



# Values

Our values express what we believe will help us take one step closer to Jesus and our neighbours every day; striving to make the church look more and more like a reflection of heaven:

## **Relationship Focused**

*Mark 12:30-31, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:20, 2 Corinthians 13:5; Luke 10:25-37*

First a relationship with Jesus, the triune God expressed in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the one who knows us best and yet loves us most. We want people to be in a genuine relationship with Jesus. We value our relationship with Jesus over everything else.

Second, a relationship with our neighbours. God says that if we can't love one another, how can we say that we love Him? But to love authentically, we need to know others and be known by them; to create community where we can walk together.

## **Journey Oriented**

*Acts 15, Hebrew 6:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:6-9*

We want to create space for people to journey into a relationship with God; not be expected to behave, before they believe or belong. We want people to ask questions, dialogue in the responses, and find Neighbours Church as a place to belong, before they believe, or ever consider if they want to become like Christ.

The journey doesn't end when we decide to become a disciple either. So, we want to create a space that is relevant in each stage of discipleship. For those that call themselves followers of Jesus, we will encourage people to develop a variety of characteristics in their personal lives that we see as long-term personal discipleship goals or end goals for followers of Jesus. We hope that each step they take towards Jesus will allow them to intentionally move forward in their faith journey.

Finally, we recognize that there are many stages of life, and although we want to be a multi-generational church that relates with one another, we also recognize that music preferences, a message people can relate with, and age-appropriate discussions can help people in the practical life transformation we long for people to experience in every day life.

## **Intentionally Diverse**

*John 17; Galatians 3:28, John 13:35, Revelation 7:9; Book of Ephesians*

We believe that we are better together. That the differences God created in us weren't meant to ever divide us, but to help us learn who He is, because we are each unique image bearers that

reveal more of who He is to one another. Whether that is men and women, people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, different generations, or different experiences in life. We want to be a multi-ethnic, multi-socio-economic, multi-generational church where people aren't just sitting with one another on Sundays, but actually spending time together during the week, and leading one another in an understanding of who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him.

## **Postured for Worship**

*Romans 12:1, John 4:23-24, 1 Corinthians 11 & 12*

To worship is not just something we do on Sundays, but it is a life whole heartedly devoted in service to God and others. We expect to hear from the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, submitting our lives to His promptings and leadings. Living generously in service, love, and humility; offering time, talents and treasure for the benefit of His Kingdom and other people. We encourage each person to discover their spiritual gifts and to use them in the unique ways God has called them to do so.

Worship is also something we do wherever two or more are gathered together in His name. And so when we gather to express our worship in song, communion, Baptism, teaching, prayer, a time of question and response, and fellowship this is also worship. For us, the most important part of this corporate experience is God's presence: cultivating an opportunity for people to connect with His presence in each part of the service.

## **Choosing to Partner**

*Acts 4:32, Philippians 2:3, Ephesians 4:1-6 & 11-13, 1 Corinthians 12*

We believe we can go further faster with the help of others. Whether that is people in our church, our national fellowship of churches, ministries we support or who support us, or community organizations serving Kingdom purposes; we know that there are people doing things we are better to join into than ever try and do on our own. We value the opportunity to learn from others and support their God given vision. We want to make our communities a better place to work, live, and play. The main partnership we have is with the ACOP – Apostolic Church of Pentecost, but there are many other Kingdom partnerships we are involved in locally and globally.



## **ACOP Statement of Faith**

We are part of a fellowship of hundreds of churches across Canada and around the world called the ACOP (Apostolic Church of Pentecost). The ACOP celebrated 100 years in Canada the year our founders moved to Ottawa to start this church in 2021. ACOP has now sent out workers to more than 40 countries around the world. Over those 100 years, the statement of faith has changed through collective discernment. So, we recognize that not all people who attend Neighbours Church will agree with every single part of our statement of faith, and we can celebrate that difference in belief and still walk together. We hope that you will grow from rubbing shoulders with those that think differently at times. You can see how our differing levels of commitment to the church and membership allow for difference in opinion.

The following is our statement of faith which we share with members of our church and hundreds of other churches across the country and around the world:

- That the Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative written Word of God.
- In the eternal existence of one true God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- In the Savior of men, the Lord Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, very God and very man.
- In the creation, test, and fall of man, as recorded in Genesis; his total spiritual depravity and inability to attain to divine righteousness.
- That forgiveness of sin and eternal life is freely offered to all by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Salvation of sinners is by grace through faith alone, in the perfect all sufficient work of Christ, who died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day for our justification.
- In Water Baptism of believers by immersion in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Meaning the in the authority of Jesus name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)
- In the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as an experience subsequent to salvation with the scriptural evidence; namely, speaking in tongues.
- In the gifts of the Holy Spirit as enumerated in the book of Acts and the Epistles.
- In the Lord's Table as a memorial for believers.
- In Divine Healing as practiced throughout the New Testament.
- In the eternal life of the believer and the eternal punishment of the unbeliever.
- In the Spirit-filled life. The Holy Spirit is the catalyst for sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in the believer's life as their minds are renewed and they are conformed to the image of Christ.
- In the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church.
- In the sanctity of marriage, as a lifelong exclusive commitment between one man and one woman.



