

CONSTITUTION OF COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Amended: May 7, 2023

PREAMBLE

In order that the witness of this church may be carried out in accordance with scriptural doctrines; that its worship, teachings, ministry, and fellowship may be conducted in harmony with Christian principles; and that its business affairs may be administered in an orderly fashion and in a responsible manner consistent with biblical teachings, we do adopt and set forth this constitution and its accompanying bylaws. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to its associate churches, affiliate churches and other churches in the body of Christ.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND INCORPORATION

This Church shall be called **Community of Faith**, located at 5208 Meadowland Pkwy, Marion, Illinois 69295 (*Formerly addressed as: 1105 North Refuge Road, Carterville, Illinois.*) This Church shall be a subsidiary corporation unified under the leadership and oversight of the Hands of Hope Foundation and will serve as the head of a new **Community of Faith Church Global Family**. This Body has been incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

ARTICLE II - FOUNDING VISION

Community of Faith was born in the heart of God. It was conceived in the mind of God, and its vision was given to men to be carried out in the power of God.

In 1979, while serving as evangelism director of the Illinois Baptist State Association, God called John Somers to leave his work and begin a new church in southern Illinois. At the same time, Les Snyder was also called by the Lord to leave his position with a church near Chicago and he became the first music minister.

Together, they came to southern Illinois to establish a non-traditional church. It was to be regional in outreach, have multiple pastors, have a ministry to pastors, and have or help sponsor a school. It was to be a house of prayer, meeting the material needs of people in addition to spiritual needs – a “church without walls”.

The initial word, given from Isaiah 19: 18 and 19, indicated an area at the intersection of Illinois routes 13 and 148, which the Lord miraculously made available. Home prayer meetings preceded the first service, held Sunday, November 4, 1979, at John A. Logan College, Carterville, Illinois. The church was constituted January 27, 1980, as Community of Faith Baptist Church.

About a year later, when the Lord was bringing people from many denominational backgrounds, He clearly instructed that the words “Baptist Church” be removed from the church name. His intent was for it to be a community of faith! The ministries of the church developed as the people responded to the Lord’s promptings, enabled by His gifts and blessing.

ARTICLE III – MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to be a “COMMUNITY OF FAITH”. We hope to achieve that with the Vision of “GROWING FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.” Those Core Values are PRAYER, OUTREACH, EVANGELISM, WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP. And our Core Values, the very foundation stones we will use to shape this House of God. All that we do will be GROUNDED IN PRAYER, we will bring people in by OUTREACH & EVANGELISM, and together we will WORSHIP and spend time in DISCIPLESHIP.

ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The core beliefs of Community of Faith Church are grounded in Biblical truth and summed up by the "Apostles' Creed".

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church***, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***The holy Catholic Church is a traditional statement. This is not a reference to the Roman Catholic denomination. Rather, it refers to the Unified body of Christ as seen in scripture. The word "catholic" means united.

Summary of our Core Beliefs:

The Trinity/Triune God: God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

God as Father: God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.

God as Son: Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose

bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.

God as Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

Free Will: The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.

Original Sin: Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

The Atonement: Comes in Jesus Christ who became the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Resurrection: The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Justification by Faith: The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Word of God: The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New Testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.

The Church: The Church is composed of all such persons (Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

Additional Theological & Biblical Reference to our Core Beliefs:

1. **God, the Father:** God, assisted by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, made the heavens and the earth. He is referred to by Jesus as Father and by Paul as Abba. He is the giver of

every good and perfect gift. Genesis 1:1; Psalms 68: 5; Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 26:39; Romans 8:15; James 1:17.

