



## **Bread of Life Fellowship Church, Inc.**

A New Jersey Non-profit Corporation

### **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

*Adopted by the Board of Elders of Bread of Life Fellowship on July 1, 2006  
and amended by member vote August 2021*

*Adopted by the Board of Trustees of Bread of Life Fellowship Church on May 20, 2025.*

*Amended by member vote July 27, 2025*

#### **Article I: Name**

The name of the entire ministry, including the church, offices, ministries and outreaches is called ***Bread of Life Fellowship Church, Inc.*** (herein referred to as Bread of Life Fellowship). The word Church was added to the name when switched over from an LLC to Incorporated on 4-15-2025

#### **Article II: Purpose**

*Except the Lord build a house, the laborers labor in vain.* It is our calling to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to build His church. To that end, we seek a biblical foundation based on the first church established in the book of Acts – a community of believers devoted to the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers. With no concern for modern modes of ministry and “pragmatism,” and with a commitment to systematically teach the entire Word of God in all of its power, and to foster fellowship based on genuine agape love, our purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission of Messiah to make disciples of all nations. This purpose will find its expression through a common dedication to Bible Study, prayer, worship, fellowship, service, and the highest standards of personal holiness, which is achieved by exalting a risen and sovereign Christ.

#### **Article III: Statement of Faith**

The Statement of Faith is published by the church as a separate document, but is considered part of this constitution. The Elders may alter this statement upon their unanimous agreement. The latest adopted version is the expressed position of the Elders.

#### **Article IV: Ordinances**

## **A. Water Baptism of Believers (by immersion)**

The ministry will practice and recognize believer's baptism by immersion in water, which is a picture of the believer's death, burial and resurrection with Christ. It shall only be administered to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It shall not be administered to anyone who has already been baptized as an adult in another Christian church or denomination, unless it is the clear testimony of the person that he was converted to Christ after their baptism, or that his baptism took place in an apostate church or pseudo-Christian cult. We will under no circumstance baptize infants or young children. Older children who have a clear understanding of the gospel, after counsel with their parents and agreement of the elders will be considered for baptism. The elders may recommend that a child wait until he is older to be baptized. We will also consider baptism of adults who were baptized as children before they had a full understanding of the gospel and/or a full commitment in following.

### **1. The need for Baptism**

Baptism publicly identifies the believer with Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, and with the body of Christ, the church. The repentant person is to be baptized as a step of obedience. Salvation is not contingent upon baptism; however, one would question why one who has truly been converted would not desire to obey Christ in following His command to be baptized. Upon baptism, one is publicly received into the body of Christ, the church; thus the baptized are received into full membership of Bread of Life Fellowship where they can practice the "*one anothers*" of the scripture.

### **2. The requirement for Baptism**

A person who has trusted in the person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation and sanctification is born-again and can thus be baptized. This requires more than a verbal profession. One should not be baptized without a full allegiance to Christ, whereby ownership of self is transferred to Him. This is expressed in counting the cost and denying oneself and taking up one's cross daily. In addition to the testimony of the individual being baptized, there should be a person or persons with whom the elders or ministers are familiar, who can bear witness of the true committed life of the new disciple. In most cases it will be necessary for the elders or ministers to interview the candidate to confirm his commitment before he or she enters the waters of baptism.

### **3. Administration of Baptism**

Baptism shall be administered by the elders of the congregation or their appointed minister or representative. It should be in a location where it can be witnessed by other members of the fellowship, as well as the family and friends of the one being baptized. Baptism should be offered to new disciples as often as there is a need, and it should not be delayed.

## **B. The Lord's Table: Communion**

Along with baptism, the other ordinance that the Lord ordained for His body is communion or the Lord's Table. It is to be done as an act of worship with the purpose of remembering Him - in particular His death which is a reminder of the cost for our sins. Being that communion is an ordinance that Christ has given to His church, only born-again, baptized believers should be partaking of the elements. Also, since it is a symbol of our union with one another as the body of Christ, members in good standing (or those in the process of becoming members) should partake of the elements; those who regularly

attend but are not official members of Bread of Life Fellowship should speak with the elders to confirm their testimony before regularly participating at the Lord's table. Also, as a sign of our unity with other like-minded evangelical churches, we welcome visitors from such churches to participate with us.

1. Frequency and Administration of Communion

The Lord's Table will be celebrated as often as the elders determine it to be necessary. It should be no less than once per month but can be administered as often as every meeting. Caution should be maintained that the Lord's Table not become a place of tradition, and according to the apostle Paul is not a place to enter without considering and examining oneself. Time should be given prior to communion for confession and self-examination. Communion may be administered by any elder or ministry appointed home group leader.

2. The Lord's Presence and the Table

We believe that the spiritual presence of the Lord is present at the table. We do not believe in transubstantiation or consubstantiation, that is that the corporal body of Christ is in any way present in the bread and wine, but the elements are symbols of His body and blood.

3. Withholding Communion

It may become necessary at the discretion of the elders, as a matter of discipline, to keep an individual, whom they deem it needed, from participating in communion. Withholding communion should be done only upon full agreement of the elders, as a step of discipline - only after initial disciplinary actions have been ignored or unfruitful, or as a preliminary discipline to complete dis-fellowshipping - see Article VII, Step 3 & 4. In non-disciplinary cases, the elders may counsel an individual to refrain from participation at the Lord's Table for his or her own benefit, if there is a known sin that needs to be dealt with.

