

**Doctrine, Constitution And  
Discipline of the  
United Christian Church**



Edited and Published by Authority of the Annual Conference 2006

Updated through 2024

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## **CHAPTER I CONFESSION OF FAITH**

### **Of God, the Holy Trinity**

We declare and confess before all men that we believe in one Supreme God, consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit: That these three are one; the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Spirit equal in essence or being with the Father and the Son.

### **Of Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ; that he is very God and man; that he is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race if they with full faith in him accept the grace of God offered through him; that he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary and was born of her; suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God to intercede for us, that He shall come again to rapture His church, judge and reward the believers (II Cor.5:10) and that on the last day, He shall also judge the unbelievers (Rev. 20:11, 12).

### **Of the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit; that he is equal in being with the Father and the Son; that he convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that he comforts the faithful and guides them into all truth.

### **Of the Creation**

We believe that this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible and invisible; that He sustains, protects, and governs these, with fatherly regard for the welfare of mankind, to the glory of his name.

### **Of The Holy Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testament, is the inerrant Word of God as originally written by men as inspired by God; that it reveals the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it, by the help of the Spirit of God, as the only rule and guide in faith and practice.

### **Of Depravity**

We believe that man is fallen from original righteousness, and apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not only entirely destitute of holiness, but is inclined to evil, and only evil, and that continually; and that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.

### **Of the Resurrection of the Dead**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, both of the just and subsequently of the unjust; the righteous unto eternal life and the wicked to endless punishment.

### **Of the Church**

We believe in a holy Christian church, ordained of God, composed of true believers, in which the Word of God is preached by men divinely called; the ordinances are duly administered; that its mission is to worship God, preach the gospel to all the world, to edify believers and minister to the needs of society.

**Of Redemption and Atonement**

We believe that we are redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross; that this vicarious atonement is sufficient for all mankind, but becomes efficient only in those who accept it through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Of Justification**

We believe that penitent sinners are justified before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and not by works; yet that good works in Christ are acceptable to God and spring out of a true and living faith. -

**Of Regeneration and Adoption**

We believe that regeneration is the work of God, through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, by which the heart of man is renewed in the image of God, and through which the believer receives the Spirit of adoption and is enabled to serve God with the will and the affections.

**Of Sanctification**

We believe that sanctification is the work of God's grace, through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are separated in their acts, words, and thoughts from sin, and are enabled to live unto God and follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

**Of the Church Ordinances**

We believe in the ordinances of baptism, the remembrance of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ (Communion), and feet washing and that they should be observed in the church by believers. The mode of baptism shall be left to each individual only that it should be by immersion if practicable.

**Of the Lord's Day (Sunday)**

We believe that God ordained a day of rest and worship for mankind. Since the time of the early church, this day has been observed on Sunday in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection. We believe that its observance is beneficial to the welfare of both the individual and the community and essential to the life of the church.

## **CHAPTER II CONSTITUTION**

We, the members of the United Christian Church, in the name of God, for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, in order to produce and secure a uniform mode of action in faith and practice, and to define the powers and business of the District and Annual Conferences as recognized by this church, do ordain the following Constitution:

### **ARTICLE I**

**Section 1.** All ecclesiastical power to make or repeal any rule of discipline is vested in the Annual Conference which shall consist of all the Elders, licensed ministers including lay ministers and those holding missions license, and all other members of the District Conferences.

**Section 2.** The Annual Conference shall determine the place and time for its next meeting. A majority of its members shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 3.** The Annual Conference shall, at every session, elect a presiding officer from among the Elders of the church who have served at least two years as an Elder.

**Section 4.** The business of each Annual Conference shall be done strictly according to the Discipline, and any Annual Conference acting contrary thereto shall not be recognized by the church.

**Section 5.** The Annual Conference shall define the boundaries of the District Conferences.

**Section 6.** The Annual Conference may, by two-thirds of the votes cast propose changes in, or additions to, the Confession of Faith; provided that such changes or additions shall be submitted to a vote of the membership throughout the church, under regulations authorized by said conference.

A majority of three-fourths of the votes cast by the membership on any submitted change or addition shall be necessary to its final ratification.

### **ARTICLE II**

**Section 1.** The Confession of Faith may only be amended pursuant to Article 1, Section 6 above.

**Section 2.** No rule shall be adopted that will restrict the mode of baptism, only that it shall be by immersion, if practicable.

**Section 3.** No rule shall be enacted which will abolish the right of appeal.

### **ARTICLE III**

**Section 1.** The Lord's Supper (Communion) and feet washing shall be practiced by the church.

**Section 2.** There shall be no connection with oath-bound secret organizations. No one who is a member of such an organization may become a member of this church without severing his/her membership with it. Any church member who joins such an organization shall automatically forfeit membership in the church. Such members may be reinstated by giving satisfactory evidence to the Official Board of the local church that they have severed their membership in such organizations.

### **ARTICLE IV**

The right, title, interest, and claim of all property, both real and personal, of whatever name or description, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by any person or persons, for the use and benefit of the United Christian Church, is hereby fully recognized and held to vest in the Church

aforesaid and not the local church.

**ARTICLE V**

Alterations of or amendments to the foregoing Constitution may be proposed by any Annual Conference, by two-thirds of the votes cast, and submitted to a vote of the membership throughout the church under regulations authorized by said conference.

A majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by the membership upon any submitted alteration or amendment shall be necessary to its final ratification.



## **CHAPTER III MEMBERS**

### **SECTION I RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

Persons desiring to unite with the church shall apply to the Pastor of the congregation where they attend, whose duty it shall then be to visit the applicants for the purpose of consultation regarding our Confession of Faith and Discipline, in order that they may be fully informed on our church policy before formally presenting themselves for membership in the church.