2. **The Person and Work of Christ:** The Lord Jesus, the Christ, and the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Our redemption and salvation are guaranteed to us by His physical resurrection from the dead. Luke 1:38; John 1:1, 14 and 18; Romans 3:24-26; I Corinthians 15:4; Colossians 1:15-20; I John 2:2.
3. **The Personality of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, regenerates believers in Christ, sets each member in the Body of Christ, the church; indwells them, seals them unto the day of redemption, teaches all truth and bestows spiritual gifts upon each saved believer. Jesus baptizes and fills with the Holy Spirit those yielded to Him. John 15:26; 16:7-15; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; I John 2:27.
4. **Holy Scriptures:** The Holy Bible, as set out in the original manuscripts, is the verbally inspired Word of God; authoritative, inerrant, and God-breathed. Matthew 5:18; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21.
5. **Holiness:** God has called Christians out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – from sin to holiness. It is God’s will that we partake of His nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Matthew 5:48; John 8:1-11; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16; II Peter 1:4.
6. **Salvation:** Salvation is a gift of God through grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. John 1:12; Romans 3:25-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.
7. **The New Creation:** God’s masterful work of creating the universe by His Word is exceeded only by the greatest masterpiece of His workmanship, namely, a Christian. Becoming a new creation helps us to face life knowing that our identification with Christ enables us to hold fast to our confession, overcome in life and be more than conquerors in Christ. II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.
8. **The Total Depravity of Man:** Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam’s sin, the human race fell. Man inherited a sinful nature and became alienated from God. Man is totally unable to regain his former position by or through his own means. Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 53:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:12; I John 1:8.
9. **The Church:** The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is vested all the power for its government. According to His commandments, Christians are to associate themselves into communities of local churches. God admonishes His people to assemble regularly for worship. God still heals, delivers, and works miracles through His church. Deuteronomy 12: 5-7; Isaiah 53:5; John 14:12-14; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:25; 13:8; James 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24.
10. **The Head of the Church:** The Head of the Church is Christ Himself. He is the final and ultimate authority in all matters of faith, doctrine, and decision. All divinely approved church practices in the New Testament reflect the Church’s own

acknowledgement of God's hand directing the Church. Where the Church failed to submit itself to Christ, He spoke firmly and unequivocally in denunciation. He expresses His will today through the Holy Spirit and the written Word. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 5:27; 14:16-18 and 26; 16:13-14; 17:2; Acts 13:2-4; 14:26-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 2 and 3.

11. **Baptism:** Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ; of remission of sins and of his giving himself up to God, and to live and walk in newness of life. It is not a prerequisite to salvation. Matthew 3:6-8; Mark 1:5, 9 and 15; Luke 3:3-16; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.
12. **The Lord's Day:** The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance and should be employed in exercise of worship and spiritual devotion. Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 2:27-28; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.
13. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and juice of grapes; and to be observed by His Church until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice but is designed to commemorate His death and our communion with Him and with our church fellowship. It is open to all believers. Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-26.
14. **Citizenship:** Civil government is of divine appointment and established by God for the good order of human society. Government officials are to be prayed for and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7.
15. **Marriage:** The first institution that God gave mankind was marriage. He joined a man and a woman in a special and sacred union. To this union He gave a special gift – sexuality. This gift expressed in any other form (example: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, transsexuality, or bestiality) does not have God's approval. Genesis 2:18-25; 3:16; 4:1; Exodus 20:14 and 17; Song of Solomon; Matthew 19:1-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; Revelation 19:7-9.
16. **The Responsibility of Believers:** All believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior. It is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scripture and seek to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world. Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16 and 25; II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:16-20.
17. **Sanctity of Life:** All human life was created by God and should be valued. The valueless ending of human life is not approved of by Him. Abortion and euthanasia are not acceptable means of dealing with life's difficulties. Exodus 20:13; II Peter 3:19.
18. **Stewardship:** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. All we have and are we owe to Him. We recognize the Lord as owner of all our possessions. Christians cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally should contribute their talents, abilities and possessions to advancing the Savior's cause on earth. The purpose of the tithe is to enable us to discharge some of the tremendous sense of obligation and indebtedness we have toward God and to teach us to always put God first in our lives. Deuteronomy 14:23; Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4 and 19-21; Luke 12:16-21; Acts 2:44-47; Romans 6:6-22;

I Corinthians 4:1-2; Philippians 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18-19.

19. **Last Things:** At the end of the age, every person will be judged. The unrighteous will go to Hell, a place of everlasting punishment. The righteous, through Christ, will receive their reward and dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; Revelation 19-22.
20. **The Second Coming of Christ:** Jesus will return personally and visibly to the earth according to His promise. Believers are to live sensible, righteous and godly lives in the present age looking for His imminent return. Matthew 24:27-44; Titus 2:12-13.

ARTICLE V- CHURCH COVENANT

Because our God, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is a covenant-keeping God, demonstrating His eternal love for us through the death of His only Son on the cross in order to provide complete redemption for our sins and by His indwelling Spirit transforming us into the likeness of His Son, we desire to respond to His love by obeying His command and loving Him with all our heart, mind and soul; and to love each other as He has commanded.

