

# **Constitution**

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## **Preamble**

We, the members of Downtown Mission Church, Wisconsin do establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

### **Article I: Organization**

- A. *Name:* The name of this church shall be Downtown Mission Church.
- B. *Date Organized:* Downtown Mission Church was organized on May 10, 2012
- C. *Incorporation:* This organization was incorporated in the State of Wisconsin on May 1, 2012.

### **Article II: Purpose & Mission**

**Growing disciple-making, gospel-centered communities, by the power of God to the glory of God**

### **Article III: Affirmation of Faith**

#### **1. The Tri-une God**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

#### **2. Revelation**

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation,

sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

### **3. Creation of Humanity**

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

### **4. The Fall**

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan's temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God's own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

### **5. The Plan of God**

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

### **6. The Gospel**

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is: “Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

## **7. The Redemption of Christ**

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

## **8. The Justification of Sinners**

We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God’s justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

## **9. The Power of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners,

awakening them to repentance and faith, and in him they are baptized into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

## **10. The Kingdom of God**

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

## **11. God's New People**

We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

## **12. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

{We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself - baptism as a symbol of entrance into the body of Christ and the Lord's Supper a regular reminder of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ. Baptism symbolizes the believer's death to sin and new life in Christ. Those baptized are done so in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because baptism symbolizes the believer's death to sin and new life in Christ, we believe it is most faithfully displayed in the baptismal immersion of those who have made a credible profession of

faith, which is the practice of Downtown Mission Church. The Lord's Table is to be practiced in the corporate worship of the church as a memorial celebration of the gospel, knitting our hearts together as it is rightly partaken of with a sober mind, joyful heart, and thankful spirit. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.<sup>1</sup>

### 13. The Restoration of All Things

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

(Adapted from The Gospel Coalition's *Confessional Statement*)

#### Article V: Membership

**The local church is a body of believers with Christ as its head. Participation in the local church is absolutely essential for the maturity of professing believers. This body is interdependent and each member is a valuable part of what Jesus intends to do in and through the life of Downtown Mission Church. As each member functions according to God's design and in the sharing of our faith, the body builds itself up in love.**

*A. Membership Requirements:* All candidates for membership of Downtown Mission Church must give a clear testimony and evidence of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Downtown Mission Church recognizes any professing believer age 18 or older as eligible for membership.

*B. Membership Procedures:* See By-Laws for membership procedures.

#### Article VI: Church Discipline

*A. Rationale:* Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his/her walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among unbelievers. (1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 6:3).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that Downtown Mission Church has adapted and expanded the TGC statement on the issue of Baptism to reflect the particular position of the church on these matters.

Scripture therefore encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being and teaches them to confront one another in love where there is evidence of sin. (2 Corinthians 11:29; Galatians 6:1).

Scripture teaches that such confrontation should be approached with an attitude of love, genuine concern, and humility. It should be motivated by a sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is the genuine expression of repentance on the part of a fellow believer (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 6:14,15, 18:21ff; Ephesians 4:32; Luke 17:3).

B. *Discipline Procedures*: See By-Laws for discipline procedures.

## **Article VII: Responsibility of Members**

Membership in the body of Christ requires a desire to submit every phase of ones' life to the Lordship of Jesus. It therefore involves obedience to the Scriptural principles of commitment and accountability to the body of Christ, as summarized in the following areas:

- A. *Individual Devotion to God*: An individual's spiritual life must not consist solely of weekly church attendance. The Lord Jesus calls his followers to obey the greatest commandment which is loving God with every part of their being (heart, soul, mind, strength). This requires regular devotion to reading the Holy Scriptures and prayer, for this is the way in which the Lord has called his people to seek him. Prior to convening together as the local body of Christ, members must commit themselves to seeking their Father in secret. (Mark 12:30; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 6:5-6; Romans 14:7-8)
- B. *Commitment to Corporate Meetings*: God's eternal plan of salvation is to unite his people in one body. This body consists of connected people, joined together into a dwelling place for the living God. To establish and represent the united nature of Christ's church, believers must meet together regularly. The Bible specifically warns against the human inclination to forego corporate meetings and therefore the Church must exhort members to heed that warning. These corporate meeting are intended to encourage, instruct, and train the body through teaching of the Scriptures, worshipping together, and engaging in intentional fellowship. Without these regular meetings, members of the body of Christ separate themselves from the life of the church which intends to build them up. (Ephesians 2:18-22; Ephesians 4:13-16; Hebrews 10:24-25)
- C. *Service to the Body*: For the body of Christ to function properly, each member must contribute. The Bible describes the Church as one body consisting of members who have different functions. Both the apostle Paul and the apostle