After applicants have been visited by the Pastor and favorably passed upon by the Official Board, they should be publicly received, if possible. At that service, the Pastor shall read aloud our Confession of Faith and Chapter XIV, Section VII regarding membership in other organizations. The applicants shall then be called forward and addressed as follows:

#### **Dear Friends:**

Inasmuch as you are presenting yourselves for membership in the United Christian Church, we rejoice with you that through the grace of God you have been brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and have been made partakers of this great salvation. The fellowship and privileges which you desire in church membership will serve to your edification and greater usefulness. The duties enjoined are solemn. It is proper that you publicly confess your faith and declare your purpose by answering the following questions;

- \* 1. Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God, and that only in the Bible is contained the knowledge of the way of salvation?
- \*2. Have you experienced the forgiveness of your sins, and have you now peace with God?
- \*3. Have you firmly made up your mind that with God's grace you will live a holy life, saying no to all ungodly ways, and keep Jesus Christ as Lord of your life?
4. Have you been baptized since receiving Christ as your Savior? (If not, the person shall do so as soon as practicable.)
5. Are you willing to use your spiritual gift(s) and other God-given abilities to glorify God through the ministries of this church?
6. Do you accept the responsibilities of church membership as stated in the Duties of Members and desire to cooperate with your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ?

If the person answers the above questions affirmatively, the Pastor and as many members as desire shall extend the right hand of fellowship to such person as a member of our church and record the name in the membership book.

\*These questions shall also be asked of baptismal applicants.

#### **Pastor's Responsibility**

Any Pastor refusing or neglecting to ask the foregoing questions, or who shall receive members into the church in violation of this order, shall be answerable for the same to the Annual Conference.

## **SECTION II DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

Among the duties of members are the following:

1. Every member must give evidence of the new birth by a changed life and a desire to continue growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2. Every member shall endeavor to faithfully attend the services of the church and Sunday School and participate in the ordinances of communion and feet washing. We encourage our members to tithe their income and in this way the church, the ministers and mission activities will be properly supported.
3. Each one shall be responsible to pray for the church's growth, invite the unchurched to attend, and warmly welcome those who visit in our services. Witnessing to the unsaved about Jesus Christ is everyone's task.
4. All members shall serve in one way or another in the ministry of the church by discovering and using their spiritual gift(s). Using our gifts to serve the Lord and others will bring blessing to the church and growth to God's Kingdom.
5. Parents should have daily family devotions with their children and live a Godly life before them. In addition, quiet times of prayer and Bible study are very important for personal growth.
6. Everyone should be a respectable citizen of the community, practice love toward all, conduct business dealings with honesty and integrity, and observe the Lord's day in a God-honoring way.
7. Because the Lord has commanded us not to be conformed to this world, but to lay aside all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and since our Savior taught us the same by his words and example, we prayerfully admonish our members to obey these divine commands. Let us guard against the world pressuring us to conform to its lifestyles including its ways of acquiring and using money, its use of work and leisure time, its immodest clothing fashions, and all other things contrary to Christlikeness and holiness. (See Romans 12:1-2, I Timothy 2:9- 10, James 1:21, I Peter 3:3-4) Accordingly, members are also expected to follow the guidelines set forth in Chapter 15 regarding Moral and Social Concerns.
8. Every member shall help to protect the unity of the church by acting in love toward other members, by refusing to gossip, and by cooperating with those in authority in the church. If we stand together for God, we shall be victorious. If we are divided, we shall injure ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of men, Therefore, let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of unity. Let us pray earnestly for each other and speak truly and freely to each other. When we meet let us not part without prayer if it is appropriate. Let us take great care not to despise one another's gifts. Let us defend one another's character in everything as far as is consistent with truth. Let us labor to honor others before ourselves.

## **SECTION III TRIAL OF MEMBERS**

### **Personal Trespass**

When members trespass against each other, let the following instruction control.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more...and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matt. 18:15-17)

### **Immoral Conduct**

If a member is accused of immoral conduct, the Deacon or Pastor, together with another person of their choosing (committee) shall visit the accused. If the accused denies the charges and the committee is satisfied with the truth of the denial, the matter shall be closed. If there is an admission of guilt but evidence of true repentance is given (including submission to appropriate counsel), the accused shall be restored and the matter closed.

If guilt is denied but the committee is not satisfied with the truthfulness of the denial, the accused shall be offered a hearing before three (3) other persons: one (1) chosen by the accused, one (1) chosen by the committee and one (!) chosen by these two (2) nominees. These persons must be members of the United Christian Church but not necessarily the same congregation as the accused.

If, after a hearing, the accusations are deemed to be unfounded, the accused shall be restored and the matter closed. If, however, the charges are found to be true, the accused shall be expelled from membership unless he/she gives evidence of true repentance (including submission to appropriate counsel), upon which he/she shall be restored and the matter closed.

If the accused refuses the offer of a hearing, the Official Board, upon its annual review of the membership roll, shall take whatever action it deems appropriate.

### **Disobedience to the Order of the Church**

In case of neglect of duty of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulging sinful tempers or words, or disobedience to the order and Discipline of the church, let the Pastor and/or Deacon give private reproof and encouragement towards spiritual growth. On a second offense, the Pastor and Deacon shall take with them one or two faithful members to further admonish and encourage. On a third offense, the matter may be brought before the Official Board for appropriate action.

### **Disputes**

In case of a dispute between members, the Deacon or Pastor to whom it is known (or the Presiding Elder if a minister is involved) shall inquire into the circumstances of the case and try to resolve it. If necessary, he shall recommend to the contending parties a reference to a committee consisting of one member chosen by each party and a third by these two, who shall then decide the matter.

### **Right of Appeal**

Should any member be dissatisfied with the decision of a local church or committee of a church, an appeal may be taken to the next District Conference by giving notice thereof to the Pastor, or the secretary of the trial within thirty (30) days after said trial, together with the reasons for such appeal; and it shall be the duty of the secretary to furnish the District Conference with a certified copy of the proceedings of the trial and notice of the appeal.

### **Going to Law Forbidden**

Any member refusing, in case of debt or dispute, to refer the matter to arbitration when recommended to him by the Deacon or Pastor, or who shall enter into a lawsuit with another member before these measures are taken, shall be dealt with as in the case of other immoralities, except when the case is of such a nature as to require and justify a process at law.

### **Record of Trials**

A faithful record of the proceedings of any church trial conducted in a local church shall be kept by the secretary of the Official Board in the minute book of said Board; and it shall be his duty, in case of an appeal, to furnish his record to the District Conference.