We further choose to forgive each other as He has forgiven us through Christ Jesus and to encourage and comfort each other using the same comfort we have received from God.

As Jesus prayed for us, we also desire to be brought to complete unity so that the world will know Jesus is sent from God to save all who will believe in Him. In accordance with Ephesians 4:16 nlt—*“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”*

Genesis 1:1; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Deuteronomy 7:9; Matthew 6:12; Matthew 22:27-28 and 39; Matthew 26:28 or 27-29; John 3:16-18; John 14:15-17; John 15:12; John 17:23; II Corinthians 1:3-5; II Corinthians 3:16-18; II Corinthians 11:25-26; Ephesians 4:16 and 32; Colossians 1:1-20; Colossians 3:13; Hebrews 9:11-15

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT

The governance of this church shall fall under care, trust, custody, and future stewardship of the Board of Directors of the Hands of Hope Foundation, who will function as the governing Board of Elders & Mothers of Community of Faith for all Global operations and as general overseers of the mission, vision, and core values with the Executive Director serving as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer for its global operations.

Further, the new Board will be fully vested to develop and join with other local Community of Faith church fellowships and network together to form a *“Denomination body and network”*. A local Community of Faith Church leadership model and plan for local church operations shall be developed with all its church planting partners and

friends, and for the operation of its own associate member churches and affiliate member churches under its covering as a denominational network in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostles Creed and the Great Commission.

The Board will develop local church and regional Boards of Elders & Mothers that will provide leadership on their behalf at the local and regional leadership operation models to provide for the oversight of the various local churches and global regions under its care in conversation and in covenant with those local church fellowships.

ARTICLE VII – CONDUCTING CHURCH AFFAIRS

The conduct of the affairs of Community of Faith not addressed in the Articles of Incorporation or this constitution will be outlined in the bylaws of Community of Faith. These bylaws define the church's organizational structure, the role of members in the structure, and the operating procedures.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be repealed, altered, or amended when an oversight has been discovered or when a need to change becomes apparent. The Board of Elders & Mothers shall have a time of local congregational input from its pastors, leaders, and members, and then will enter a time of prayer and final discernment. Afterward, as the Board of Elders & Mothers sense unity with the will of God, they can move forward to adopt the proposed changes to this constitution.

This amended Constitution was adopted the 7th Day of May 2023 by a unanimous decision of the Board of Elders of Community of Faith to the Glory of God. (Reference: Community of Faith Church, Special Called Meeting to Finalize the Resolution of Unification with the Hands of Hope Foundation dated Sunday, May 7, 2023.)

Board of Elders & Mothers Approving the Amended Constitution:

Elder: Rev. Dr. Troy D. Benitone

Mother: Mrs. Beth Benitone

Elder: Dr. Jeffrey Parks

Mother: Dr. Sherrie Parks

Elder: Mr. Jerry Johnson

Mother: Mrs. Kim Johnson

BYLAWS OF COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Amended: May 7, 2023

ARTICLE I – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of Community of Faith shall consist of such persons who have accepted and publicly confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and have been received into the church by one of its pastors have completed new members training, profession of faith and baptism.

Section 101 – Qualifications

Persons presenting themselves for membership may be accepted in the following manner:

- by profession of faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, as Savior, and through baptism according to the command of Christ; and
- by commitment to church covenant classes (*i.e. Faith Steps & Plumblines or their equivalent*); and
- by reception in a public worship service and through confession and acknowledgment of our covenant of commitment: *“It is my desire to be a member of Community of Faith Church. I confess Jesus Christ as my Savior and I am committed to the teachings of His Word. I am committed to the mission, vision, and core values of Community of Faith Church and I will be faithful as a member with my time, talent, and tithes.”*

Section 102 - Role of Members

Every member of the church 18 years old and above is entitled to participate in the nominating of pastors, local elders, local deacons and/or church leaders and to provide input at family forums.

Every member of the church 18 years old and above is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for any of the above-mentioned leadership roles in the church.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 103 – Discipline

At Community of Faith, we want to emphasize that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) is available for counselling and guidance. Action taken shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than for punishment.

Discipline procedures:

- Should any member of this church be found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life, the church reserves the right and has the responsibility to administer scriptural forms of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians

5:11-13, and Galatians 6:1-2. Such discipline will be administered through the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*). Should faithful efforts by the Board of Elders & Mothers render no promise of reform or manifest no spirit of repentance on the part of the member in question, the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) may terminate that person's membership.