Peter urge followers of Jesus to use these “gifts that differ” in order to serve their brothers and sisters in Christ. This service includes but is not limited to: counseling fellow believers with the truth of Jesus Christ, serving one another by recognizing and meeting needs in everyday life, and participating in the organization of weekly ministries or the Sunday service. Christ called his followers to imitate his example as one who came to serve others rather than be served. (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:13-16; Mark 10:42-45; Phillipians 2:5-7; 1 Peter 4:7-11)

- D. *Generosity with Resources:* Members of the body of Christ are to follow the example of Jesus who though he was rich in heaven, became poor on earth so that through his generosity his people would inherit the kingdom of God. Christ left the eternal luxuries of the heavenly places to sacrifice his life for the Church, and he calls his body to view their resources accordingly. The grace of the Lord Jesus should move his Church to be generous with their finances both in relation to one another and in tithing to the church. The Bible not only encourages such giving but also warns against the opposite of finding treasure in earthly possessions instead of stewarding finances as a gift from God. (Matthew 6:19-21; Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 8, 9)
- E. *Pursuit of a Spirit of Love and Encouragement:* Members of the body should continually seek to develop a spirit of mutual love, concern, encouragement. The body of Christ is a band of redeemed souls who are called to bear one another’s burdens and seek to deal humbly, gently, and patiently with their brothers and sisters in Christ. Members are to be concerned with each other’s spiritual well being, spurring each other to a deeper walk and commitment to Christ. In so doing, followers of Christ preserve the integrity of the body, the spirit of peace, and the bond of unity (Philippians 2:1-3; Psalm 133; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 10:24-25).

## **Article VIII: Government**

**A. Administration:** Downtown Mission Church recognizes that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the local church. Under his authority, Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit calls and equips qualified men to serve in the role of elder. This team of elders is responsible for the spiritual care and direction of the church and are God’s appointed and accountable authority in the local church. Among this team of elders are men who serve in the vocational role of pastor, as well as men who serve in a non-vocational capacity. These men are to be affirmed by the congregation as competent, qualified, and called to this service. Deacons are appointed to serve in the administration of specific ministries and do not hold the spiritual authority given by Christ to the elders of the church. As such, the deacons serve under the authority and supervision of the elders.

**B. Congregation:** The church body shall take final action on the following matters.

If a matter comes before the church body that less than all the members are eligible to vote on, a quorum for that matter shall consist of 40% of the members eligible to vote on that issue. See By-Laws for voting eligibility. Absentee ballots shall not count toward any quorum requirement.

These matters shall require a 3/4 majority for approval:

1. The calling of the Lead Pastor;
2. The purchase or sale of any land or buildings, or expansion of buildings;
3. The approval of the annual church budget;
4. The consolidation with another church;
5. The adoption of any constitutional amendments.
6. The dismissal of the Lead Pastor and other pastoral staff;
7. The affirmation of candidates to serve on the elder team

These matters shall require only a simple majority for approval;

1. Other congregational actions.

*C. Board of Elders:* The board of elders shall be chosen from, affirmed by, and accountable to the members of the church (see By-Laws for length of terms and duties).

1. *Qualifications:* A member of the board of elders shall be at least 18 years of age and consistently strive to meet New Testament standards of spiritual maturity as exemplified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4
2. *Selection:* Selection of elder candidates is the responsibility of the current elders. After a prescribed training period, must be affirmed by 75% of the membership voting during a congregational meeting. Members may submit names to any serving elder for the purpose of future consideration.

An Elder's tenure may be terminated in one of the following methods:

- a. Withdrawal of membership from Downtown Mission Church.
- b. Voluntary resignation.
- c. Two-thirds majority vote of the board of elders followed by  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote by members.