## **Neighbours Church**

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**CONSTITUTION OF Neighbours Church**  
Effective Date: September 2021

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## PREAMBLE

Whereas the government of Canada requires a charitable or a religious organization that is registered under the Income Tax Act to set forth its organizational principles and responsible officers and whereas according to Scripture, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace ...” (1 Corinthians 14:33), we therefore establish this constitution so that all things may be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40).

While recognizing its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs, Neighbours Church shall voluntarily enter into full co-operative fellowship with assemblies of like precious faith affiliated with The Apostolic Church of Pentecost Churches and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation.

## ARTICLE 1 THE CHURCH

- 1.1 **Establishment.** The signatories to this Constitution hereby create and establish an association to be called “**Neighbours Church**” (as per Mark 12:30-31, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (NIV) ). The association is referred to in this Constitution as the “**Church**”.
- 1.2 **Purpose.** The Church is established for religious purposes: to worship God wholeheartedly; to show the love of Christ to our community; to win people to Christ through evangelism; to ground them in Christ through discipleship; to build a strong Christian community and Christian families; to train and equip Christians for effective ministry; and to promote and support missions at home and abroad.
- 1.3 **Vision.** The Church’s vision is to build a community of believers involved in two key relationships:
  - 1.3.1 **Taking one step close to Jesus every day.** (Mark 12:30)
  - 1.3.2 **Taking one step closer to others every day.** (Mark 12:31)
- 1.4 **Values**
  - 1.4.1 **Relationship Focused**  
(Mark 12:30-31, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:20, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Luke 10:25-37)

First is a relationship with Jesus, the triune God expressed in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the one who knows us best and yet loves us most. We



want people to be in a genuine relationship with Jesus. We value our relationship with Jesus over everything else.

Second is a relationship with our neighbours. God says that if we can't love one another, how can we say that we love Him? But to love authentically, we need to know others and be known by them; to create community where we can walk together.

#### 1.4.2 *Journey Oriented*

(Acts 15, Hebrew 6:1-2; Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

We want to create space for people to journey into a relationship with God; not be expected to behave, before they believe or belong. We want people to ask questions, dialogue in the responses, and find Neighbours Church as a place to belong, before they believe, or ever consider if they want to become like Christ.

The journey doesn't end when we decide to become a disciple either. So, we want to create a space that is relevant in each stage of discipleship. For those that call themselves followers of Jesus, we will encourage people to develop a variety of characteristics in their personal lives that we see as long-term personal discipleship goals or end goals for followers of Jesus. We hope that each step they take towards Jesus will allow them to intentionally move forward in their faith journey.

Finally, we recognize that there are many stages of life, and although we want to be a multi-generational church that relates with one another, we also recognize that music preferences, a message people can relate with, and age-appropriate discussions can help people in the practical life transformation we long for people to experience in every day life.

#### 1.4.3 *Intentionally Diverse*

(John 17; Galatians 3:28, John 13:35, Revelation 7:9; Book of Ephesians)

We believe that we are better together, that the differences God created in us weren't meant to ever divide us, but to help us learn who He is, because we are each unique image bearers that reveal more of who He is to one another. Whether that is men and women, people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, different generations, or different experiences in life, we want to be a multi-ethnic, multi-socio-economic, multi-generational church where people aren't just sitting with one another on Sundays, but actually spending time together during the week, and leading one another in an understanding of who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him.

#### 1.4.4 *Postured for Worship*

(Romans 12:1, John 4:23-24, 1 Corinthians 11 & 12)

To worship is not just something we do on Sundays, but it is a life wholeheartedly devoted in service to God and others. We expect to hear from the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, submitting our lives to His promptings and leadings, living generously in service, love, and humility; offering time, talents and treasure for the benefit of His Kingdom and other people. We encourage each person to discover their spiritual gifts and to use them in the unique ways God has called them to do so.

Worship is also something we do wherever two or more are gathered together in His name. And so when we gather to express our worship in song, communion, Baptism, teaching, prayer, a time of question and response, and fellowship this is also worship. For us, the most important part of this corporate experience is God's presence: cultivating an opportunity for people to connect with His presence in each part of the service.

#### 1.4.5 ***Choosing to Partner***

(Acts 4:32, Philippians 2:3, Ephesians 4:1-6 & 11-13, 1 Corinthians 12)

We believe we can go further faster with the help of others. Whether that is people in our church, denomination, ministries we support or who support us, or community organizations serving Kingdom purposes, we know that there are other people doing the things we are. It is better to join into partnership than to try and do things on our own. We value the opportunity to learn from others and support their God given vision. We want to make our communities a better place to work, live, and play. The main partnership we have is with the ACOP – Apostolic Church of Pentecost, but there are many other Kingdom partnerships we are involved in locally and globally.