- A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings.
- A member removed from fellowship by disciplinary action may be re-instated by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

Section 104 - Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated due to the death of the member or when the member unites with another church.

The name of any member who is inactive for a period of six months, without just cause, will be put in an inactive file. Every effort shall be made by the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) to bring that person back into the fellowship. If there is no evidence that the member intends to rejoin the fellowship, his or her name shall be removed from membership after an inactive period of one year.

Should a member be an offense to the church and/or the Lord, the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) may terminate that person's membership, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring repentance and amendment.

Any person whose membership has been terminated, for any offense, can be restored by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

Section 105 - Conflict Resolution

Should a dispute arise between members, The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) are available for counsel and guidance.

Disputes among members should, as much as possible, be resolved in accordance with the principles set out in Matthew 18:15-17.

If the first two steps found in Matthew 18:15-17 still leave an unresolved dispute, then the matter shall be brought to The Board of Elders & Mothers (*or their designated pastoral leadership or leadership team*) for final resolution on behalf of the Church.

The primary aim of discipline shall be restoration of the members to fellowship with God, the other party, and the church Body. Community of Faith has not only the right, but also the duty to practice such discipline in a Christian manner and to protect the integrity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE II – GENERAL OVERSEERS & ECCLESIASTICAL LEADERSHIP OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The Board of Directors of the Hands of Hope Foundation, functions as the governing Board of Elders & Mothers of Community of Faith for all Global operations and as general overseers of the mission, vision, and core values with the Executive Director serving as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer for its global operations.

Section 201 – The Executive Director and Ecclesiastical leader

The Executive Director will function as the ecclesiastical leader and lead general overseer of the Community of Faith Church and its subsidiaries. The purpose of this union is to allow Community of Faith Church to serve as the global base or denominational headquarters to begin a new church family network.

The Executive Director and lead general overseer will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight of the mission, vision, objects and core values of those Community of Faith families in that region for all day-to-day regional operations through those respective Community of Faith local churches.

Section 202 – Relationships in the Community of Faith Global Family

Community of Faith Church will feature four basic levels of relationships in its network:

(1) Community of Faith Associate Member Pastors & Churches, (2) Community of Faith Affiliate Member Pastors & Churches, (3) Partners of Community of Faith & (4) Friends of Community of Faith.

- 1) **Community of Faith Associate Member Pastors & Churches-** are local churches and/or pastors that we have established, planted or who have agreed to come under the formal ecclesiastical leadership and covering of the Community of Faith Church Global Family and are recognized as a formal part of our greater church family. Said, Associate pastors and/or churches, are a part of the Community of Faith Church Global Denominational Structure and shall have local church governance in keeping with the Community of Faith Church basic requirements. Associate Member Local Church Senior Pastors and Associate Pastors shall be ordained or have said, previous ordination or license to preach, recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church. Each Associate Member Local church's senior pastor and a local elected lay-leader, after receiving the recommendation of their pastor and elected by the local body, shall serve as a full-member of our COF Advisory Board in that Region and said Regional Leader will be a part of the COF Global Advisory Board led by ecclesiastical leader.
- 2) **Community of faith Affiliate Member Pastors & Churches-** are local churches and/or pastors that desires an Affiliate Membership with Community of Faith Church because it is still active or connected to another governing body or

denomination, and as a result, is not able to be an Associate member, can enter into a “Covenant Relationship” with Community of Faith Church’s efforts to grow and develop faith-based communities. While they carry their own ecclesiological model, their Senior Pastor’s ordination or license-to-preach must be recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church. Each Affiliate Member Local Church’s Senior pastor and a local elected lay-leader after receiving the recommendation of their pastor and elected by the local body shall serve as a member with the right of voice on our COF Advisory Board in that Region and said Regional Leader will be a part of the COF Global Advisory Board led by ecclesiastical leader.

- 3) **Partners of Community of Faith-** Individuals, Organization, Churches, Business, and other such Entities who enter a “*formal relationship*” to partner with us in a project, outreach or with a specific faith-community will be known as Partners of Community of Faith. These partners are independent free agents, but with a formal common interest and a formal covenant partnership and relationship on a more long-term basis. Such Partners shall be recognized as a special Partner of the Hands of Hope Foundation and the Community of Faith Church Global Family.
- 4) **Friends of Community of Faith-** Individuals, Organizations, Churches, Business, and other such Entities who share our Mission & Vision who walk alongside us to support, facilitate and partner in our work will be known as Friends. These Friends function as independent free agents, but with common interest and communal support for special projects, events, or work on both a short and long-term basis shall be recognized as special Friends of the Hands of Hope Foundation and the Community of Faith Church Global Family.