**C. Marriage (Amended 1/31/16 by unanimous vote)**

Marriage sanctioned by God joins one man with one woman in an exclusive union. At the time of creation, God made male and female and defined marriage as a union of one man and one woman. (Gen 2:24, Matt 19:4-6, 1 Cor 6:9-10). We believe the only acceptable way to understand "man" and "woman" in these texts is as a *natural* man and a *natural* woman, defined by one's biological sex at birth. Sexual practices outside of this natural order, including but not limited to premarital sexual practices, adultery, homosexuality, bigamy, polygamy, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, rape, or any attempt to change or disagree with one's natural sex at birth, are violations of God's Word (1 Cor 5:1-5, 9-11, 6:9-10, 13-20, 7: 8-9, Rom 1:26-28, 1 Thess 4:3-8, Heb 13:4). A sex obtained or avowed after birth through physiological or psychological means is not a "natural" man or woman; such have no biblical warrant to marry. If the "changed" individual repents and makes every effort to return to his or her God-given gender and then desires to marry a member of the sex opposite of what he or she was born with, an elder may, with counsel, consider performing a wedding, but he is not obligated to do so.

All couples requesting to be married at the church or officiated elsewhere by an elder under the auspices of the church must subscribe and conform to the principles stated in the above paragraph in order for the elders to consider their marriage.

Marriage may be performed by any of the elders to any man and woman who are regularly part of the fellowship who complete any pre-marital application and/or prerequisites determined by the elders. Any elder may, at his own discretion, unite a man and woman (as defined above) in marriage outside of the fellowship; however, this must first be discussed with the other elders, and if the other elders do not think it beneficial for any objective reasons, the elders should not perform the marriage. Any elder may refuse to perform a marriage for any reason of personal conviction. Any elder who would officiate a wedding that is not in conformity with the biblical definition of marriage as outlined above, is not acting under the authority of the church and would be subject to discipline by the church as outlined in Article V Section B-6 on the discipline of an elder. It will be the duty of the elders to establish a policy concerning remarriage of divorced individuals and detail that policy as an addendum to this constitution.

#### **D. 'Dedication' of Children**

'Dedication' of children is a practice that was formally conducted in the Old Testament, and will not be performed at Bread of Life Fellowship. At times Christian parents in the New Covenant desire to publicly acknowledge their intention to raise their child in the fear and admonition of the Lord, with the help and guidance of other families in the church. This will not be a formal 'dedication,' and no 'vows' will be made; however since this tradition usually involves the understanding that the child will be raised with the help of the church, this is a practice open to active participants in the fellowship only. Children of single or "unequally yoked" parents may be prayed for publicly in this way, as long as the parent desiring this is a committed believer and active worshipper in the fellowship.

### **Article V: Office-Bearers: Elders, Deacons, Trustees**

#### **A. General Statement**

We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the church (Eph 5:23, Col 1:18) and who directs the affairs of the church through office-bearers who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. Office-bearers in the church are of two kinds: elders or pastors (also called "bishops"), and deacons (Phil 1:1; I Tim 3:3-13). It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts of office-bearing, and after formally recognizing them, to set them apart by united prayer, and then to submit to their authority.

Bread of Life Fellowship may and should at times cooperate and even affiliate with other like-minded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern (2 Cor 8:18-24). We may seek assistance (I Cor 16:1,2) and counsel (Prov 11:14, I Thess 2:14) from other churches in matters of importance; however, we remain congregational in our form of government, meaning that no other church, group of churches, or council shall ever be binding upon Bread of Life Fellowship.

#### **B. Elders**

The Scriptures indicate that normally there should be a plurality of elders in the church (Acts 20:17; Phil 1:1). The Scripture also refers to these as "bishops" (meaning "overseers") because they are charged with the oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28; I Pt 5:2). They are the "pastors and teachers" given to the church "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11,12).

The Board of Elders is comprised of the men who by the calling of God and recognition of men have the responsibility to lead and govern the body. They are the highest ruling board of the church.

### **1. The qualifications of an elder**

*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

Anyone who would be considered for the position of elder must fulfill all of these qualities from I Timothy 3:1-7. Details that exposit and offer Bread of Life Fellowship's interpretation this and other passages concerning the qualification of elders should be made available to the congregation.

Any individual called to eldership should have an inward conviction that the Lord is calling him, and the church should recognize that call as it observes in the individual, evidence of the character, gifts, qualities and graces which Scripture requires for the office. This is a matter of such importance that it must be accompanied with much prayerful waiting on God for guidance, a careful analysis of the relevant passages of Scripture, and an objective evaluation of each man nominated to a particular office. These activities are the responsibility of each individual member of the church as well as of the church as a whole.

### **2. Process of Appointment of Elders**

It should be considered a primary objective of the church to identify and encourage men ordained and gifted by God for leadership. It is a vital part of the Great Commission that qualified, faithful men be identified, trained and raised to positions of leadership in the congregation. This must be done with care and serious consideration, under the leadership of the elders. Any qualified man who has been faithfully attending Bread of Life Fellowship for at least one year may be considered for nomination. Nominations for a man to be an elder may be suggested by congregants and should be considered by the elders for final determination. A man may not nominate himself. If a congregant nominates an individual, and all of the existing elders agree, the elders should first meet with the man and his family to confirm his willingness to undergo examination and his readiness to serve in church office. He may, without prejudice, decline nomination. If the man consents, he will begin the process toward ordination. In addition, the elders are free to invite men from outside the local congregation to come into its midst to potentially serve in this capacity, but may only do so after being part of the fellowship for one year.

Any man called to this office must first participate in the church in lesser capacities, proving himself faithful to smaller tasks. He must affirm his agreement with the Statement of Faith and constitution of the church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the elders.