1.5 ***Affiliations.*** The following provisions shall apply with respect to the Church's affiliations:

1.5.1 ***Fellowship of Churches.*** The Church shall be affiliated with the fellowship of churches in the Apostolic Church of Pentecost (referred to as the ACOP moving forward), and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by such affiliations.

1.5.2 ***Financial Support.*** Recognizing the important services rendered to this Church by the ACOP, the Church will support their administrative costs in such amounts as may be approved by the Elders' Board from time to time.

- 1.5.3 **Disaffiliation.** No motion to withdraw or disaffiliate from ACOP be made at any Business Meeting unless the motion is made by the Elders' Board and seconded by the Lead Pastor. If such a motion is made, the motion shall be tabled and the meeting shall be adjourned for 4 months and then reconvened. At the reconvened meeting the motion may be withdrawn by the moving parties or (if not withdrawn) voted upon. The motion shall be considered passed only upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all Active Members (as hereinafter defined).
- 1.6 **Statement of Faith.** The Church adopts as its "**Statement of Faith**", the Statement of Faith from time to time adopted by the Apostolic Church of Pentecost Churches.

## **ARTICLE 2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION**

- 2.1 **Definitions.** In this Constitution:

"**ACOP**" means the Apostolic Church of Pentecost fellowship of Churches.

"**AGM**" means the Annual General Meeting, also called the Annual Meeting.

"**Active Members**" means Members of the Church who are categorized as "Active Members" pursuant to **section 4.3.1**.

"**Annual Meeting**" has the meaning ascribed to such term in **section 5.2**.

"**Associate Pastor**" means an individual who has been delegated responsibility by the Lead Pastor, and approved by a Joint Resolution, for different aspects of the spiritual well-being of the church.

"**Business Meeting**" has the meaning ascribed to such term in **section 5.2** and shall include an Annual Meeting.

"**Statement of Faith**" means the Church's Statement of Faith as described in **section 1.6**.

"**Elders**" means those persons who from time to time hold the office of Elder (excluding the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastors).

"**Elders' Board**" means a board comprised of all Elders.

"**Nominating Committee**" means 2 active members of the congregation, one existing Elder, and the lead pastor.

"**Joint Resolution**" means a resolution jointly approved by not less than two-thirds of the Elders and by the Lead Pastor or, if the position of Lead Pastor is vacant, by not less than two-thirds of the Elders.

“**Leaders**” means Members appointed to the Leadership Team pursuant to **section 3.7.1**.

“**Major Matters**” means the purchase of land or a building or a lead pastor change, but is not limited to these things.

“**Membership**” is legal term referring to those that have legal rights within the organization.

“**Ordinary Resolution**” means a resolution approved by more than one-half of the Elders.

“NIV” means the New International Version of the Holy Bible.

“Scripture” means the text found in the Holy Bible.

“**Special Resolution**” means a resolution approved by not less than two-thirds of the Elders.

2.2 ***Meaning of “inadequately performing”.*** The Lead Pastor shall be deemed to be “**inadequately performing**” the duties of such position when so determined by a Special Resolution. Although it is not required, in most cases such a determination will not be made unless the Lead Pastor has been given:

2.2.1 two written warnings explaining why he/she is not meeting the requirements of the position in the view of the Elders’ Board; and

2.2.2 a period of four months after the first such warning and a period of two months after the second such warning to improve performance to an acceptable level.

A person who holds a position in the Church (as Elder, Treasurer, Leader, or Associate Pastor) shall be deemed to be “**inadequately performing**” the duties of such position when so determined by a Joint Resolution. Although it is not required, in most cases such a determination will not be made unless the person has been given:

2.2.3 two written warnings explaining why they are not meeting the requirements of the position in the view of the Elders’ Board and the Lead Pastor; and

2.2.4 a period of two months after the first such warning and a period of two months after the second such warning to improve performance to an acceptable level.

2.3 ***Interpretation.*** Should any dispute arise as to the interpretation of any part of this Constitution, its meaning and application shall be determined by an Ordinary Resolution.

