECTION B: CORPORATE CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT

The corporate Chairman/President, who is an elder/pastor, will prepare the agenda of, and preside over, the elders'/pastors' meetings; and represent the elders/pastors to the congregation for information purposes.

SECTION C: CORPORATE SECRETARY

The corporate Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, a book of minutes at the principal office or such other place as the elders/pastors may order, of all elders'/pastors' meetings, with the time and place of holding,

whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given if any, the names of those present at the meetings, and the proceedings thereof. The corporate Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, in a bank safe deposit box, in the State of Missouri, the corporation's Articles and Bylaws, as amended to date. The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the corporation or other such location, a church membership register, showing the names of the members along with their addresses, and phone numbers and email addresses if possible.

SECTION D: CORPORATE TREASURER

The corporate Treasurer shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the corporation. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the finances, properties, and business transactions of the corporation. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any elder/pastor. The corporate Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the elders/pastors. He or she shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the corporation as may be ordered by the elders/pastors, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the elders/pastors, 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 elders/pastors. He or she shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports to the elders/pastors.

SECTION E: OFFERINGS

All cash offerings are to be counted by at least two members who have been approved by the elders/pastors, before the funds are removed from the church meeting facility. Those counting the offering will sign a cash receipt(s) form. A record will be kept of all receipts and disbursements of the local assembly and of all individuals who give. All funds shall be deposited in federally insured accounts. All giving shall be considered non-designated funds.

SECTION F: CHECK SIGNING

At least two elders/pastors must sign all checks written.

SECTION G: INDEMNIFICATION

Each existing or former member of the elders/pastors shall be indemnified by this church against expenses reasonably incurred by him in connection with any action, suit or proceeding to which he may be a part by reason of being or having been an agent, trustee, or officer of this corporation, unless any said action, suit or proceeding is initiated by the corporation.

SECTION H: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June each year.

SECTION I: DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of this corporation, after paying all of its liabilities, the elders/pastors shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to the Baptist Children's Home in Mt. Vernon, Missouri. None of the assets shall be given to any elder/pastor, deacon, deaconess, or member.

ARTICLE XV -- AMENDMENTS

The Constitution, Bylaws, and Statement of Faith of this church may be repealed, amended or otherwise modified, either in part or in whole, by the unanimous decision of the elders/pastors. The elders/pastors shall keep a record of the amendment, including its date, substance, and content, and shall announce and explain the amendment to the church at a regularly scheduled worship service.