Further, a local Community of Faith Church leadership model and plan for local church operations shall be developed with all its church planting partners and friends, and for its own associate member and affiliate member pastors and churches in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostles Creed, and the Great Commission.

Section 203 – Approval & Appointment of Leadership in the Community of Faith Global Family

The Executive Director, as the General Overseer will approve and appoint ecclesiastical leadership to guide the Community of Faith Church Global family in its various global regions, and in turn, approve the appointment or call of pastoral leadership to be the leaders of our Community of Faith Associate Member Churches and will provide an affirmation for the leaders of our Community of Faith Affiliated Member Churches.

ARTICLE III – GLOBAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Church leadership includes all Elders, Mothers, Pastors, and Leadership Team Members/Deacons serving the church whether locally, regionally, or globally.

- must be active in the life and work of the church as a baptized believer in Jesus Christ;
- should seek the Lord and delight in Him;
- should give adequate time to daily quiet time, personal prayer and study of the Word;
- should strive after godliness;
- should be a pastor to his/her own family first;
- should spend time together with his/her family in prayer, spiritual conversation, and the Word;
- should meet the needs of his/her spouse, deepening their intimacy and relationship together;
- should be a soul winner and regular in bringing their tithes;
- should be an example to the believers as outlined in I Peter 5:1-3.

ARTICLE IV – LOCAL BOARD OF ELDERS & MOTHERS

Section 301 – Responsibilities

The Local Churches Board of Elders & Mothers shall consist of all pastors, elders and mothers. The Local Board is responsible for the administration of the local church under God's authority and in particular is responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the local church and its members. Collectively the Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall:

- define and interpret the overall objectives and aspirations of the church, which will produce progress toward fulfilling the scriptural purposes for its existence;
- oversee the development of strategies by the various boards, committees, ministry groups, and individuals, using available resources to meet the goals of the church. This includes all programs, ministries, meetings, and other efforts of the church. Individual Elders & Mothers may be assigned as liaison to various boards and leadership teams for specific periods of time;
- obtain from the Body nominations of those who are willing and qualified to serve as Elders, Mothers, Pastors and Leadership Team Members/Deacons serving the church whether locally, regionally or globally;
- become aware of the spiritual needs and concerns of those in the congregation, and assist in the establishment of goals for the church based on these spiritual needs and concerns;
- administer scriptural forms of church discipline to members, as outlined in Matthew 18:15- 17, when a member is found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life;
- act in termination of membership as provided in the bylaws;
- ensure all candidates for position of Elder or Mother are fully qualified according to the bylaws;

- suspend or remove church leaders when necessary;
- appoint persons to and dismiss persons from paid or unpaid administrative or staff positions. For paid positions, appointments should follow sound budgetary practices. Dismissal of persons from administrative or staff positions requires a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers.

ARTICLE V – LOCAL ELDERS & MOTHERS

Section 401 - Selection and Removal

Local Churches Elders & Mothers shall be nominated by the local church body, approved by the current Local Board of Elders & Mothers, and shall serve in that capacity in staggered terms of five years. A local elder or mother may be suspended indefinitely by a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers. Local Elders may be removed from office upon their own request. There shall be no less than five Elders & Mothers, but no more than seven.

Section 402 – Vacancy

At the end of an Elder's or Mother's term of service or at any time a vacancy occurs, the remaining Elders & Mothers shall make and can receive nominations from the Body and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in selecting a man to be affirmed by the church Body as a new elder or mother to be affirmed by the church as a new elder. It is our purpose and plan to select Elders and Mothers that are in healthy marriages and to offer them as a couple to leadership. Where one has demonstrated a Biblically exemplary single life according to scripture, a single Elder or Mother of the Church could be discerned to serve on the Board of the Local Church.