### **ARTICLE 3 CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

- 3.1 ***Governing Documents.*** The Church shall govern itself according to: (a) the standard of Scripture (Ephesians 4:3, 13); (b) this Constitution; and in association with the ACOP.
- 3.2 ***Governance Structure.*** Biblical principles of Church government view the Church as a theocracy that is led by the Spirit of God, though it has democratic aspects at times. Its leaders are trusted with the delegated authority as servants of the Lord and people. The spiritual oversight of the Church shall be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor, with the assistance of Elders; together, they will provide leadership and vision for the Church. The day-to-day operations of the Church will also involve a Treasurer, a Leadership Team, Associate Pastors, and staff. The Lead Pastor, Elders, Treasurer, Leaders, and Associate Pastors must be Active Members of the Church.
- 3.3 ***General Responsibilities of Lead Pastor and Elders.*** The Lead Pastor and the Elders, collectively, are to:
  - 3.3.1 oversee and shepherd the congregation (Acts 20:28-31) and be responsible for the spiritual care and nurturing of the Church under the leadership of the Lead Pastor;
  - 3.3.2 instruct, correct, encourage believers to discover their giftedness, and equip the believers in the Church for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; 2 Timothy 2:2);
  - 3.3.3 lead in resolving doctrinal and moral issues in an attitude of love and gentleness (Acts 15:4, 6, 23; Galatians 6:1-5);
  - 3.3.4 discern and articulate the vision, functions and goals of the Church through prayerful decision making and meaningful involvement of the Members (Acts 13:1-3; 6:1-7);
  - 3.3.5 formulate and make recommendations on all major matters to the active members of the Church for approval;
  - 3.3.6 coordinate and oversee all the ministries and functions of the Church (1 Peter 5:1-10);
  - 3.3.7 be accountable first to Jesus Christ, and then to each other and the Church (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- 3.4 ***Lead Pastor.*** The office of Pastor is recognized as Biblically ordained and, as such, the Lead Pastor is a serving elder of the Church and is seen as the leader of the Elders. The Lead Pastor must fulfill the biblical requirements of an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9). The Lead Pastor shall be deemed to be an Active Member.

3.4.1 **Appointment.** The Lead Pastor will be called (hired) by a Special Resolution and shall be presented to the congregation at a duly called Business Meeting. For affirmation by 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of active members of the business meeting.

3.4.2 **Responsibilities.** The Lead Pastor shall:

- (a) oversee the vision and spiritual direction of the Church, set the boundaries within which the Church operates, and develop long-range planning to achieve the purposes of the Church, and of administering Church discipline;
- (b) be considered the spiritual overseer of the Church (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9) and shall direct all of its activities;
- (c) attend and participate in all meetings of the Elders' Board and the Members and, for such reason, no such meeting may be held in the absence of the Lead Pastor unless the Lead Pastor shall have consented to the holding of such meeting in his/her absence (unless for the purpose of discussing inadequate performance of the Lead Pastor);
- (d) shall act as the chairman for meetings of the Elders' Board and the Members, or shall appoint an Elder to so act;
- (e) shall be an ex officio member of all committees and departments of the Church;
- (f) shall determine the format and content for all services of the Church, with the exclusive authority to determine who is invited to speak or preach in the Church;
- (g) continually strive for excellence and to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit (1 Timothy 4:12-16 and Galatians 5:22);
- (h) attend diligently to the duties of office, working in harmony with the Elders' Board and others (1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 1:27);
- (i) demonstrate a personal concern for and interest in those to whom he/she ministers (Hebrews 13:7, 17); and
- (j) conduct himself/herself in such a way as to be an example to those he/she leads and influences, and to curtail his/her liberty and rights so as not to be a stumbling block to those who are weaker in the faith (1 Corinthians 8:7-13).

3.4.3 **Resignation.** It is expected that the Lead Pastor will endeavour to provide at least three months written notice of his/her intention to resign and such notice shall be given to the Elders' Board.

3.4.4 **Removal.** The Lead Pastor may be removed from office and dismissed from the Church's employ if the Lead Pastor:

- (a) fails to hold the qualifications for membership requirements in the Church;
- (b) ceases to be qualified to be an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);
- (c) fails to comply with the requirements for pastors holding credentials with the ACOP; or
- (d) is deemed by Special Resolution to be inadequately performing the duties of his/her pastoral office (see section 2.2);

provided that a majority of the Elders have met with the leadership of the ACOP and that ACOP have agreed that the Lead Pastor should be removed from active ministry in the Church. In such cases, two or more Elders will meet with the Lead Pastor and remove him/her from active ministry in the Church and provide the Lead Pastor with a written letter of dismissal from the Elders' Board and a letter supporting such dismissal from ACOP.

3.5 **Elders.** The Elders are called into leadership by the Holy Spirit and recognized as such by the Lead Pastor and Members. Elders must be Active Members who, in the opinion of the Lead Pastor, fulfill the biblical requirements of overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9). There shall be no less than three Elders at all times, and at least three of the Elders must be unrelated by blood or marriage to each other and to the Lead Pastor. In the case where a couple are on the Elders Board together, one vote will be given to the couple.

3.5.1 **Appointment.** The Nominating Committee of the congregation shall have the sole authority to nominate Active Members for appointment as Elders, provided that prior to doing so they have:

sought comments from the existing Elders regarding Active Members who are under consideration by the Lead Pastor for nomination as Elders; and

has given notice to the congregation of any Active Members they are considering for nomination as Elders and have invited the congregation to provide written comments of approval or disapproval of the proposed nominees to the Nominating Committee.

Nominations proposed by the Nominating Committee shall be voted upon (confirmed) at the next Annual Meeting or at a Business Meeting called

specifically for the purpose of considering such nominations. A nominee shall be appointed as an Elder if his/her nomination is approved by two-thirds of the Active Members who vote at the meeting, provided that a quorum exists.