### **Order in Trials**

All church trials shall be conducted in a consistent Christian manner, without the employment of magistrates and attorneys to administer oaths and conduct investigations.

## **SECTION IV TRANSFER AND DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

### **Certificate of Transfer of Members**

When members of our church desire to transfer their membership from one congregation to another, they may obtain a certificate of transfer by a majority vote of the Official Board of the congregation to which they belong.

A footnote shall be added to all certificates of transfer, as follows:

Note: This is not a letter of dismissal from our church  
and it does not terminate the connection of the member with the local church which grants the transfer until it is accepted by the local church to which it is given, and the granting church officially notified of its acceptance.

### **Certificate of Recommendation**

When a member of our church desires to transfer membership from our denomination, said member may be entitled to receive a certificate of recommendation by a majority vote of the Official Board of the local church. Provided that the member is in good standing as evidenced by the observance of the rules of our church.

### **Limitation of Certificate**

A certificate issued to a member of our church as provided in either of the preceding sections must be presented to some local church, or returned to the church by which it was granted, within six months; otherwise it becomes null and void.

### **Delinquent Members**

In case a member fails to attend the local church of which he is a member at least once each conference year, he may be marked "Removed without certificate", but not before a sincere attempt has been made to contact the member,

### **Certificate of Withdrawal**

If a member of our church desires to withdraw, he shall be entitled to a certificate of withdrawal from the church by a majority vote of the Official Board of the local church of which he is a member.

## **CHAPTER IV GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

### **Section I Congregations**

#### **Organization of Local Church**

A local United Christian Church may be organized, where not already established, by the Mission Board when desired by at least three (3) resident persons, all of whom are members of our church or desire to be, by first receiving those that are not already members of our church and enrolling the names of all the members in a membership book. A Deacon, a steward, and a treasurer shall be elected.

#### **Election of Church Officials**

Toward the close of each conference year, the Pastor in charge shall hold an election at which the members of the congregation shall elect a Deacon, Assistant Deacon, steward, treasurer, and ushers. Trustees shall also be elected in such years when their terms expire.

Congregations that are part of a Union Sunday School are allowed to annually elect up to three (3) members from their congregation to serve as members-at-large on their Official Boards. The officers shall all be elected by ballot.

In the event that the votes are so scattered that the one having the highest number does not have a majority, a second ballot shall be taken using the names of the three having the highest number of votes as nominees for the office. In case of tie votes, so that the first ballot does not definitely determine the three eligible candidates, those ties which it is necessary to break shall be voted off before the final ballot is taken, so that there shall not be more than three candidates on the final ballot for the offices.

All members shall be allowed to vote without regard to age.

Absent members may send properly marked ballots to the election of officials.

Wives of all Pastors and assistant Pastors shall have full voting privileges in the local church(es) where they are currently serving.

No woman shall be elected to any office, the holding of which would make her a member of the Official Board, but shall not be considered ineligible for other offices.

The officers so elected shall enter upon the duties of their offices immediately after the Annual Conference.

#### **Disbanding of Congregations**

When a District Conference deems it impractical to maintain the organization of a church in any place, whatever members who remain shall be, by the Pastor, transferred to such congregation(s) as may be desired by the member(s).

## **SECTION II DEACONS**

### **Qualifications**

It shall be his duty to lead a pious and exemplary life before the congregation; carefully and prayerfully study the Holy Scriptures thereby fully qualifying himself for the faithful performance of his duties as a leader and counselor.

### **Meeting With The Congregation**

It shall be the Deacon's duty to conduct prayer meetings, instruct and admonish from the Bible, exhorting to unity and love.

### **Visitation**

When any of his members are sick or delinquent in their performance of any of their duties as Christians, he shall visit them, pray or counsel as circumstances may require. Should it be known to him that any of his members are in needy circumstances, he shall present the matter to the Official Board, whose duty it shall be to take such action as may be required to relieve the situation.

### **Church Record**

He shall keep a record of the members of the congregation and shall make regular reports of his work, and the condition of his congregation, to the Official Board and, upon request, to the District Conference.

## **SECTION III STEWARDS**

### **Elements for the Lord's Supper**

He shall provide the elements for the Lord's Supper and feet washing. When at all possible, he shall procure unfermented wine for the Lord's Supper.

## **SECTION IV**

### **OFFICIAL BOARDS**

1. The Official Board shall be composed of the following: the Pastor, resident minister(s), lay minister(s), missions minister(s), Deacon and assistant, steward, church treasurer, trustees, Sunday School superintendent and assistant, Sunday School treasurer, members-at-large where applicable, and any member who serves on an Annual Conference board or committee.
2. The Pastor or an elected member of the Official Board shall be chairman of the Board. In his absence one of the members shall be elected chairman pro tem. The sessions shall begin and close with devotional exercises.
3. The Board shall elect a secretary, who shall keep a record of its proceedings.
4. It shall receive an annual statement from the Deacon in reference to the spiritual condition of his congregation.
5. The Board shall at least annually receive statements of all monies received and disbursed for the interest of the local church.
6. The Board shall annually review the membership roll for Christian conduct and attendance, approve new memberships and grant transfers and dismissals per the provisions of the Discipline.
7. The Board shall meet at the call of the chairman, or at a regular time, as each congregation may determine, or when called for by at least three members of the Board.

## **SECTION V DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

### **Members**

The members of the District Conference shall be the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder and the members of the Official Boards of the congregations comprising the district as established by the Annual Conference.

### **Duties and Powers of the District Conference**

1. All sessions of the District Conference shall begin and close with devotional exercises.
2. In the absence of the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder, or a substitute whom they may have chosen, the conference shall elect a chairman pro tem, whose official acts shall be valid.
3. A secretary shall be elected whose duty it shall be to keep a correct record of all the

proceedings in a book in which the names of all the members composing said conference shall be entered.