Section 403 – Qualifications

Elders & Mothers should be qualified in accordance with the Word of the New Testament passages Ephesians 4:11-16, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-3. Elders & Mothers should be men and women of intellectual and spiritual maturity, with proven Christian character and sound judgment, exemplary in their conduct, and effective leaders and teachers. They must be men and women who passionately believe they are called to this place of ministry. Additionally, Elders & Mothers shall be members of Community of Faith and shall have proven themselves before the membership in other capacities of service. Elders & Mothers shall be consecrated by Community of Faith with the laying on of hands by the current Local Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of their directing/lead/senior pastor.

Section 404 – Responsibilities

Each Elder or Mother, individually and according to the situation, should

- be equipped to teach God's Word according to Acts 6:4, Ephesians 4:11, Titus 1:9;
- establish relationships of support and accountability with other elders & mothers, so that no gap is left for the enemy to enter;

- meet with other elders & mothers of the church at the stated times for the purpose of prayer, discussion, making decisions related to the life of the church, and other duties pertaining to the Local Board of Elders & Mothers;
- be available to pray for the sick according to James 5:14-15, and faithfully pray for the whole church ministry according to Acts 6:4
- Elders of the Church shall give priority in leadership, counsel, guidance and mentoring of boys, sons, husband, fathers and men. Mothers of the Church shall give priority in leadership, counsel, guidance and mentoring of girls, daughters, wives, mothers and women. Elders & Mothers of the Church together should strive to use their collective wisdom and leading to provide the same for couples, families and households as examples of Godly houses according to Joshua 24:15.

ARTICLE VI- PASTORS

The New Testament indicates that the early church had several pastors in many of the congregations. The pastoral staff at Community of Faith consists of a Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor and Associate Pastors. Additional Part-time Local Pastors may be added as the Local Board of Elders & Mothers perceives the need. All pastors should strive to meet the scriptural calling as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7. All pastors shall be ordained ministers with doctrinal beliefs consistent with the Community of Faith Statement of Faith.

- Associate Member Church Senior Pastor's shall be ordained or have said, previous ordination or license to preach, recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Global Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of its Executive Director and lead general overseer who will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight and approval of ordination or recognition of credentials of its Associate Member Church Senior and Associate Pastors.
- Affiliate Member Local Church's Senior Pastor', while they carry their own ecclesiological model, their Senior Pastor's ordination or license-to-preach must be recognized and formally certified by Community of Faith Church Global Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of its Executive Director and lead general overseer who will be responsible with approval by Global Board of Elders & Mothers to appoint Regional Ecclesiastical leaders and assistants to provide for effective oversight and recognition of credentials of its Affiliate Member Church Senior Pastor.

Section 501- Selection of Pastors

The Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall solicit candidates and interview them. Said candidates can be recommended and referred to the local board for consideration by recommendation of the General Overseer or the Regional ecclesiastical leader from the Community of Faith Church Global Family by the local church.

- Each candidate shall address the congregation as directed and scheduled by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers.
- The Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall schedule a fellowship with the candidate and the congregation.
- After selecting a primary candidate, the Local Board of Elders & Mothers shall call for a family forum to share their impressions of the candidate and how they believe God is leading them regarding his selection. At the conclusion of their presentations, the Board shall ask for congregational input and a time of discernment and prayer will take place. After that, when the Local Board of Elders & Mothers believes they have sensed unity with the will of God, they shall announce their decision.
- The Local Board of Elders & Mothers will then request that the General Overseer *(or the designated ecclesiastical leadership appointed to guide the Community of Faith Church Global family in that specific global regions)* to approve the appointment or call of a pastor to be the local leaders of a Community of Faith Associate Member Church.
- Together the Local Board of Elders & Mothers along with the ecclesiastical leadership for the region will plan and hold an ordination and installation service or a recognition and installation service for those pastors who have previously been ordained as a pastor.

Section 502 – Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor

A. Qualifications

The Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor should meet the qualifications as outlined in Article III of the bylaws of Community of Faith. They must passionately believe that they have been called by God to serve in this place.

B. Responsibilities

The Directing/Senior/Lead Pastor should function as the chief shepherd for the Body, guarding the spiritual health of the church staff and encouraging a holy life before God and the church family. Each church officer in turn is mutually responsible for encouraging the directing pastor to lead a holy life before God and the church family. The directing pastor should strive to maintain harmonious relationships with all church associate pastors, leaders, and staff.

- The lead pastor should be the spokesman representing the church staff, as well as serve as supervisor for the employees of the church.
- The lead pastor should minister to the congregation through the regular preaching and teaching from the scriptures.
- The lead pastor should be available to visit and pray for the sick according to James 5:14-15.