#### *D. Ministry Teams:*

Ministry Teams exist for the efficient and appropriate function will have an Elder to whom that Team is responsible.

Ministry Team leaders, deacons/deaconesses, shall be appointed or removed from office by the board of elders. Each appointment shall be reevaluated yearly and empty positions will be filled by qualified leaders as needed. The Ministry Team leader and the Elder responsible for that team shall have the freedom to assemble the team to carry out the ministries assigned for the coming year.

### **Article IX: Church Staff**

#### *A. Lead Pastor:*

1. The Lead Pastor shall be a man biblically qualified for the ministry and shall be in agreement with the Affirmation of Faith of this church. He shall perform all the scriptural duties of his office, with a specific emphasis on the ministries of preaching and prayer.

He shall be a voting member of the elder board and an ex officio member of all Ministry Teams.

2. Along with other pastoral staff, the Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the equipping and mobilization of the church body to do the work of the ministry. He shall provide counsel, encouragement, and direction to the pastoral staff and elder board.

#### *B. Call of a Lead Pastor:*

The board of elders shall create a search team of at least five members,

including at least one elder. The search team shall contact candidates and make recommendations to the church body.

The Lead Pastor shall be chosen by written ballot at a constitutionally called business meeting (see By-Laws for procedure). Each candidate shall be considered individually and shall be voted upon before another candidate is presented.

#### *C. Tenure of a Lead Pastor:*

1. The Lead Pastor will continue to serve until he resigns in writing or his tenure is terminated by action of the church body upon recommendation of the board of elders. The Lead Pastor, upon resignation, shall terminate his pastoral duties after no more than 60 days. Severance pay, if any, shall be determined by a majority vote of the board of elders.

#### *D. Pastoral/Elder Misconduct*

Accusations against a pastor or elder shall not be considered unless supported by two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

If it is determined that a pastor/elder has erred in doctrine or conduct, he shall be charitably admonished by the board of elders with a goal toward restoration. If the elders deem the issue serious enough to warrant further disciplinary action, they may place a pastor on suspension of duties with pay until such matter is satisfactorily resolved. In the case of a lay elder, they shall be suspended from their responsibilities until the matter is satisfactorily resolved.

If this does not bring about restoration, the matter shall be brought before the church body. Charges against the pastor/elder shall be stated in writing with scriptural support. Should he be found unworthy by majority vote at a constitutionally called business meeting, he shall be removed from his position. In the case of a pastoral staff member, their position and employment shall be terminated. Termination may include up to 60 days salary.

#### *E. Other Pastoral Staff:*

1. Associate pastors shall be recommended to the church body by the board of elders and voted upon by the congregation.

2. All pastoral staff shall be in agreement with the Affirmation of Faith of Downtown Mission Church.

3. Associate pastors shall perform duties as designated by the board of elders. The elders will propose a job description for pastoral candidates prior to the congregational vote.

4. Resignation of pastoral staff shall require a letter of resignation. Employment relationship shall be severed at the discretion of the elder board. Severance pay, if any, shall be determined by a majority vote of the elders.

5. The board of elders may recommend the termination of an associate pastor's tenure to the congregation. The congregation shall vote on the termination at a constitutionally called business meeting by a majority vote of 75%. Severance pay will be determined by the board of elders.

6. Pastoral staff members hired under the explicit designation of pastor shall also be recognized and automatically reside as members of the elder board until they leave their position.

#### *F. Other Church Employees:*

Other church employees shall be appointed or terminated by the board of elders. Their salary levels will be consistent with the church budget. The responsibility for supervision of such employees will be specified by the board of elders.

### **Article X: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31 inclusive.

### **Article XI: Meetings**

#### *A. Devotional Meetings:*

1. The Church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for worship, instruction in the faith, and mutual encouragement. Any exceptions will be determined and announced by the elders at least two weeks prior to the proposed change. In the case of emergencies, natural disasters, or

serious safety concerns, the decision to cancel corporate worship will be prayerfully determined and communicated to the body in a reasonably timely manner depending on the circumstance.

2. The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper monthly during regularly scheduled gatherings on the Lord's Day. Any further observances of the Lord's Supper will be determined by the board of elders.