If an Elder dies, resigns or is removed from office, the Lead Pastor and Elders may, by Joint Resolution, appoint an Active Member to take the place of such Elder and such Active Member may thereafter hold the office of Elder until the next Annual Meeting. At such Annual Meeting, the Active Members shall be asked to vote on such appointment and the appointment will be confirmed if approved by two-thirds of the Active Members who vote, provided that a quorum exists.

3.5.2 ***Responsibilities.*** The Elders shall:

- (a) together with the Lead Pastor determine the will of God for the Church;
- (b) shepherd the people of the Church in the direction of God's will by example and instruction under the oversight of the Lead Pastor;
- (c) prayerfully reach decisions and take action only after giving due consideration to the needs and opinions of the whole Church provided that obedience to Christ shall be their chief obligation;
- (d) act in the full legal capacity of the Lead Pastor when the Lead Pastor's position is vacant and, in such time, the Elders shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable pulpit ministry until such time as a new Lead Pastor has been duly installed;
- (e) continually strive for excellence and to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in all they do on behalf of the Church (1 Timothy 4:12-16; Galatians 5:22);
- (f) attend diligently to the duties of office, working in harmony with others and under the direction of the Lead Pastor (1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 1:27);
- (g) demonstrate a personal concern for and interest in those to whom they lead (Hebrews 13:7, 17); and
- (h) conduct themselves in such a way as to be an example to those they lead and influence, and to curtail their liberty and rights so as not to be a stumbling block to those who are weaker in the faith (1 Corinthians 8:7-13).



3.5.3 **Resignation.** An Elder may resign from such position by giving written notice of his/her resignation to the Lead Pastor and the Elders' Board. It is preferred that an Elder's resignation shall be provided at least two months prior to an Annual Meeting and shall take effect at the conclusion of such Annual Meeting.

3.5.4 **Removal.** An Elder may be removed from office by a Joint Resolution if the Elder:

- (a) fails to hold the qualifications for membership requirements in the Church;
- (b) ceases to be qualified to be an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);
- (c) or is deemed to be inadequately performing the duties of an Elder.

In such cases, the Lead Pastor and at least one other Elder will meet with such Elder and remove him/her from active ministry in the Church and provide him/her with a written letter of dismissal from the Elders' Board.

3.5.5 **Start Up Period.** In the start up period of the church, a temporary team of Elders will be appointed by the Lead Pastor and director of church planting for the ACOP until such time as it is appropriate for the Elders of the church to be affirmed by the members of the congregation.

3.6 **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have the general oversight of the financial affairs of the Church, and the responsibility of overseeing the book keeping and offerings of the church. The Treasurer must be a person in the opinion of the Lead Pastor that meets the scriptural requirements for a deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

3.6.1 **Appointment.** The Treasurer of the Church will be appointed by Joint Resolution.

3.6.2 **Responsibilities.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing the custody, receipts and disbursements of the funds of the Church (this may be done through a book keeper with their oversight), the keeping of accounts and the preparation of financial statements (again this may be done through a book keeper with their oversight) and shall perform such other duties as the Elders' Board or Lead Pastor may direct (again this may be done through a book keeper with their oversight), ensuring that:

- (a) all monies contributed to the Church are deposited on a regular basis in the financial institutions designated by the Elders' Board;
- (b) records (as required by law) are maintained showing from what sources monies have been received and for what purposes monies have been disbursed;
- (c) a quarterly financial report is rendered to the Elders' Board;

- (d) financial statements for the fiscal year of the Church are presented at the Annual Meeting;
- (e) there is an annual audit of the Church's financial records;
- (f) an annual budget is prepared, submitted and explained to the Membership at the Annual Meeting;
- (g) all filings required to be made with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency or other governmental authorities are made in a proper and timely manner;
- (h) the Goods & Services Tax (GST) credit is applied for on an annual basis;
- (i) they continually strive for excellence and to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in the ministry for which they have responsibility (Galatians 5:22);
- (j) attend diligently to the duties of office, working in harmony with others and under the direction of the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board (1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 1:27);
- (k) conduct themselves in such a way as to be an example to those they lead and influence, and to curtail their liberty and rights so as not to be a stumbling block to those who are weaker in the faith (1 Corinthians 8:7-13).

3.6.3 **Resignation.** The Treasurer may resign from such position by giving written notice of his/her resignation to the Lead Pastor and the Elders' Board. It is preferred that the Treasurer's resignation shall be provided at least two months prior to an Annual Meeting and shall take effect at the conclusion of such Annual Meeting.

3.6.4 **Removal.** The Treasurer may be removed from office by a Joint Resolution if the Treasurer:

- (a) fails to hold the qualifications for membership requirements in the Church;
- (b) ceases to be qualified to be a deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13);
- (c) is deemed to be inadequately performing the duties of treasurer; or
- (d) acts in an unlawful or unethical manner in his/her capacity as Treasurer.

In such cases, the Lead Pastor and at least one other Elder will meet with such Treasurer and remove him/her from active ministry in the Church and provide him/her with a written letter of dismissal from of the Elders' Board.