- The lead pastor should faithfully pray for the church Body and ministry.
- The lead pastor should be available to pray with and counsel members of the Body.
- The lead pastor should establish relationships of support and accountability with the other associate pastors so that no gap is left for the enemy to enter.
- The lead pastor should establish relationships with area pastors and seek to find areas to work together to strengthen the Body of Christ in the region.

Section 503 - Associate Pastors

All associate pastor positions are full-time paid positions having a specialized ministry such as administration, outreach, students, youth, small groups, Christian education, or any other ministry according to the needs of the church. The associate pastors should be capable of serving as backup for the lead pastor in all pastoral roles. These positions take their general vision and direction from the Lead Pastor in conjunction with The Local Board of Elders & Mothers but manage their own specialty areas. They also serve as members of the Board of Elders & Mothers.

Section 504 - Part-time Local Pastors

Part-time, bi-vocational Local Pastors may be added to the staff when the need warrants, having specific outlined responsibilities provided by the Board of Elders & Mothers.

Section 505 - Removal of a Pastor

A pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. The pastor's tenure of service shall terminate upon his resignation, or by a decision of the Board of Elders & Mothers. Grounds for removal of a pastor include, but not limited to, significant departure from the Statement of Faith of Community of Faith, substantial departure from biblical conduct and lifestyle, and serious failure to fulfill the duties of the pastoral office. In the event there arises a circumstance that warrants the dismissal of any of the pastors, the Board of Elders & Mothers will communicate appropriate information to the local Body.

Section 506 - Compensation and Benefits

All pastoral salaries and benefits will be determined by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers working in conjunction with the appropriate budgetary teams that might exist in the church. (See Section 603.) A total monetary package will be prepared for each pastor position. The salary of each pastor and other compensation such as social security, insurance, pension, etc. shall be specified in writing and made part of the call. Likewise, such items such as vacation, attendance at meetings and conferences, moving expenses, and other agreed-upon conditions shall be addressed in the call. The call shall be in the form of a written agreement. Compensation for each pastor shall be reviewed annually. Changes in compensation and initial conditions of employment are to be enacted by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers, with recommendations from the Lead Pastor and in consultation with the appropriate budgetary teams. (See Section 603.) No pastor shall be involved in setting his own compensation, or that of other pastors.

Section 507 - Outside Endeavors

Involvement by any Lead or Associate Pastor in work or other endeavors outside of the church and its ministries should be approved by the Board of Elders & Mothers.

The work or endeavors of Part-time Local Pastors is outlined in their call by the Local Board of Elders & Mothers (See Section 504), but if that changes, the changes need to be updated and verified to being still within the agreed call. It is important that our work is representative of and pleasing to the Lord.

ARTICLE VII – LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS FUNCTION IN THE BIBLICAL ROLE AS DEACONS

Section 601 - Selection and Removal

Leadership Team Members function in according to the Bible as Deacons. Deacons in the Bible are men and/or women who have been nominated by the Body and approved by the Board of Elders & Mothers with a recommendation by their Lead Pastor to serve in a ministry area within the local church. A Leadership Team Member/Deacon serves by a decision of the Local Board of Elders & Mothers. They function like the Levites did to the Aaronic Priestly family as assistants and helpers to fulfill the mission, vision and core values of the Body.

Section 602 – Qualifications

Leadership Team Members/Deacons must be members of Community of Faith. They should be men or women of spiritual discernment, exemplary in their Christian character and conduct, and of good reputation in the community outside of the church. They should be willing to be servants of the church Body in accordance with the meaning of the work as outlined in Acts 6:1-6 and should be qualified in accordance with the guidelines in I Timothy 3:8-13. Leadership Team Members/Deacons should be consecrated by Community of Faith with the laying on of hands by the Board of Elders & Mothers under the leadership of the Lead Pastor.

Leadership Team Members/Deacons are to serve under the leadership of, and report to, the Board of Elders & Mothers. Since they are to be responsible for various business functions, practical duties, ministry areas, established outreaches and other functions or activities of the local church, it is suggested that the leadership team member/deacon possess abilities, gifts, experience, certifications, education, and talents in the realms of (but not limited to) the area they are being assigned to serve.

All of the work of the Leadership Team Members/Deacons fall under the supervision and guidance of the Board of Elders & Mothers, under the direction and leadership of the Lead Pastor. The Leadership Team/Deacon is there to enhance, strengthen and expand the work of the Lead Pastor and Board of Elders & Mothers, and allow them to be more effective. It shall never supersede or be a substitute or pull away from their responsibility to provide leadership to the local church.