3. The Church shall observe the ordinance of baptism as necessary.

#### *B. Business Meetings:*

1. An annual business meeting will be held during the first quarter of the year. The exact date and time is to be determined by the board of elders and is to be announced publicly to the congregation two weeks prior to the meeting.

2. Additional business meetings will be held as determined by the board of elders. The exact date and time is to be determined by the board of elders and is to be announced publicly to the congregation two weeks prior to the meeting. Apart from the annual business meeting, the church will hold not less than two other business meetings during the course of the year.

3. All business meetings will be called by the board of elders on its own motion or upon consideration of a congregational request . All such meetings will be communicated to the membership at least two consecutive weeks in advance and announced publicly two Sundays prior to the meeting. The communication shall state the general terms of the business to be transacted. Any topics requiring a vote, must be submitted, reviewed, and approved by the elder board prior to the meeting.

#### **Article XII: Church Property**

*A. Dissolution:* Should a condition arise at any time in the future when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be liquidated and the proceeds distributed to other churches, parachurch organizations, or non-profits as determined by the board of elders.

*B. Consolidation:* Should a condition arise where a consolidation with another church be advisable, Downtown Mission Church's board of elders is authorized by the congregation of Downtown Mission Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation, including the disposition of all debts and real property and financial assets. The elders of Downtown Mission Church

are also authorized to negotiate the absorption of other local churches, including the disposition of assets (real and financial) and debts absorbed.

### **Article XIII: Amendments**

A. *Initiation:* Any proposed amendment to this constitution shall be brought to the congregation by the board of elders at a constitutionally called business meeting.

B. *Notice:* Written notice to the membership concerning the nature of the proposed amendment will be sent at least four weeks prior to a vote on the amendment. The business meeting during which the vote is to take place will be announced publicly not less than two Sundays prior to the meeting.

C. *Adoption:* The proposed amendment shall become a part of this constitution immediately upon affirmation of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of members present during the business meeting at which such amendment is affirmed.

## **By-Laws**

The purpose of the By-Laws is to more definitively explain the qualifications, authority and responsibilities of Downtown Mission Church members and leadership in order to address our mission.

### **Article I: Membership Procedures**

#### *A. Procedure to Join:*

1. Persons desiring to join this church shall make their request known to any member of the pastoral staff or board of elders.
2. They shall participate in an informational orientation session.
3. They shall be interviewed by an elder of Downtown Mission Church and upon recommendation of the board of elders and be welcomed into the church body at any regular service by a member of the pastoral staff and/or a member of the elder board.

#### *B. Procedure to Leave:*

1. Any member desiring to leave the membership of this church is

requested to indicate that decision in writing to the board of elders.

2. Such a request will be acted upon by the board of elders and the congregation shall be informed during the annual or a business meeting.

## **Article II: Government**

A. Membership is a requirement for voting in church decisions.

B. Written absentee ballots may be used for elections only. These ballots must be sealed and delivered to a member of the elder board in advance of the election. It will be the responsibility of the board of elders to deliver them to be counted with the other ballots cast during the meeting for which they are intended.

C. The proposed budget shall be announced and made available for review no sooner than four weeks prior to the annual business meeting. Voting on the annual budget will be held during the annual business meeting in accordance Article XI of the church constitution..

## **Article III: Board of Elders**

A. *Number of Elders:* The exact number of elders is to be determined annually by the board of elders (not less than three per location). During the initiation of new church plants, the existing elder board from established sites will oversee the business of the new site as it seeks to identify and equip elder candidates.

B. *Length of Term:* The length of term shall be two years. In the case of pastoral staff explicitly designated as pastors of the church, no term limitations, length of term, or congregational re-affirmation will apply.

C. *Term Limitations:* There shall be no term limitations.

D. *Duties:* The board of elders shall:

1. Regularly meet to discuss relevant business matters of the church not less than once per month. Elders are expected to maintain regular communication with one another in order to handle issues arising within the church between meetings.

Finally, the elder board will regularly devote time to encouragement of one another, prayer, and spiritual growth.