## **ARTICLE 4 COMMITMENT and MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 **Commitment:** Commitment to the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12) at Neighbours Church can look different based on the choice of people who choose to participate and call Neighbours Church their home. We understand that each person is on a journey and may be comfortable at different levels of commitment to the church based on personal convictions. So, we want to acknowledge that we see at least four levels of commitment to Neighbours Church.
- 4.1.1 **Level 1 Commitment:** these people are '*attenders*'; the commitment level is low, they come to the church fairly regularly, and have the right to attend services, financially support the work of the church, attend our AGM, and participate in communion if they are a believer.
- 4.1.2 **Level 2 Commitment:** these people are '*regulars*'; those who call Neighbours Church their home church, and have the right to attend services, financially support the work of the church, attend our AGM, participate in communion if they are a believer, and serve in a variety of roles at the church.
- 4.1.3 **Level 3 Commitment:** these people are '*church family*'; those who have made a personal decision for Christ, call Neighbours Church their home church, are interested in greater accountability to the leadership of the church, voluntarily submit to the leadership of the church and discipleship, and have the right to attend services, financially support the work of the church, attend our AGM, participate in communion if they are a believer, and volunteer in most roles at the church other than those reserved for legal Members of the church.
- 4.1.4 **Level 4 Commitment:** the people are '*Members*'; everything that is true for '*church family*' is true for '*Members*', however as '*Members*' they are part of the Membership. '*Membership*' is legal term referring to those that have legal rights and responsibilities within the organization as outlined below.
- 4.2 **Qualifications for Membership.** A person qualifies for membership in the Church if he/she:
- 4.2.1 has experienced the 'new birth' (John 3:5-7) through repentance and personal faith in Jesus Christ and shows evidence that they are a child of God, born of the Holy Spirit;
- 4.2.2 is willing to accept the spiritual oversight of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, and Elders and is willing to follow their lead unless it is plainly contrary to the written Word of God;
- 4.2.3 agrees with the Statement of Faith and is willing to strive to live out its principles;

- 4.2.4 embraces the purpose and vision of the Church;
  - 4.2.5 affirms all of the provisions contained in this Constitution; and
  - 4.2.6 is willing to commit himself/herself to the Church by word, regular participation, tithing/giving, fulfilling the responsibilities of membership, and governing their lives according to Scripture.
- 4.3 **Membership.** The Members of the Church shall consist of those persons who:
- 4.3.1 are qualified for membership in the Church;
  - 4.3.2 have applied for membership in the Church,
  - 4.3.3 have had their applications for membership approved by a Joint Resolution; and
  - 4.3.4 have not been removed from membership in the Church.
- 4.4 **Classifications of Members.** The membership of the Church shall be classified into Active Members, Inactive Members, Non-resident Members, Associate Members, and Suspended Members.
- 4.4.1 **Active Members.** “**Active Members**” are those Members who are not Non-resident Members, Inactive Members or Associate Members. Active Members have the right to vote at Business Meetings and may be given the privilege of serving in the Church as Elders, Leaders or church workers.
  - 4.4.2 **Inactive Members.** Any Active Member who has neglected his/her privileges and responsibilities for a period of more than six months, may be categorized by the Elders’ Board as an “**Inactive Member**”, provided that prior to being so categorized, the Elders’ Board shall have attempted to contact such Active Member with a view to seeking to restore him/her to fellowship in the Church. If an Inactive Member returns to fellowship in the Church, to the satisfaction of the Elders’ Board, he/she will be re-instated as an Active Member. Inactive Members are not entitled to vote at Business Meetings and may not serve the Church as Elders, Leaders or church workers.
  - 4.4.3 **Non-resident Members.** “**Non-resident Members**” are those Members living at a distance from the Church which prevents regular attendance (such as students or missionaries) and who have advised the Elders’ Board in writing that they wish to retain their membership in the Church while living at such a distance from the Church. Non-resident Members have the responsibility of keeping the Elders’ Board informed in writing on not less than an annual basis as to their whereabouts and their continued desire to retain membership in the Church. Non-resident

Members are not entitled to vote at Business Meetings and may not serve the Church as Elders or Leaders, but may serve as church workers.

4.4.4 **Associate Members.** A person who is a member of another ACOP church, but who is temporarily living at a distance from such church which prevents regular attendance at such church may apply for membership in the Church for the duration of time in which they expect to be attending regularly and participating in the congregational life of the Church. Such persons who are accepted into the membership of the Church shall be categorized as “**Associate Members**”. Associate Members are not entitled to vote at Business Meeting and may not serve the Church as Elders or Leaders, but may serve as church workers.

4.4.5 **Suspended Members.** A “Suspended Member” is a Member whose membership is under suspension pursuant to **section 4.8.2**. Suspended Members are not entitled to vote at Business Meetings and may not serve the Church as Elders, Leaders or church workers.