Section 603 – Responsibilities

A Leadership Team Member/Deacon should

- visit the sick, elderly and others requiring contact with or from the church;
- become aware of the physical needs of those in the church and community at large, and to develop and implement methods of meeting those needs;
- distribute money from church benevolence funds consistent with biblical guidelines and procedures established by the Local Board of Elders & Mother;
- devise and implement effective biblical methods of collecting the gifts of the Lord's people;
- assist the church in understanding biblical financial stewardship;
- assist the Local Elders & Mothers and Pastoral Staff in leading services, ceremonies and offering the ordinances as directed;
- provide for ministries to children, youth, singles, adults and various groups where their specialized ministry is discerned as needed by the local church;
- to serve as assistants to staff pastors in various areas of ministry to make enhance and make their work more effective;
- keep accurate written minutes of all Leadership Team Meetings and to be submitted to the Lead Pastor and the Local Board of Elders & Mothers;
- fulfill the responsibilities of trustees who serve as legal officers of the church where needed;
- to serve as a finance team or secretary monitoring budgets, salaries and planning expenditures.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH STAFF

The Board of Elders & Mothers shall select and remove staff members of the church, as well as fix their compensation and job responsibilities. No staff member shall be involved in setting his or her own salary or benefits. The church secretary and/or church treasurer shall keep accurate records of all church business, preserve all church documents, and maintain a register of church membership. The church secretary and/or church treasurer may be designated as a corporate officer (church secretary) for state legal purposes.

ARTICLE IX – ANNUAL GATHERING

Local Community of Faith Churches will hold an annual gathering. The annual meetings will include a report and discussion of the annual budget and any other pertinent

documents. The Local Board of Elders & Mothers may call additional gatherings if the need or discernment for such arises.

Section 801 - Calling and Notification of Meetings

All Annual Gatherings will be announced from the pulpit or published in the church bulletin on two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting. Such announcements shall state the date and time of the meeting, and an agenda along with an outline of the called or planned topics to be reported or discussed.

Section 802 – Moderator

The Lead Pastor, or in a vacant pulpit, a Representative of the Board of Elders & Mothers shall be appointed by the Board of Elders & Mothers to act as the moderator for the Annual Gathering.

Section 803 - Transaction of Business

The Community of Faith year runs from January 1 and continues through December 31 of the same year.

Section 804 – Procedures

Official minutes of all Annual Gatherings shall be recorded and the Minutes from the annual gathering shall be made available to members of the local church and provided to the regional leadership as a record of the meeting.

ARTICLE X – PROPERTY

All property purchased by the local Community of Faith will be held in the name of the local church. All funds received by the local church will be held in an account belonging to Community of Faith. No property will be distributed to pastors, staff members or church members without the approval of the local Board of Elders & Mothers. Unused property will be sold for a reasonable market value or donated to another church or 501c3 organization or NGO outside the USA.

ARTICLE XI – POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Community of Faith will not endorse any candidate, donate, or contribute to any candidate's political campaign, participate or engage in political fundraising events, distribute statements for or against a particular candidate, nor engage in any other activity that may favor or oppose a candidate.

Registering people to exercise their right to vote, and providing voter guides for informational purposes is permissible, as long as they remain neutral.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be repealed, altered, or amended when an oversight has been discovered or when a need to change becomes apparent. The Board of Elders & Mothers shall have a time of local congregational input from its pastors, leaders, and members,

and then will enter a time of prayer and final discernment. Afterward, as the Board of Elders & Mothers sense unity with the will of God, they can move forward to adopt the proposed changes to these Bylaws.

These amended Bylaws were adopted the 7th Day of May 2023 by a unanimous decision of the Board of Elders of Community of Faith to the Glory of God. (Reference: Community of Faith Church, Special Called Meeting to Finalize the Resolution of Unification with the Hands of Hope Foundation dated Sunday, May 7, 2023.)

Board of Elders & Mothers
Approving the Amended Constitution:

Elder: Rev. Dr. Troy D. Benitone

Mother: Mrs. Beth Benitone

Elder: Dr. Jeffrey Parks

Mother: Dr. Sherrie Parks

Elder: Mr. Jerry Johnson

Mother: Mrs. Kim Johnson