*(Paragraph amended by unanimous vote of church italics added 1/15/15)* Elders begin the process of ordination as an “elder-in-training.” This is for men who are called of God, and recognized as gifted and qualified for this capacity by all of the existing elders. An elder-in-training must meet all of the requirements of an elder as explained in the Scripture. A man will not be considered for elder-in-training who does not fulfill all of the Scriptures – who has moral or spiritual character flaws, is a believer for less than five years, does not have his household in order, or who does not know the Word of God. (In light of the biblical requirement stated not to appoint a novice – I Tim 3:6 – the elders of Bread of Life Fellowship have concluded that someone must be a consistent and growing believer for at least five years to be considered for this position.) An unqualified man should not be appointed to this position with the hope that these matters will change during his apprenticeship. *Being that an elder-in-training has not yet had hands laid upon him, or been confirmed by the church, he ought to be considered a “temporary elder” for a period of one year. As such, he may act in the capacity of an elder only with the authority delegated to him by the existing eldership. At the discretion of the eldership, the elder-in-training’s responsibilities may include anything typical of an elder, but without the individual authority conferred by the laying on of hands. As a man not yet ordained, an elder-in-training cannot officiate a wedding or sign or represent the church in any legal capacity.* The elder-in-training does have voting rights during the duration of his apprenticeship (one year, unless determined to be extended). The appointment of an elder-in-training does not imply absolutely that the man will become a full elder at the end of his term.

The existing elders must unanimously agree upon appointing an elder-in-training. After one year, elders-in-training may be presented to the congregation for examination and discussion where any concerns should be voiced and heard (see below for detail). After the counsel of the congregation is considered, the elders should decide whether to accept the man as a full elder, reject him, or extended his tenure as an elder-in-training for one additional year. Applications and/or exams for perspective elders, to help determine their understanding and doctrinal position may be used; however these should never be the sole determining factor in the decision to ordain an elder.

As a protection, if there is a matter under consideration by the Board of Elders, whereby the sole dissenting vote is by an elder-in-training, and whereby the entire remaining full elders are in full agreement with no abstention, the matter may be considered as agreed upon, and the elder-in-training’s vote noted by not counted. After one year, the full Board of Elders may vote on the eligibility of the elder-in-training for full eldership. Prior to voting, all members should be invited to a meeting whereby the candidate for elder can be asked questions and have an opportunity to speak to the congregation. When that is complete, he and any members of his family who are present shall be requested to leave the room while his qualifications are openly discussed by the entire congregation in the light of Scripture. At this time the elders should express to the congregation why they support the man’s eldership. After discussing this, a secret written ballot shall be taken. It is hoped that the vote of the congregation will in such matters always be unanimous, but if unanimity is not realized, the elders should consider no less than a three-fourths majority of the

members present and voting as a vote of confidence for the recognition of a full elder.

If at any time during the training of an apprentice elder, the rest of the entire board of elders agrees that the man should be dismissed, they have the power to do so.

However, the reasons for this decision must be clearly explained to the man at a meeting with all of the elders. In cases where the man may lack maturity, but it is believed that he is called, he should be admonished in the areas where growth is needed, and perhaps considered for the position again at a future time.

There is no limit to the number of times an elder-in-training may be appointed to this temporary position; however, one man should not occupy the position for more than 2 consecutive years. The reason for this is, if there are concerns that the man is not eligible for full eldership after 2 years of working with the existing board, it would be questionable to keep the man on the board any longer. However, if growth is seen in the individual who has already served as an elder-in-training for any length of time, he may be reconsidered for the position only after being out of the position, yet continually faithful in his ministry for a period of one year. It is conceivable that a person can occupy this temporary position several times (with one year breaks between) before the Board of Elders is comfortable with ordaining him as a full elder.

Following the recognition of an office-bearer by vote of the congregation, he shall be publicly installed in his office at a regular worship service by the prayer of the church and the laying on of the hands of the elders (I Tim 4:14; II Tim 1:6).

In order to put the best quality time and effort into raising the elder-in-training up to fulfill his calling, it should be considered that the number of elders-in-training be limited to one for each existing elder at a time, and that additional men not be taken into training until the existing apprentice(s) are ordained, dismissed, or have their term run out.

### **3. Responsibilities of the *Board of Elders***

It is the responsibility of the elders to shepherd the flock. This includes overseeing, leading, providing direction, teaching, and ruling.

The Board of Elders is the ultimate decision making body of the fellowship; however, matters may and should be brought to the ministry board, membership, or specific individuals in the congregation for counsel. Unanimity among elders is required for all decisions unless otherwise stated. Apprentice elders have full voting rights, but if their opinion represents the sole dissenting vote against the existing board of full elders, the matter should be decided as the full elders determine. Any elder may at his discretion abstain from participating in any decision made. This may be done as a willingness to defer to the other elders in a matter that one may be unfamiliar with, or in cases where an elder is absent from a meeting, he may defer a decision to the elders in attendance. Abstentions will not be allowed in major decisions such as the amending of the constitution or statement of faith, or the appointment, discipline or dismissal of another elder or elder-in-training.

It is expected that an elder be "able to teach." The ability or gift of teaching, should be regularly used by every full elder. Elders-in-training should also be given opportunities to teach - as assistants in services, home churches or as "guest speakers" when a full elder is not available to teach.

Gifted men who are not recognized as elders may engage in public preaching and evangelism provided they are godly in character and walk, but the exercise of their gift must be under the direction of the elders.

#### 4. **Number of Elders and Term of Office**

Ordained eldership is a lifetime position, unless the need arises for one to step back either temporarily or permanently from the position. An elder may, however, resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it. Elders-in-training shall be considered such for one year with a maximum extension of up to one additional year before consideration for full eldership.

There should always be a minimum of two elders on the board. Two elders should place a priority on seeking to raise up a third man. There is no maximum limit to the number of elders – it should be as many as the Holy Spirit appoints.