4.5 **Privileges and Responsibilities of Members.** Members have privileges and responsibilities, including the privilege and responsibility to:

4.5.1 “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7);

4.5.2 not forsake “the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:24);

4.5.3 be “labourers together with God” (1 Corinthians 3:9);

4.5.4 endeavour “to keep the unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:3);

4.5.5 exercise care one for another (Galatians 6:2);

4.5.6 be faithful and diligent in service (1 Corinthians 4:2);

4.5.6 promote and proclaim the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:2);

4.5.7 encourage and sustain the entire ministry for the evangelization of all people (Matthew 28:19,20);

4.5.8 be separate from the world, to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18); and

4.5.9 pray for the Members and the ministry of the church (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 and Ephesians 6:18).

4.6 **Resignation.** Any Member who makes a written request to be removed from Membership shall be removed from the membership of the Church by the Elders’ Board.

4.7 **Removal.** The Elders' Board may, upon a Joint Resolution, remove from the membership of the Church:

4.7.1 any Non-resident Member who has failed for a period of 18 or more months to keep the Elders' Board informed in writing as to their whereabouts and their continued desire to retain membership in the Church.

4.7.2 any Inactive Member who has been absent from the Sunday Worship Services at the Church for a period of six months (after being made inactive) without giving a satisfactory reason for such absence;

4.7.3 any Associate Member who has ceased to attend at the Church on a regular basis for a period of six months or more;

4.7.4 any Member who has ceased to be qualified for Membership; and

4.7.5 any Member who is subject to removal in accordance with **section 4.9.2(b)**.

4.7.6 Upon removing a person from Membership, the Elders' Board shall send a letter of removal to such person.

4.8 **Membership List.** The Elders' Board shall hold and maintain a Membership list containing the names of all Members. At the Annual Meeting, the Elders' Board shall report the names of those persons received into Membership and those persons resigned or removed from Membership.

4.9 **Discipline and Counselling.** Scriptures grant to the Church the right to counsel and/or discipline Members.

4.9.1 **Grounds for Counselling and Discipline.** The Church may counsel and/or discipline Members, including those who:

(a) lack self discipline (Matthew 5:23-26; 1 Corinthians 11:31);

(b) trespass against a brother (Matthew 18:15-17);

(c) are disorderly persons (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 11-14);

(d) are factious persons and heretics (Romans 16:17, 18; Titus 3:10, 11);

(f) are wicked persons (1 Corinthians 5:9-13);

(g) are self-seeking, resist the truth, and are judgmental (Romans 2:1-11);

(h) persistently exhibit the desires of the sinful nature and not fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26);

- (i) are argumentative, unbecoming in speech, spreading falsehood, arrogant, greedy, or live unholy lifestyles (2 Timothy 2:14-19; 3:1-11);
- (j) are overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1); or
- (k) are sinning Elders (1 Timothy 5:19, 20).

4.9.2 ***Exercise of Counselling and Discipline.*** The counselling and discipline of a Member shall be exercised by the Lead Pastor (in conjunction with the Elders' Board) for the purpose of restoring the Member to full fellowship. The Member will be asked to meet with the Lead Pastor and at least one Elder to be interviewed according to scripture. Such meeting may result in the suspension of the Member, the removal of the Member from membership, or the restoration of the Member into full fellowship:

- (a) ***Suspension.*** If, after full inquiry and prayer and counsel together, the Member does not repent, the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board may suspend the Member, by written notification, from the privileges of membership including participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.
- (b) ***Removal from Membership.*** If a Member's offence(s) warrants removal from membership, or if the Member refuses to comply with the provisions of the Word of God and the Constitution and guidelines of the Church, the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board may remove the Member from membership by written notification stating the reason(s) for removal. The Lead Pastor and/or Elders' Board shall inform other Leaders confidence of their decision to remove the Member from membership. At the next Annual Meeting following the removal of the Member, the congregation shall be notified of the steps and action taken, the time frame, and why the decision to remove the Member from membership was made; provided, however, that the specific information so disclosed shall be determined by the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board (Matthew 18:15-20).
- (c) ***Restoration.*** If a suspended Member or a former Member who was removed from membership due to an offence repents and desires to be restored to fellowship in the Church, the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board shall oversee the restoration process in a Biblical and sensitive manner.

## **ARTICLE 5 MEETINGS**

5.1 ***Church Meetings.*** The Church shall meet regularly for worship, prayer, teaching, and fellowship.

- 5.2 **Business Meetings.** A meeting for the purpose of conducting the business of the Church (a “**Business Meeting**”) may be called from time to time by Joint Resolution (1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:25). One Business Meeting (referred to as the “**Annual Meeting**”) shall be conducted every year within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year as required by law. At the Annual Meeting, among other things, the financial statements of the Church will be distributed to the congregation.
- 5.3 **Quorum.** No resolutions shall be passed at a Business Meeting unless the number of Active Members present at such meeting is at least 35% of the total number of Active Members (in which case a “**quorum exists**”).
- 5.4 **Committee Meetings.** The Elders’ Board may from time to time appoint any committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and with such powers as the Elders’ Board shall see fit. Any committee member may be removed by the Elders’ Board. All committees of the Church shall work under the general oversight of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Elders.
- 5.5 **Prohibition.** No person who identifies as an attender, regular, church family, or Member (see section 4.1) of the Church shall call or conduct any private, business, or devotional meetings related to this Church without the knowledge and consent of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, or Elders.