4. Additional powers and duties of the District Conference shall include:
  - (a) To make a general inquiry into the moral and official conduct of all its members.
  - (b) To enforce discipline in all the congregations under its jurisdiction, but in no case disorganize a congregation unless the preliminary steps have been taken as required in Section I above.
  - (c) To receive and try appeals, references, and complaints that may come regularly before it.
  - (d) To review all Official Board and Sunday School executive committee minutes.
  - (e) To elect trustees when necessary according to Chapter VII
  - (f) To grant license to preach according to the provisions of Chapter V, "Ministry of the Church."
  - (g) To renew the license of District Conference and lay ministers annually if they be found worthy.
5. After such District Conference ministers have stood in that capacity one or more years, the District Conference may recommend them to Annual Conference for Annual Conference License. All ministers recommended to Annual Conference and not received may retain their former relation.

### **Time and Place of Meeting**

The District Conference shall meet at least once a year or at the call of the Presiding Elder at such time and place as may be agreed upon.

### **Appeals**

Any member dissatisfied with a decision of the District Conference may, within thirty (30) days, appeal to the next Annual Conference by giving written notice to the secretary of the District Conference together with his reasons for the appeal. The secretary shall then furnish a certified copy of the proceedings, notification and the reasons to the Annual Conference.

## **SECTION VI ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **Members**

The Annual Conference shall consist of all the members of the District Conferences.

### **Devotions**

A portion of God's Word shall be read, also singing and prayer at the opening and closing of each session.

### **Presiding Officers**

The Annual Conference shall annually elect a presiding officer and an assistant from the Elders of the church who have served at least two years in that capacity.

The conference shall elect by ballot a secretary, or two if necessary, who shall record the names of members and the proceedings of conference in a book kept for that purpose.

### **Method of Doing Business**

The business of each Annual Conference shall be done strictly according to Discipline and any Annual Conference acting contrary thereto shall not be recognized by the church.

### **Ministers' Reports**

All ministers shall report in person or by letter concerning their personal life and conduct, as

well as their ministerial work. Pastors shall include information concerning their particular assignment such as conversions, baptisms, membership and other highlights of the year.

### **Electioneering Forbidden**

No member shall be permitted to electioneer favorably to his own election to any office of the church. Should anyone be found so doing, if a preacher, he shall be held accountable to the next Annual Conference, and if a layman, he shall be held accountable to his congregation, to be dealt with as said conference or congregation may see fit.

### **Powers of Annual Conference**

Annual Conference shall have the power:

1. To make or repeal any rule of Discipline. The support of two-thirds of the votes cast at two successive Annual Conferences shall be necessary for its final ratification. (Items appearing in *italics* throughout this Discipline are considered Conference Rules and do not need to be ratified.)
2. To define the boundaries of the District Conferences.
3. To grant Annual Conference License to preach to such as have been recommended by the District Conferences and found proficient by the committee on examinations.
4. To examine such ministers who, after one year probation, may be presented to Annual Conference for ordination to Eldership.
5. To elect from among the Elders of the church, who have served at least four years in that capacity, a Presiding Elder for the coming year.
6. To determine the time and place where the next Annual Conference shall be held.
7. To elect a Board of Trustees of the United Christian Church; a Mission Board; a Board of Campmeeting Trustees; an Auditing Committee, a Board of Youth Ministries, a representative for the Board of Stone Ridge, and a Pastoral Stationing Board. All such board/committee members shall become members of the Official Board where they hold membership.

*Should any vacancies occur, the unexpired term may be filled by the board/committee subject to ratification by the next Annual Conference.*

*Unless otherwise provided, members of conference boards and committees are allowed to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms or 14 years with one year off before serving future terms on that same board or committee. This does not apply to the conference officers, the office of Presiding Elder or Assistant Presiding Elder, nor any other board or committee where the person is serving by virtue of the office of Presiding Elder or Assistant Presiding Elder.*

*The Nominating Committee shall choose a slate of nominees for vacancies on Annual Conference boards. The committee shall consist of one church member from each congregation, chosen annually by the Official Board. The chairman of the committee shall be an active Elder who shall serve one year on a rotating basis through seniority. It shall nominate three persons when there is one vacancy on a board and a minimum of five persons when there are two or more vacancies on a board.*

*When balloting for a conference board, if no one has a majority of votes on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be taken using the names of the two persons having the highest number of votes.*



### **Additional Matters for Consideration**

1. Have any of the ministers died during the last year?
2. Missions reports.
3. Sunday School and Vacation Bible School reports,
4. Any additional business,
5. Is all that has been done entered upon the minutes?

### **Conference Preparation**

1. *To the extent that it is possible, all new items and committee reports, with the exception of financial reports, to be brought before Annual Conference for action should be submitted in writing to the Presiding Elder at least one month prior to Annual Conference. The Presiding Elder is responsible to compile the above items and see that each church receives one copy at least two weeks prior to Annual Conference.*
2. *Prior to February 1, each congregation shall report in writing to the Presiding Elder the following statistics as of December 31:*
  - (a) *Total church membership*
  - (b) *Average Sunday a.m. worship attendance*
  - (c) *Average midweek service attendance*
  - (d) *Average small groups attendance (other than midweek service)*
  - (e) *Number of small groups*
  - (j) *Sunday School enrollment Average*
  - (g) *Sunday School attendance Average*
  - (h) *Vacation Bible School attendance*

*The Presiding Elder shall compile this information from all the congregations and present it in written form to the Annual Conference each year.*

## **SECTION VII BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH Corporation**

The name of the Corporation is The Board of Trustees of The United Christian Church, consisting of five members, elected by the Annual Conference, each for a term of five years. Its principal office shall be at 3854 Hill Church Road, Annville, Pennsylvania, 17003.

### **Organization**

The Board shall reorganize annually by electing a president, secretary, and treasurer. It shall meet at least annually upon the call of the president. The officers shall serve as an Executive Committee with authority to transact any necessary business between meetings subject to the approval of the Board.

### **Duties**

1. It shall be the duty of the Board to receive, hold in trust, and/or apply to or for the benefit of the United Christian Church any and all funds, including bequests, that may be given or conveyed to said Board or to the United Christian Church. All such funds and the proceeds thereof shall be applied in harmony with the specified purpose of the donors if feasible or, in the absence of such directions, as the Board may determine.
2. *The Board shall also maintain and preserve the church archives.*

## **Annual Report**

The Board shall report yearly to the Annual Conference all funds and property received and the disposition thereof. It shall be accountable to and under the direction of the Annual Conference.