#### 5. **Differences (Firsts) among equals**

While all of the eldership must be teaching regularly, it is also recognized that there exist differences among equals. That is, an elder may be gifted to preach, teach, administrate, counsel, or serve in different capacities. Based on these gifts, one elder may preach more regularly than another in the congregational worship services – another may teach more regularly in Sunday School – another may counsel more, etc.; a sole elder may even be considered the spokesman for the eldership to the congregation, but whatever the case or perception may be, no elder shall be considered greater or with more power or authority than another. The congregation may need to be reminded of this, as people often have the tendency of lifting up an individual personality based on their perception of his role.

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, an elder may be offered a full-time paid staff-elder position. The church is responsible to give adequate financial support to such men (I Cor 9:9-11; I Tim 5:17,18). The fact that one elder is paid as staff or is the primary preaching elder, or an administrator, or “first among equals,” or any other condition, does not mean that this elder has any more power or influence over the other elders. He is simply gifted differently among equals.

#### 6. **Discipline of an Elder**

*Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. (1 Timothy 5:19-22)*

While elders are overseers of the flock, they are themselves members of the flock.

Therefore, each elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow elders and is subject to the same discipline as are all the members of the church.

Accusations to anyone against another elder, should not be given any consideration, unless the accusation is confirmed by at least two witnesses. If such confirmation is received, the elder should be approached in the same manner that an individual would be, as outlined in Article VII, with the following clarifications:

Step 1: The first private meeting should be limited to the person confronting the elder, with no additional witnesses present. If the sinning elder repents, and the sin is not

one that would disqualify him from his leadership position (see Article V #1), it should not go beyond this point. If it is determined that restitution or an apology is needed, this should be done as part of the reconciliation.

Step 2: The second step of reproof should include other elders as well as those parties who brought forth the original accusation and any additional witnesses.

Step 3: The appropriate form of discipline should be unanimously decided upon by the remaining elders – in the event that there are two elders, the elder should incorporate the counsel of all those involved in Step 2 before determining the appropriate disciplinary action.

Step 4: Should an elder go through steps 1-3 and still not change on the matter for which he is being disciplined, and he remain in the congregation, he should, as a final step be publicly censured at either a regular or special meeting of the entire fellowship, and at that time officially dis-fellowshipped.

Step 5: While complete reconciliation and resuming full participation of the sinning elder is the ultimate goal, it also must be realized that elders are held to a higher standard of accountability. If their sin comes under the category of one that would disqualify him from the position (Article V), while an open hand of fellowship and hope of restoration can be offered, a return to eldership should not be considered.

**7. An elder or group of elders called to another work**

If at any time an elder, or group of elders, believe that they are called to another work (apart from Bread of Life Fellowship), they may at their own discretion step down from their eldership position. Whether they continue in non-profit ministry or not, they have no entitlement to Bread of Life funds or materials; of course, at the discretion of the Board of Elders, an offering may be given to the new work, and if the new work is considered a work of God by the elders of Bread of Life Fellowship, additional support and help should be offered.

**C. Deacons**

Deacons will be appointed from the membership of Bread of Life Fellowship who have exhibited exemplary, enduring and dedicated service and commitment. The Board of Elders may appoint and license deacons based on their qualities.

**1. The qualifications of a Deacon**

*Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

Based on these qualifications from I Timothy 3:8-13, anyone who would be considered for the position of deacon must fulfill all of these qualities. Details that exposit and interpret this passage should be outlined in the future in additional policies by the elders.

**2. Process of Appointment of Deacons**

When a man who has been identified as a faithful servant to the body, but for one reason or another cannot fulfill the position of an elder, upon unanimous agreement of the elders, he may be approached to be a deacon. Unlike the eldership process, there is no public consideration or voting, or “training” position. Deacons will simply be appointed by the elders and recognized as such at a public worship service.

### 3. **The responsibilities of a Deacon**

Deacons are responsible to administer the ordinary business, secular affairs, and benevolent concerns of the church so that the elders may devote themselves without distraction to the matters of spiritual oversight (Acts 6:3,4). They must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with and subjection to the elders. The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church elders shall choose as many as are needed for the work to be done from among the men who give evidence of having the Scriptural qualifications for that office (Acts 6:3).

Since deacon (Gr. *diakonos*) means “servant,” the responsibilities of a deacon can be decided upon by the Board of Elders. A deacon’s primary responsibility is to assist the elders, freeing them to be able to pray and teach. The responsibilities of a deacon can thus range from setting up chairs at a service to teaching an elder-approved Bible Study. Of course not every deacon is automatically approved to teach, rather his duties shall be limited and defined by the Elders.

Because a deacon is appointed does not mean that he may take on additional responsibilities not assigned to him. A deacon may ask the Board of Elders for definition of his realm of responsibility and have his limitations clearly defined. But the position itself has no authority beyond what is given by his elders.

Deacons will be considered for renewal of their appointment on a yearly basis, and may serve as long as they are qualified to do so.

#### 4. **Discipline and dismissal of a deacon** (see procedure in Article VII)

Deacons as any office-bearer are subject to the same rules of discipline as are the other members of the church. They shall hold office as long as they are faithful to their calling and have the confidence of the congregation. An officer may, however, resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it. In the event that an officer fails to receive an expression of confidence from the elders, he remains a member in the church, unless disciplinary proceedings under Article VII are in effect. In these cases, these proceedings take precedence.

### **D. Other Appointments, Offices, Committees, and the Ministry Board (Trustees)**

The Ministry Board (Trustees) consists of the eldership along with at least two additional positions – which may be called Secretary and Treasurer. Additional positions may be added as the elders determine there to be need. Since these are not positions of authority, they may be held by men or women members of the congregation who have demonstrated appropriate character and gifting. It would behoove the elders to include women on the Board of Trustees, as their counsel can prove invaluable particularly in decision relating to other women.