2. By appointment fill any vacancy that may occur on the board of elders. The person so appointed shall serve the full un-expired term of the person he is replacing;
3. Annually evaluate the pastoral staff;
4. Confirm Ministry Team leaders;
5. Keep the congregation informed as to their activities at each business meeting.
6. Oversee and give leadership to all Ministry Teams;
7. Be responsible for the spiritual development, direction, planning and coordination of Church goals;
8. Represent the Church in legal and contractual matters;
9. Provide budget parameters to the Finance & Records Ministry Team; approve and recommend the annual church budget to the congregation in compliance with the policies set forth in the church constitution.
10. Make line item adjustments up to \$1,000.00 per line in the budget as the year progresses. The total annual budget, however, shall not be increased beyond 5% of the affirmed annual budget without congregational approval;
11. Be responsible for proper management, distribution, and recording of the Church's funds.

#### **D. Voting:**

All decisions made by the board of elders shall be by simple majority vote.

### **Article IV: Ministry Teams**

- A. *Qualifications of Team Leaders:* A ministry team leader shall be a member who exhibits the character and qualities set forth in Titus 1:8,9.

*B. Length of Term:* Ministry team leaders shall continue at their post indefinitely. The elder board will be responsible for reviewing ministry team leaders annually to ensure accountability.

*C. Duties:* Ministry Teams shall:

1. Have responsibility for the administration of all ministries and other activities as approved by the board of elders.
  - a. Lead, direct and organize all children's and youth ministries, Sunday School, worship services, discipleship groups, Bible studies, women's & men's groups, social ministries, and any other ministry of the Church with guidance and encouragement from the board of elders.
  - b. Be responsible for all church properties, provide maintenance for same, and set policy for use of church facilities for other than regular church programs.
2. Annually prepare (based on ministry requirements) and present a budget to the elder board and be prepared to address these budget needs before the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

## **Article V: Administrative Division**

The board of elders is responsible for appointing trustworthy individuals to serve in the task of financial stewardship, accounting, and management of resources. The designated bookkeeper is responsible for presenting regular statements concerning the finances of the church to the board of elders not less than quarterly. These statements will direct the elders of Downtown Mission Church in amending the yearly budget according to incoming funds and outgoing expenditures. Any hiring of financial or administrative staff to perform these duties will follow the guidelines set forth in Article IX of the constitution.

## **Article VI: Discipline**

### **A. Unchristian Conduct and Grievances Between Believers**

When the actions of a member are deemed to be detrimental to the church or any member thereof, (i.e. impenitently practicing a known sin as defined in the Bible and/or habitually neglecting church obligations) the matter shall be considered

by the board of elders or its appointed agency. This process shall include confidential inquiry, counsel to the members involved, and recommendation to the Church for appropriate action if necessary. The spirit of this action is to be supportive and expressive of the acceptance, help, and forgiveness of the Church. If the member responds favorably to the inquiry by giving evidence of innocence (or repentance, if necessary) no further action shall be required. Should the member fail to respond favorably, the board of elders shall recommend to the Church that his or her name be removed from membership. If possible, the member must be notified of the meeting and given the privilege of speaking on his or her own behalf. This process will follow the standard set forth for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-20. All matters of personal grievance within the church will also be counseled to follow the same pattern, with appropriate counsel given by the board of elders to the unreconciled parties with the aim of restoration and church unity. Such grievances may also be considered a subject of church discipline if an attitude of impenitence continues.

#### **Article VIII: Indemnification**

Downtown Mission Church shall indemnify any and all persons who may serve or have served at any time as a pastor, associate pastor or in another executive level staff position in the church, as a church officer, or member of a church board or committee, as a youth leader for a church youth organization or as a teacher or counselor of the Church elected or appointed by the Church or any board of committee of the Church, against any and all expenses, including amounts paid upon judgments, counsel fees, and amounts paid in settlement (before or after suit is commenced) actually and necessarily incurred by such persons in connection with the defense or settlement of any claim, action, suit or proceeding in which they, or any of them, are made parties, or a party, or which may be asserted against any of them or any of them by reason of being or having been in one or more of the aforesaid positions, except in relation to matters as to which any such person shall be adjudged in any action, suit or proceeding to be liable for his own negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties. Such indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any law, bylaw, agreement or otherwise.

#### **Article IX: Amendments**

Amendments to these By-Laws will follow the same process as noted in the Downtown Mission Church constitution for the amending of the church constitution.