## **Salaries**

The salaries of the officers of the Board shall be fixed by the Annual Conference.

## **Trustees Liability and Indemnification**

No Trustee of this Corporation shall be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless:

- (a) the Trustee has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office; and
- (b) the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness.

The provisions of this Section shall not apply to:

- (a) the responsibility or liability of a Trustee pursuant to any criminal statute; or
- (b) the liability of a Trustee for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or federal law.

The Corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the Corporation) by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a representative of the Corporation, against expenses including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if he acted in good faith and in manner reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful, The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not of itself create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

## **Earnings and Dissolution**

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition of, any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on:

- (a) by a Corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code) or
- (b) by a Corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code).

If this organization is dissolved, all the existing assets, less any amounts necessary to pay debts, shall be transferred to another organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code), which in the opinion of the Board, will best carry out the purposes for which this organization is designed. In no way shall dissolution result in any pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to any of its members.

## **CHAPTER V MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

### **SECTION I Qualifications**

1. There are three levels of Pastoral Ministerial Licenses in the United Christian Church: 1) District Conference, 2) Annual Conference, and 3) Elders. In addition, there is a Lay Minister's License as set forth in Section VIII below. Only male members are eligible for Ministerial Licenses in the United Christian Church.
2. A man married by virtue of divorce shall not be granted a license.
3. All ministers and their wives must be members of the United Christian Church. Any minister whose wife is not a member, or who withdraws her membership from the Church, shall forfeit his license.
4. No person who uses alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, or abuses any controlled substance in any form shall be granted a license.
5. *All ministers shall meet the following minimum educational requirements:*
  - a. *He shall have a high school diploma or equivalent.*
  - b. *He shall take a public speaking course within the first year of his ministry.*
  - c. *He shall take an introductory study of the Bible, including a survey of the Old and New Testaments.*
  - d. *He shall take a comprehensive study of the Gospel of John.*
  - e. *Anyone who has completed courses like these before will not have to do so again. It is the responsibility of the applicant's Advisory Committee to see that these requirements are met, and, if possible, prior to the granting of Annual Conference license.*

### **SECTION II District Conference License**

1. Any member sensing a call to the ministry and desiring to be licensed to preach shall notify his Pastor of his calling and desire. After the Pastor and Presiding Elder have met with the candidate, the Pastor shall call a meeting of the congregation of which the applicant is and has been a member for at least one (1) year preceding the meeting. An announcement of the meeting and its purpose shall be given at least four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting, with the Pastor or his designee presiding.

At said meeting, the ministerial applicant shall present his calling to the congregation, after which the members of the congregation (exclusive of immediate family members) and ministry of the church shall withdraw for a period of discussion. Any member of the congregation or ministry not able to attend the meeting may send a signed letter of comment to the Pastor.

After discussion, the congregation shall return to the meeting and a vote taken to recommend him for District Conference license. Two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast (including electronically) at the meeting shall be necessary to make a recommendation to the District Conference that it grant License to the Applicant.

The recommendation shall be signed by the Pastor and submitted to the District Conference, which shall then set a time and date for a District Conference.

2. At the District Conference, the applicant shall present himself to the Conference, giving satisfactory evidence of his call, experience, soundness in doctrine and attachment to our church and government.

The Presiding Elder, or his designee, presiding at the District Conference, shall ask the following questions:

- (a) Do you believe the entire Bible is the infallible Word of God?

- (b) Have you now peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?
  - (c) Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our Discipline?
  - (d) What is your motive in desiring permission to preach the gospel?
  - (e) Are you satisfied with our church government?
  - (f) Will you submit to the counsel of your brethren?
  - (g) What is your knowledge of depravity, of redemption, of faith, of repentance, of justifications, and of sanctification?
  - (h) The chairman may ask any other questions that he may deem appropriate.
3. By simple majority vote, the District Conference may accept the recommendation of the congregation and grant the applicant District Conference license.
  4. The license of the District Conference Minister is for a term of one (1) year and subject to renewal at the discretion of the District Conference.
  5. Upon granting of a District Conference license, the District Conference shall request the Chairman of the Annual Conference to appoint three (3) Elders to serve as an Advisory/Examination Committee for the candidate. This committee shall counsel, prepare and examine the candidate up until he is ordained, after which the committee will be relieved of its duties.

### **SECTION III Annual Conference License**

1. After a District Conference Minister has stood in that relation for one or more Conference years, his Advisory Committee may, upon satisfactory answers to the following questions, recommend him to Annual Conference for license:
  - (a) Please share with us where, when, and how you came to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.
  - (b) How has that changed your life since then? Have you experienced His pardon, peace, and joy?
  - (c) In what ways is the Word of God alive to you personally?
  - (d) How has the Holy Spirit used the Word of God to speak to you regarding your call to the ministry?
  - (e) What do you believe regarding the infallibility and authority of the Bible?
  - (f) What is your understanding of the divinity and atoning work of Jesus Christ?
  - (g) How do you understand and explain the doctrine of the depravity of man, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification?
  - (h) How would you explain eternal life and eternal damnation?
  - (i) What is your understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit?
  - (j) What is your understanding of holiness?
  - (k) What do you believe is your spiritual gift/gifts?
  - (l) What is your motive in desiring permission to preach the gospel?
  - (m) Do you believe in and agree with our entire Confession of Faith as set forth in our Discipline?
  - (n) Does your own salvation and the salvation of others lie nearer your heart than all other things in this world?
  - (o) Are you satisfied with our church government? Are there any areas with which you are uncomfortable?
  - (p) Will you cooperate with your brethren in the Lord and endeavor to humbly accept the counsel they may give you?
  - (q) Do you use tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs; abuse any controlled substance, or view pornography? If so, in what ways?
  - (r) Thus far in you ministry, what has been your greatest challenge?
  - (s) Are there any areas in your ministry where you feel you need some help?
  - (t) What do you feel are your wife's strengths to aid you in your ministry?