Trustees other than the elders are positions that are considered and renewed yearly, as determined by elders. Trustees may be deacons, but are not necessarily so.

The purpose of the Ministry Board is to provide counsel for financial decisions. While only elders have decision-making rights – the Trustees on the Ministry Board should be consulted for counsel before financial decisions are made. The Ministry Board (Trustees) should meet as

determined to be needed by the elders. Trustees also may request a meeting, as they feel the need. There should be a minimum of three (3) Ministry Board (Trustee) meetings per calendar year.

In the event that the Ministry Board be without officers, interim officers should be appointed by the elders. If the elders are not confident in deciding upon individuals to serve as interim officers, or those selected do not wish to serve on the interim board, the regular constituency of the congregation (ie. members), the names of which are to be determined by the elders will serve as an interim board until official Trustees are appointed.

Trustees must be members in good standing of Bread of Life Fellowship (as defined in Article VI).

## **Article VI: Membership**

Members are those who support the congregation by prayer, regular fellowship, financial giving, and faithful service when called upon.

### **A. Qualifications for Membership**

Membership at Bread of Life Fellowship is based upon membership in the body of Christ. Any baptized born-again believer who is following Christ as Lord and Savior, regularly attending Lord's Day services, a home church and/or other weekly meeting for a period– of time (determined by the elders, on a case-by-case basis), and faithfully endeavoring by the grace of God to make his or her life conform to the Word of God, will be eligible for membership. All eligible members will be required to meet with the elders, listen to/attend membership classes and be in general agreement with the statement of faith and constitution.

A baptized believer may wish to transfer his or her membership from a like-minded evangelical church. If such member is formally recommended by his or her previous church and is attending Bread of Life Fellowship regularly, they may be received directly into membership after meeting the requirements stated above for eligible members.

Admittance of any member requires the unanimous agreement of the elders and general agreement of the church body.

Baptized believing Christians who marry current members of Bread of Life Fellowship may, upon request, be considered for membership and admitted, upon the unanimous agreement of the elders and general agreement of the church body.

Objections raised by existing church members over the receiving of a new member ought to be seriously considered by the elders. Efforts should be made to discover the nature of the objection and if substantive, should put membership on hold.

### **B. Provisional Membership: (this was presented to the congregation Sep 23, 2024)**

A minor child (A teen who is under the age of 18, but old enough and mature enough to understand their commitment to Christ and his church) of a church member, or of unbelieving parents who do not attend our congregation, may be deemed ready to be baptized based on his or her personal testimony, affirmation of his or her parents, if they are believers, confirming interview with the elders and approval of the congregation. Baptism should not be withheld when these prerequisites are met, independent of age (Acts 10:48, 1 Cor 1:16); however, due to the minor's position in submission to their parental authorities, he or she is in a unique place when it comes to their role as a member of the church community. While under typical circumstances,

baptism initiates the candidate into full membership, directly accountable to other church members, minor children remain subject to parents, and parental involvement in matters including the minor child is necessary.

Provisional membership includes all the duties, rights and privileges of full members including participation at the Lord's Table, service in ministry, Church Discipline for unrepentant willful sin and attendance at members meetings. Unlike full members, provisional members would not be subject to direct confrontation or engagement on matters of sin, apart from their parental authorities, if they have believing parents, otherwise the elders would serve in that role ; matters involving minor members ought to also include their believing parents, or elders if the parents are unbelieving. Provisional members will not have voting privileges. Also, at the discretion of the elders, provisional members may be dismissed from attending certain sensitive (age inappropriate) matters that require the attention of church members. Provisional membership automatically becomes full membership when the minor turns 18 years old, unless the member and their parents have good reason to extend their provisional membership (as might be the case for an individual who is cognitively impaired).

**C. Inactive Roll:**

Members who are in process of finding another church for various reasons and are no longer involved in the weekly life of the congregation, but still maintain contact with the elders, can be put on the Inactive Roll for a period of a few months, until they find another church. As such they will not have any voting rights. Should they decide to return to BOLFC, they will need to meet with the elders before being restored to full membership. This will help the elders to assess their spiritual walk while they were away from us and their commitment to continue with us.

Additionally, if a member has not been attending the regular services on the Lord's Day for a period of 2 months, and has not been in communication with the elders, despite the elders' attempts to reach them, he or she will be placed on the inactive roll. If this behavior continues for a period of 3 months, they will then be removed from membership, in accordance with Article VI, Paragraph C.

**D. Inadequacy for Membership Consideration**

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, a person may be placed on hold from being considered a member even though fulfilling the aforementioned requirements for membership. Such circumstances include but are not limited to immoral lifestyle, discipline, problems or divisiveness at another assembly, false doctrine, and/or an unwillingness to submit to the elders or Statement of Faith.

**E. Withdrawal of Membership**

Membership may be withdrawn at any time by simply notifying the elders. Members who have not notified the elders but have not participated in the ministry in any manner for three months (without notification) will be removed from official membership but will remain in good standing unless the loss of such is indicated as described in the next

section.

**F. Loss of Good Standing**

Membership may be removed by a decision of the Board of Elders – good standing is lost when:

1. A known and unrepentant sin continues to be practiced with no sign of contrition (see Article VII for detail).
2. A member is teaching doctrines contrary to the Scripture. While a member may appeal and present his view to the Board of Elders, the ultimate authority in deciding whether a teaching is error and whether the member teaching this is to be disciplined shall remain with the Board of Elders.
3. The member has exhibited divisive behavior in this or another assembly, in accordance with Titus 3:10-11 & Rom 16:17\*.
4. Any member who disregards the Word of God or goes contrary thereto, after loving admonition by the elders and deliberately continues in a contrary lifestyle.