## ARTICLE 6 ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES

- 6.1 **Ordinances.** The Church administers the ordinances of water baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper.

**Baptism.** The ordinance of water baptism by full immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered, upon request, to all those who have repented of their sins, have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 11:23-26) in the authority of Jesus name, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Lord’s Supper.** The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper shall be regularly observed as commanded in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

- 6.2 **Practices.** The Church has adopted the following practices:

6.2.1 **Dedication of Children.** While the Church does not baptize infants, Christian parents may present their children to the Lord in front of the congregation at a time agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and the parents. In so doing, we seek God’s blessing for the child(ren) and solidify the parent’s or parents’ commitment to the responsibility of bringing up their child(ren) “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).



6.2.2 ***Christian Marriage.*** The Church will marry any Member who meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) the Ontario Government will allow them to be married by law;
- (b) the couple will submit themselves to pre-marriage counselling by the Lead Pastor or the Lead Pastor's appointed pre-marriage counsellor;
- (c) the Lead Pastor agrees that the couple should be married and is willing to marry them or to have an Associate Pastor marry them;
- (d) there is no Biblical reason for the couple's marriage to be denied according to the interpretation of the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board and, in this regard, as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, the Church reserves the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others (Genesis 1:22-24; Matthew 19:4-6);
- (e) the constitution of the ACOP permits the couple to be married; and
- (f) the Member agrees to pay any associated fees.

6.2.3 ***Christian Burial of the Dead.*** The Church will bury any Member of the congregation within a local proximity, assuming a Christian service or memorial and Christian burial are conducted. Some fees may apply.

6.2.4 ***Prayer for the Sick.*** The Church believes, in accordance with Scripture, that Elders should lay hands on those that are sick to receive healing (James 5:14).

## **ARTICLE 7 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

7.1 ***Exclusive Responsibility of the Elders' Board.*** Subject to consultation with the Lead Pastor, the Elders' Board shall have the exclusive responsibility and power to make all determinations regarding financial matters pertaining to the Church, including the establishment and modification of budgets and decisions related to the expenditure of Church funds.

7.2 ***Financing.*** The Church believes that its financial needs will be met as the congregation trusts the Lord, follows His principle of proportionate giving (as laid down in 1 Corinthians 16:2; Malachi 3:10; Numbers 18:28; 1 Corinthians 6:1-4; Matt.23:23), and gives from a "willing heart" (according to 2 Corinthians 9:7). Voluntary offerings will be received from the congregation at regular and special services of the Church. Other

methods of raising money will be permitted only by permission of the Lead Pastor and Elders' Board.

- 7.3 ***No Gain for Members.*** The activities of the Church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its Members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its objectives, in accordance with its Constitution or as the same may be amended from time to time.
- 7.4 ***Trustees.*** If the Church acquires any real property, three Elders shall be appointed from time to time by Joint Resolution to act as trustees on behalf of the Church for the purpose of holding title to such real property.
- 7.5 ***Fiscal Year.*** The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> and end on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **ARTICLE 8 RECORDS**

- 8.1 ***Records.*** All records, papers, correspondence, books, and other documents pertaining to the business of the Church are the property of the Church, and shall be made available to the Lead Pastor or Elders' Board upon request and, if required by the Lead Pastor or Elder's Board, shall be kept at the Church office.

## **ARTICLE 9 AMENDMENTS**

- 9.1 ***Amendments.*** This Constitution may be amended only by a Joint Resolution which is subsequently approved at a Business Meeting by two-thirds of the Active Members who vote, provided that a quorum exists.

## **ARTICLE 10 DISSOLUTION**

- 10.1 ***Dissolution.*** No motion to dissolve the Church shall be made at any Business Meeting unless the motion is made by the Elders' Board and seconded by the Lead Pastor. If such a motion is made, the motion shall be tabled and the meeting shall be adjourned for a minimum of two months and then reconvened. At the reconvened meeting the motion may be withdrawn by the moving parties or (if not withdrawn) voted upon. The motion shall be considered passed only upon an affirmative vote of three-quarters of all Active Members, provided a quorum exists.

10.2 ***Distribution of Assets on Dissolution.*** Upon a dissolution of the Church, any funds of the Church remaining after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to one or more organizations in Canada that, in the determination of the Elder's Board, have cognate or similar purposes to the Church; provided that each such organization shall be a charitable organization, a charitable corporation or a charitable trust recognized by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency as being qualified as such under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada from time to time in effect.

This Constitution shall take effect on September 1, 2021

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Reverend Christopher Stevens, Lead Pastor

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Bill Hogg, Elder

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Cal Ellerby, Elder

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Trevor Seath, Elder