- (u) The committee may also explore other areas or ask additional questions.
- 2. Except as provided in Section V below, no one shall be granted Annual Conference license without having a recommendation from his Advisory Committee.
- 3. Upon receiving a recommendation from his Advisory Committee that it has examined the applicant and is satisfied with his understanding of the Scripture and positive answers to the questions set forth above, Annual Conference shall act upon a motion to accept the recommendation and grant him Annual Conference license. A simple majority vote is needed to accept the recommendation and grant Annual Conference license.

Should Annual Conference fail to adopt said recommendation, the applicant shall retain his District Conference license.

#### **SECTION IV Ordination**

1. After a minister has held Annual Conference License for one (1) year, his Advisory Committee may recommend him to the Annual Conference for ordination. to the office of an Elder. Upon receiving such a recommendation, the Chairman of the Conference shall propose to the Conference the following questions:
  - (a) Is he blameless regarding marriage?
  - (b) Is his deportment in the social circle marked with watchful sobriety?
  - (c) Is he hospitable toward the troubled and needy?
  - (d) Is he faithful in the public ministration of God's Word?
  - (e) Is his household subject to rules of piety?

Upon the above questions being answered in the affirmative, the candidate may be approved for ordination by a majority vote of the Elders of the Conference. Following a service of ordination, he shall be granted Elder's License.

2. The functions of an Elder are to preach the gospel, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, solemnize marriages, anoint the sick and perform all parts of divine service. It shall be the duty of an Elder to cherish and encourage young ministers to take up the cross and begin the work without delay.

#### **SECTION V Reception of Ministers from other Churches**

When a minister from another church comes to us with a certificate of good standing from the church to which he belonged, and gives satisfaction to the District Conference or Annual Conference concerning his agreement on the doctrine, discipline, government and practices of our church, the Conference may license him. If he is an ordained minister, he must pass the examination for ordination, but he may be exempt from the laying on of hands.

In the case of the ministerial student of a Bible school or seminary who applies for a Ministerial License, he shall submit a written recommendation from 1) his home church of which he has been a member for at least one (1) year; and 2) the Bible school or seminary he is attending. These recommendations shall be reviewed by the Pastoral Stationing Board, who shall interview him and determine whether or not to recommend him to the appropriate District Conference for licensing. If so, he shall then be examined by the District Conference as set forth in Section II above.

## **SECTION VI PRESIDING ELDER**

### **Election**

The Annual Conference shall elect, annually, by ballot without nomination, from among the Elders of the church who have served at least four years in that capacity, a Presiding Elder who shall serve during the ensuing year. A majority of votes shall be necessary for a choice. Absentee ballots may be accepted with the understanding that those who cast them state whose vote they are casting.

### **Support of the Presiding Elder**

The Annual Conference shall make regulations for the financial support of the Presiding Elder.

### **Duties of the Presiding Elder**

He shall schedule and preside over the District Conferences. Whenever feasible, he shall administer the ordinances of the church. He shall inquire whether the ministers do their duty and exhort them to maintain love, discipline and order in the denomination. He shall call special sessions of the Annual Conference when the circumstances demand it. He shall give a report to the Annual Conference.

He shall preach as often as practicable, give careful attention to evangelism, and look after the general interest of the denomination.

### **Power to Dismiss Pastors**

The Presiding Elder may, in conjunction with the District Conference, dismiss a Pastor from his charge for inefficiency or neglect of duty.

### **Ordination to Eldership**

He shall ordain to the office of Elder at such time and place as may be agreed upon, eligible Annual Conference ministers who have been elected to ordination.

### ***Assistant Presiding Elder***

#### ***Election***

*The Annual Conference shall elect an assistant to serve with the Presiding Elder. The qualifications and election shall be the same as apply to the Presiding Elder.*

#### ***Duties***

- 1. As much as possible he shall attend the District Conferences and may preside at the Presiding Elder's discretion.*
- 2. He shall be a member of the Mission Board and the Pastoral Stationing Board.*
- 3. He shall participate in planning and moderating the Campmeeting services.*
- 4. He shall be authorized to sign checks for the Minister's Fund*
- 5. In the event of the death of the Presiding Elder while in office, the Assistant shall succeed him to finish out the term.*
- 6. Any other duties and responsibilities delegated to him by the Presiding Elder*

*Financial Support for the Assistant Presiding Elder shall be \$3,600 per year (\$300 per month, paid monthly) out of the Minister's Fund.*

*Financial Support for the Presiding Elder shall be \$6,500 per year plus 50% of the communion offerings.*

## **SECTION VII MINISTER'S DUTIES IN GENERAL**

The duties of ministers are to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, as

well as the whole counsel of God; to organize congregations when practicable and report the same to the Annual Conference; converse with the members on their spiritual condition; strengthen and direct those that are troubled and labor under temptation; encourage the inactive; endeavor as much as possible to edify and instruct all in faith, in the Christian virtues, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; visit the sick whenever practicable; and strive to enforce and confirm the doctrines they preach by a well-ordered exemplary life.

### **Directions to Minsters**

The following directions are given to our minsters:

1. Be diligent. Use your time wisely. Always have a sober attitude. Let your motto be "Holiness unto the Lord". Avoid all vain conversation and gossip. Conduct yourself prudently with women and in all respects as a true Christian. Believe evil of no one without good evidence. Put the best construction on everything.
2. Speak evil of no one. Whatever your thoughts, keep them to yourself until you can tell the person concerned what you think wrong in his conduct.
3. Let your business be to save as many souls as possible and equip them for Christian service. Visit those who need it, and act in all things, not selfishly, but as sons of the gospel; for as such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner prescribed, in preaching, and in visiting from house to house, in instruction and prayer, and in meditating on the Word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord shall come.