*\*Divisive behavior* can be manifested in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: cliquishness (Ja 2:1), gossip (Ja 4:11), flattery (Pr 29:5), self-aggrandizement (2Sam 15:2-6), meddling (1 Tim 5:13), slander (Ps 101:5), jealousy (Ja 3:14-16), and discord, or creating a faction (Gal 5:19-21). Whereas the Scripture calls us to be eager to maintain the unity of the body in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3), knowing that Christ has purchased our unity by His precious blood (Eph 2:3ff), and that God hates the one who sows discord among brethren (Prov 6:19); and He commands a blessing where there is unity (Ps 133:3). In consideration of such Biblical emphases, should a member disagree with a church decision, policy, or our accepted doctrinal positions, he or she may respectfully present his or her difference to the elders. If a peaceable conclusion can be reached between the elders and disagreeing member and the member wishes to continue to submit to the elders and remain as a vital member in the congregation, they may do so; or they may simply resign their membership and seek another assembly while maintaining his or her good standing. However, it is not considered acceptable behavior for a member to seek out others to try to win them to their side, thus creating a faction that may result in disharmony within the church.

**G. Submitting to the Elders**

Each member or adherent shall accept the privilege of local body participation by submitting to and accepting the decisions of the Board of Elders including the elders' decision to exercise discipline (see Article VII for detail). Members shall accept the responsibility of exercising their gifts of the Spirit under the guidance of the elders for the edification of the entire body. Members will be called upon to utilize their gifts in service of the ministry.

**H. Returning Members**

Any member who has left the fellowship or withdraw membership while in good standing, may if he so desires, return to membership upon returning to regular fellowship for six months, and fulfilling the requirements stated in paragraph A of Article VI.

**I. Removal of Membership (Amendment added unanimous church vote 1/27/08)**

In Hebrews 13:17 the writer gives the church the admonition to obey and submit to their elders. Attached to the command is the profound statement, “*for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.*” If an elder is to take this seriously, it is important that he know for whose soul is he responsible for in his oversight. While the elders authority extends to the entire church (members and non-members alike), their primary responsibility lies with those who are counted as members. The elders’ oversight and shepherding (1 Pet 5:2) of members becomes very difficult when a member is inconsistent in their attendance at church services, meetings and fellowships. For this reason individuals who have not demonstrated regularity in their attendance and participation will not be considered for membership (in addition to those stated reasons in Article VI section C). Also, an existing church member’s removal is consistent with general biblical principles, and sometimes necessitated by the above considerations. Therefore, members who are otherwise in good standing and whose conduct does not warrant corrective discipline (as described in Article VII) may be removed from the membership roll under the following conditions (in addition to those already stated reasons in Article VI section E):

- a. When such a one concludes he has not been truly converted.
- b. When such a one, upon relocation, ceases to maintain vital contact with the church.
- c. When such a one wishes to transfer membership to another Biblical church.
- d. When such a one wishes to terminate his membership for other reasons which do not call into question his Christian profession.
- e. When such a one either due to carelessness or other circumstances, fails as a pattern of life, to maintain regular fellowship with the church body, without showing just cause.

When the elders conclude that removal is warranted, after first informing the member himself of this assessment, they shall inform the other members of this judgment, and the reasons for such action, at a congregational meeting. A period of one month will be allowed for objections or questions to be raised privately with the elders concerning the member’s removal. If no objections are raised, the member shall be removed. In the event that any objections are raised, or the member himself does not wish to be removed from membership, the elders shall postpone the removal of a member until the objections are investigated and resolved to their satisfaction. In all cases, persons finally removed from membership shall be informed of the church’s action. Of course, they may continue to fellowship within the church as long as they agree to adhere to the church’s standards, but they forfeit privileges which are reserved for members.

## **Article VII: Church Discipline**

As a manner to maintain peace and unity while encouraging repentance and purity in the church, Scripture teaches and gives the authority to the church to exercise discipline of a sinning person in its ranks. Members, adherents, or anyone person attending or participating in any fellowship, assembly, or ministry may be restricted from active participation and membership in the body in any form as determined by the Board of Elders. Steps to disciplinary action shall be followed as

described in Matthew chapter 18, whenever there is uncorrected, deliberate sin, including omissions of duty, whether in doctrine or practice.

*"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-18)*

Step 1: Effort should first be made by any individual with first-hand awareness of the sin or aberrant teaching, to attempt to gently correct the person. If the person with first-hand knowledge of the sin is not sure how to proceed, they may seek counsel of an elder or deacon, without mentioning the person in question's name. The first meeting should be private between the offender and the person confronting.

In cases where severe transgression could danger the physical or spiritual life of another person (such as severe false teaching to a new or weaker believer, physical abuse, suicide, etc.) matters should be brought directly to the attention of an elder, who at his discretion can bring it before the Board of Elders for immediate action.

Step 2: If reasonable effort in private reproof fails to convince the sinning person of their need to repent, the matter can be brought to one or more additional witnesses who should offer additional admonition to repent. It is suggested at this time that a minister in the church (but necessarily an elder – unless the accusation is against an elder) be a part of this confrontation so that the sinning person may realize the weight of their action or teaching. If the offender admits to the sin and stops, no further action is warranted.

Step 3: If the offender refuses to repent after reasonable attempts at the admonition of two or three witnesses, the matter should be submitted to an elder. The elder with the counsel of the entire Board of Elders may set a time period whereby the offender may change his mind about his sinful action or teaching. If that time period is exhausted without repentance, the matter should be presented before the congregation.