## **SECTION VIII LAY MINISTERS**

### **Licensing**

1. *Any person given a lay minister's license needs to be a member in good standing in the United Christian Church. The persons entering this type of service need to have demonstrated leadership ability and should be able to minister God's Word. They shall enter this type of service either by stating their desire in written form to their Pastor, or by call of the Official Board as a need may arise in the local church to use an individual in this capacity.*
2. *They shall be elected, by having a two-thirds majority in favor of granting a license, of the votes cast at their local congregation.*
3. *They shall be examined by the District Conference of which their congregation is a part and the following questions asked:*
  - (a) *Will you share your Christian experience?*
  - (b) *Do you believe the entire Bible is the infallible Word of God?*
  - (c) *What is your knowledge of depravity, of redemption, of faith, of repentance, of justification, and of sanctification?*
  - (d) *Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our Book of Discipline?*
  - (e) *What has been/is your involvement in and commitment to our church?*
  - (f) *Are you satisfied with our church government?*
  - (g) *Will you submit to the counsel of your brethren?*
4. *The chairman may ask any other questions that he may think necessary.*
5. *Any man married by virtue of divorce shall not be granted license.*
6. *Any person who uses alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs, or abuses any controlled substance in any form shall not be granted a license.*
7. *Upon satisfactorily answering the foregoing questions and meeting the above criteria, he may be licensed by the District Conference.*
8. *This license needs to be renewed yearly.*



***Duties***

- 1. This person shall assist the Pastor in visiting and preaching the Word. In the absence of or at the request of the Pastor, he may conduct the services.*
- 2. He shall have the privilege of assisting other Pastors in our denomination, but his first allegiance shall be to his local congregation.*
- 3. He shall not solemnize marriage, or share in conducting the ordinances of God's house.*

**SECTION IX MARRIAGES**

All Elders and Annual Conference ministers may solemnize marriages in accordance with Chapter XIV, Section III.

**SECTION X TRIAL OF MINISTERS**

When a minister is accused of immorality, trespass, imprudent conduct, or disobedience to the order and Discipline of the church, the Presiding Elder shall appoint a minister, and these two choose another minister or Deacon and these three shall inquire into the charges.

If the examiners are satisfied that the accusations are unfounded, if advisable, they shall report the same to the next District Conference where most appropriate. If it appears the accusations are well founded, they shall bring charges against the accused before the appropriate District Conference. The District Conference shall then conduct a hearing and, if the accused be found guilty, take appropriate action which may include a recommendation to the Annual Conference concerning suspension/revocation of Annual Conference or Elder's license.

## **CHAPTER VI PASTORS**

### **SECTION I ELIGIBILITY**

All Elders, Annual Conference ministers and District Conference ministers are eligible to serve as Pastors.

### **SECTION II STATIONING BOARD**

1. This Board shall be composed of the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder and three other Elders. The Presiding Elder and Assistant Presiding Elder shall serve by virtue of office while the other members shall be elected by Annual Conference for a term of 5 years. The initial terms shall be arranged so that no more than one member shall be elected each year.
2. It shall be the duty of this Board to assign a Pastor or Pastors to each congregation if feasible. All assignments shall be done in consultation with both the Pastor and the congregation. When considering a Pastoral assignment, it shall take into consideration any theological differences and his compatibility with United Christian doctrines, practices and traditions.
3. This Board shall develop guidelines for use by congregations desiring to call and/or enter into a contract with a Pastor.
4. All contracts need to be reviewed and approved by the Board before they become effective.
5. It shall encourage and assist the Pastors in their ministry and, if necessary, serve as a liaison between a Pastor and congregation working to resolve conflicts and effect reconciliation. It shall also assist in the periodic evaluation of the Pastor and congregation.
6. The Presiding Elder or his designee shall serve as Chairman.
7. The Board shall meet as necessary or at the call of the Presiding Elder.

### **SECTION III PASTORAL ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Pastoral assignments shall be for an indefinite term. Any Pastor or congregation may request a change by giving notice to the Presiding Elder.
2. Each congregation shall conduct an evaluation of both the Pastor and the congregation at least once every three (3) years.

### **SECTION IV DUTIES**

1. He shall faithfully endeavor to shepherd his flock by a well-balanced ministry of preaching the Word, visiting his people, and giving Pastoral counsel and advice so that ultimately they would "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ". (II Peter 3:18)
2. He shall pay particular attention to the youth under his care and urge them to yield their hearts and lives to God.
3. His life should be an example of the life of our Lord Jesus and also be consistent with what he preaches and teaches.
4. He shall promote the general welfare of the denomination by cooperating with the other ministers and keeping his congregation informed of denominational interests and activities.
5. Each year he shall read to the congregation our Confession of Faith and Duties of Members.
6. He shall preach at least one sermon each year on the sanctity of the home and warn his people against the many evil influences that threaten families today.
7. He shall hold a harvest home service each year at which an offering shall be lifted for

missions. *Additional special offerings shall include: (1) the first church offering in June for the Church Extension Fund; (2) the first church offering in July for the Ministers' Education Fund; and (3) a Sunday School offering each year for the Mission Board.*

8. He shall, as near the close of the conference year as practical, hold an election in the church(s) under his charge, at which time the officials of the Church and Sunday School shall be elected for the coming conference year. (Chapter IV, Section I, and Chapter IX, Section III). Such officers shall take office immediately after the Annual Conference.
9. He, in connection with the Official Board, and just before the Annual Conference, shall revise the church records. This duty shall be essentially clerical, and the name of no member shall be erased from the records unless the appropriate steps have been taken. (Chapter III, Sections III and IV; and Chapter IV, Section I).
10. He shall preside at the trial of members and see that a correct account of the same is kept.
11. He shall report on his work to the District and Annual Conferences, where he is to be held accountable for neglect of duty.