Step 4: If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the church, the Board of Elders should then decide to exclude the sinning person from attendance and participation in any fellowship, meeting, and/or service and if a member, be removed from membership in unfavorable standing. The decision to dis-fellowship which is made by a unanimous-majority\* of the Board of Elders, shall be announced to the members of the local body. The entire assembly will be encouraged publicly to not have fellowship with the unrepentant party; however, members should pray for and encourage the offender to repent and reconcile.

(\* a unanimous-majority instead of unanimity is suggested in this case so that elders unfamiliar with the case may not vote or abstain without pressure to act on something they may have little or no knowledge about. All of the elders voting to dis-fellowship an individual must be in agreement to do so.)

Any member has the right to appeal this decision to the Board of Elders at any time during or after the disciplinary process, by submitting a request for an appeal to an Elder in writing.

Step 5: This is the ultimate goal of all discipline – namely that the disciplined person demonstrate repentance and be restored. Any person disciplined in any capacity who demonstrates repentance, may be restored to fellowship by a simple majority vote (at least 51%) of the Board of Elders. At the discretion of the Board, limitations may be set in the process of restoration with the goal of complete reconciliation and full participation.

Any person exhibiting signs of contrition, but for one reason or another has difficulty attaining full restoration, shall be considered for other forms of disciplinary action such as restriction from serving in ministry, participating in a fellowship or assembly, or repudiation from participating at the Lord's Table (which would be for the benefit of the individual based on I Corinthians 11:23-34.) Such a decision should be decided by a majority of the Board of Elders, and communicated by an elder to the individual.

Since it is the tendency of man to rate sins as "severe" or "minor," we need to be aware that God counts all sin as sin. Discipline is a gift He gives to the local body for the purpose of purifying it from all sin. In considering such, it should not be considered extreme to exercise the aforementioned steps of discipline for sins like gossip, slander, or covetousness, as we would in cases of fornication or adultery.

### **Article VIII: Home Churches and Small Fellowships**

It is an emphasis of Bread of Life Fellowship to foster home churches and other small fellowships. It is not a goal to grow a central church with cell-groups, but rather to establish, plant and support independent fellowships, which can operate under Bread of Life Fellowship. This does not exclude the possibility of Bread of Life Fellowship having larger weekly meetings, if the Lord has not provided adequate leadership for planting a new work. However, the larger fellowships should be considered a means to an end; the end being the planting of another congregation, once adequate leadership is raised up.

Individual churches under Bread of Life Fellowship may or may not be home-based, but must maintain the standards and direction of the ministry, which is to raise up and plant new works, as opposed to grow a large central church.

### **Article IX: Congregational Worship Services**

Bread of Life Fellowship meets for its main service on the Lord's Day (Sunday). Each service shall consist of the essential elements of the Word, prayer communion and fellowship.

#### **A. The apostles doctrine**

The apostles doctrine (the Word of God) is given the primary place in our worship. We both read and expound on the Word. The sermon will be derived exegetically from the Word of God – not from human reasoning or ideology. There will be a strong emphasis from the pulpit on doctrine and its natural product – the application of such doctrine to life. Sermons will usually be expository – based on a thorough verse by verse study. Occasional topical sermons may be preached as deemed needed by the elders.

#### **B. Prayer and Worship**

Prayer must pervade our services – from beginning to end. Nothing meaningful can be accomplished unless we recognize our own insufficiency and seek the Lord in fervent prayer. Prayers will be offered for various elements surrounding the service, as well as individual prayer requests taken.

Worship in song or in private meditation is offered following the preaching of the Word. This is the congregation's opportunity to reflect, thank and respond to God after He gives His Word. No particular style of worship music is preferred, as long as it is reverent, and

does not conform to the pattern of the world. As a safeguard, all songs must be approved by all of the elders before they shall be used in a service.

**C. Confession and Communion**

Opportunity will be provided for the congregants to reflect, examine themselves, and confess their sins to one another. Public confession will also always be considered appropriate. Congregants may participate and share gifts talents, confirming Scriptures, etc. following the preaching of the Word. Services will typically end with the participation in the Lord's Table. When deemed appropriate, a warning will be issued regarding taking the Lord's Supper unworthily. Private individual admonition about this may also be done. The Lord's Table is not to be taken lightly, and never unless examination precedes participation. Communion will be celebrated regularly, in the main service. If the elders determine to change the communion service to another time, this is fine, as long as it is regular and the whole membership has the opportunity to participate.

**D. Fellowship**

Effort will be made to foster bonds of true fellowship whereby the body of Christ can genuinely love one another – beginning with the elders. Elders must meet regularly for fellowship. Weekly home meetings in addition to the main service should provide congregants with an opportunity to share and learn from one another. Agape meals should be celebrated frequently – with the most logical time being on Sundays after service. It should be encouraged that the body meet together during the week at each other's homes for prayer and fellowship.

## **Article X: Business Meetings**

**A. Congregational**

There shall be a minimum of one annual business meeting of the church for the distribution of reports, and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the congregation. Special business meetings may be called at other times at the discretion of the elders. Notice of all business meetings shall be given at regular worship services on two successive Lord's Days immediately prior to the meetings. However, in the case of an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying each member by mail, e-mail or phone of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Meetings for the hearing of special reports or for seeking the counsel of the congregation may be called on shorter notice. The regular members present at any properly convened congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. One of the elders shall preside at all business meetings.

**B. Ministry Board**

Tri-annual Ministry Board (Trustee) Meetings (can be more as needed or called for by the elders) are designed to discuss and decide upon financial decisions and policy (all elders do not need to participate, but absence from these meetings means a forfeiture of his voting for that meeting.)

**C. Eldership**

Monthly Board of Elders Meeting (can be more or less frequent as needed) are for the purpose of meeting for fellowship, study the Word, discuss doctrinal issues, and other issues such as amendments or policy procedures, etc. Agenda will be set by elders, but should always include prayer, a brief study of the Scripture, and personal encouragement.

## **Article XI: Property, Contracts, Salaries, Funds, Deposits and Expenditures, and Benevolence Funds**

### **A. Property**

While it is not a goal of the ministry to acquire property, it is possible that at a time deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders, should property be procured, it shall be the duty of the Board of Elders and those whom they appoint, to take all necessary measures for the protection and maintenance of buildings and properties.

### **B. Contracts**

The Board of Elders may authorize any officer or agent thereof to enter into any contract or execute and deliver anything in the name of and on behalf of the ministry. Such authority may be limited to specific instances and maximum expenditures by the Board of Elders.

### **C. Salaries**

The Board of Elders shall establish and set salaries for all ministering staff. Any elder may recommend a staff addition or salary change, but it must be approved by all of the elders after receiving counsel from the Board of Trustees.

### **D. Funds and Deposits**

The Ministry Board of Trustees (as distinct from the Board of Elders) shall be responsible for receiving, counting, depositing, and disbursement of ministry funds.

The Ministry Board or Board of Trustees (which includes both elders and officers) shall be responsible for establishing a yearly budget projecting operating expenses for the coming year.

Funds may be received on behalf of the ministry from contributions, tithes, gifts either for general or special purposes. The Ministry Board may also establish special funds for specific purposes agreed upon by the elders. While funds for special projects may be given and received in good faith, the Ministry Board reserves the right to redistribute any funds to any account the board believes to be in the best interest of the church. However, in the case of funds given for special ministries, in interest of good faith, the donor should be informed of this decision, and at the discretion of the Board offered the opportunity of having that money returned if it cannot be used in a manner agreed upon by the donor. Deposits on behalf of the ministry shall be deposited at a time and place determined by the Ministry Board in such bank, trust company or other depository determined by the Ministry Board.

### **E. Expenditures**

All checks, payments and notes or other evidences of indebtedness in the name of the ministry shall be signed by at least two officers of the ministry who shall be determined by the elders. In the absence of such determination, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer or Secretary and countersigned by a full Elder. (The requirement of a second signature can be lifted for expenditures under a certain amount determined by the Board of Elders in the future).

### **F. Benevolence Funds**

The Board of Deacons after receiving counsel of the elders shall decide on matters requiring disbursement of funds in cases of need presented to them that could not be met by other means, and their appointees will be in charge of disbursement of any funds,

goods or services.

### **Article XII: The Fiscal Year**

The church fiscal year will be set by the Board of Elders – Was changed from (January to December) to (July to June) to more accurately estimate the budget for the following year.

### **Article XIII: Amendments**

The Constitution may be amended by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders; confirmed by a 75% vote of those present at a stated meeting; confirmed by a 75% vote of those members present at a stated church meeting.

### **Article XIV: Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of the corporation and after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, the board of trustees shall dispose of the remaining assets of the corporation exclusively for one or more exempt purposes, within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future federal tax code), or shall distribute the same to the federal government, or to a state or local government for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by order of the Superior Court of the State of New Jersey in the judicial district where the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purpose or to such organizations organized and operated exclusively for such purposes as said court shall determine.

### **Amendment to Article III “Statement of Faith” (Accepted 1/21/07)**

The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must be the Bible alone. However, in this age of doctrinal confusion, controversy, division and human weakness, we believe that it is necessary for the church to clarify its understanding of the Bible on primary matters of faith and practice. Seeking to be united with the historical church and godly men who have gone before us, we thus adopt as our articles of faith and doctrinal statement The London Baptist Confession of 1689, as a reasonable expression of our faith. While this confession of faith gives a concise statement of biblical doctrine, it in no way is equal to the infallible authority of the Word of God. It is rather to assist the church in doctrinal controversy and is a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.

Members of Bread of Life Fellowship are not required to adhere or agree to all of this Confession’s distinctives; however members must agree to peacefully abide under it as a guide for the church; and negatively not to teach others anything against its doctrinal content, while positively keeping a ‘teachable spirit’ as to its contents.

The elders will at times clarify our church’s position on matters of doctrine held therein (and thus may add footnotes to this amendment as needed). For example, concerning Chapter 26, Paragraph 4, which states that the Pope of Rome "is that Antichrist, and man of sin." Although

we hold that the Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy are antichristian, and we acknowledge the possibility that the Pope could be the man of sin, nevertheless, we do not adopt the absolute assertion as described in the Confession.

We also hold a different view on the Sabbath from that of the 1689 LBC as outlined in: Chapter 22 (Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day), paragraphs 7&8. We whole-heartedly agree with the first 6 paragraphs of Chapter 22, underscoring the prominence of the Lord's Day and order of corporate worship. We do not, however, find adequate Scriptural support for the idea in paragraphs 7 & 8, that the Sabbath (with all that it entails in the Old Testament) was transferred to Sunday after the resurrection of Jesus. This by no means belittles the importance of the Lord's Day as a day, distinct in its priorities. We believe that the Sabbath rest was fulfilled by Christ in the rest He achieved for us by His finished work on the cross (Heb 4:3-10). The sanctification of the Lord's Day for congregational worship ought to be the priority for God's people on the Lord's Day; but this is not by manner of law or duty, but by what some have called "grace-fueled obedience." It is the deep desire of our new heart, to worship God with His people for completing the work that we could not do for ourselves, dying in our place, and triumphantly rising on the Third Day, granting us victory and eternal life. We believe that every Lord's Day is a sanctified, dedicated time, that God's people ought to set apart to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and we expect every member to actively participate in each Lord's Day worship service unless otherwise hindered by illness, travel, etc.