#### ***SECTION V Remuneration of Pastors***

*Each congregation shall be responsible for paying its own Pastor by establishing a base reimbursement fee to the ministers as follows: Pastors serving one church \$4,500; Pastors serving two churches \$6,500. Effective April 1, 2006, Pastors serving one church shall receive a minimum of \$6,000 annually.*

*Churches shall be responsible for paying ten percent (10%) of the first \$8,000 they allocate for their Pastor to the Presiding Elder for the ministers' fund The a.m. offering of communion services, or one-half of the a.m. offering if no afternoon service, will also be contributed to this fund.*

*The Presiding Elder shall receive the p.m. offering from communion services, or one-half of the a.m. offering if no afternoon service, plus \$6,500 from the fund.*

*Monies from the fund will be used to meet the base pay of any Pastor whose church has been unable to do so. In addition, monies from the fund will be used to reimburse Pastors for mileage at the rate designated by the Annual Conference for each mile beyond 20 miles round trip to and from preaching appointments, revivals, prayer-meetings, Sunday School and Bible School. The Mission Board shall be responsible for subsidizing any shortage of monies in the fund.*

*All remuneration except mileage reimbursement paid to the Presiding Elder or other ministers from the ministers' fund shall be designated as a housing allowance as permitted and defined by the Internal Revenue Code.*

*Any funds allocated to the Pastor which he chooses not to receive become the property of that Church as of April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.*

## **CHAPTER VII REAL ESTATE/BUILDINGS**

### **SECTION I Trustees**

1. Whenever it is contemplated to purchase or build a church, it shall be the duty of the appropriate District Conference to discuss and decide on such plans, The District Conference shall then elect, from the members of the United Christian Church, a board of three trustees; one for two years, one for four years, and one for six years. Thereafter, all terms shall be for six years.
2. When vacancies occur in a board of trustees, it shall be the duty of the congregation to elect suitable persons to fill such vacancies. The District Conference shall be responsible for election of trustees where it is not feasible or possible for the congregation to do so.

### **SECTION II**

#### **Duties of Trustees**

1. The trustees shall meet at least annually and may organize by electing a president, secretary, and treasurer.
2. If elected, the secretary shall keep a record of all business of the board.
3. If elected, the treasurer shall receive all funds, make disbursements at the direction of the board, and submit an annual report to the Official Board and/or District Conference.
4. No board of trustees shall begin the building of a church without first submitting their plans and estimates of total costs to the Official Board and the Board of Trustees of the U. C. Church for consideration, approval and direction. Nor shall they proceed to buy or build until they have the necessary funds either in hand or sufficiently assured, thus securing harmony in action and avoiding unreasonable debts.
5. The board shall maintain the property in a neat and attractive manner and keep it adequately insured.

### **SECTION III Sales and Rent of Church Buildings**

The Board of Trustees of the U. C. Church may, upon the recommendation of a congregation, lease or sell church property. However, no church building shall be sold that would result in the discontinuation of a congregation without the consent of the Annual Conference. All proceeds of such sales shall be used or invested at the discretion of the appropriate District Conference.

### **SECTION IV Real Estate**

1. Other real estate held for church purposes not covered by the above provisions shall be subject to the same regulations as church buildings.
2. Titles to all church-owned real estate shall be held by the Board of Trustees of the United Christian Church.

## **CHAPTER VIII CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

### **SECTION I Purpose**

The purpose of Christian Education is to instruct people in the Word of God with the intention of leading sinners to salvation and believers to a more abundant life in Christ Jesus.

### **SECTION II Leadership**

The Pastor shall provide general leadership of the Christian Education of his Pastorate by encouraging and assisting the development of various ministries.

### **SECTION III Sunday Schools**

#### **New Sunday Schools**

In organizing a new Sunday School, the Pastor shall pursue such course as he may think advisable to secure a superintendent, secretary, and treasurer as necessary. These officials shall be active Christians and, if possible, members of the United Christian Church. They shall hold office for at least one year and shall perform the duties which usually pertain to such offices. If non-members of the United Christian Church, these officers shall be advisory, but non-voting, members of the District and Annual Conferences.

#### **Existing Sunday Schools**

1. After one year, or as soon as feasible thereafter, the Pastor shall hold an election of Sunday School officers in conjunction with and in accordance with the annual election of church officials.
2. The officers of the school, their qualifications and duties shall be as follows:
  - (a) The superintendent and assistant shall both be members of the United Christian Church. It shall be the duty of the superintendent to take the chair and call the school to order at the proper time, to furnish teachers for classes when teachers are absent, and give announcements. The assistant shall act in the absence of or at the request of the superintendent.
  - (b) The secretary shall keep a record of attendance and distribute class books to teachers and see that Sunday School papers and supplies are adequate and distributed to classes. The assistant secretary shall act in the absence of or at the request of the secretary.
  - (c) A treasurer may be elected at the option of the Official Board. If elected, he shall receive all funds, make disbursement at the direction of the Official Board and submit an annual report to the Official Board.
  - (d) At the option of the Official Board, a librarian shall have charge of the books and tapes, etc., of the library and see that they are given out and returned in proper order. If necessary, an assistant may be elected.
3. The executive committee shall consist of the members of the Official Board. It shall be the duty of this committee to organize classes, appoint faithful Christian teachers, and choose the literature used in the school. The superintendent shall be chairman of this committee. Should any vacancies occur, they shall be filled by the executive committee, said appointee to serve until next Annual Conference.
4. The responsibility of finding someone to act as superintendent in the absence of the superintendent and the assistant shall be placed first on the minister; second on the Deacon; third on the assistant Deacon.

## **CHAPTER IX MISSION BOARD**

### **ARTICLE I Name**

The Board shall be called the Mission Board of the United Christian Church.

### **ARTICLE II Purpose**

The purpose of the Board shall be to extend the knowledge of the gospel of Christ throughout the earth by the utilization of the resources of the church at its command.

### **ARTICLE III Organization**

The Board shall be composed of the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder and four other men elected by the Annual Conference each for a term of five years. The Board shall organize by electing a president, secretary, and treasurer, whose duties shall be those usually pertaining to these offices. These three officers shall compose the executive committee, which may act on routine matters between the meetings of the Board.

### **ARTICLE IV Duties**

1. The Board shall promote an interest in home and world missions in both the churches and Sunday Schools. It shall disseminate information about mission fields. It shall commission and send forth missionaries under such regulations as it may deem necessary. As appropriate, the Board may make recommendations to Annual Conference concerning financial support for missionaries.
2. Any member of our church professing a call to mission work shall contact his/her Pastor or a member of the Mission Board who shall arrange a meeting with the Board. The Board shall pass upon the qualifications of the applicant(s) for mission work and, at the option of the Board, may require a recommendation from the home congregation of the prospective missionary. If the Board passes favorably upon the applicant(s), they shall be advised to inform their home congregation of their call and intention to qualify.

When advisable, male applicants for missionary service shall qualify as District Conference ministers before being sent to the field. The Board may annually grant them the privilege to function as Elders on the field. After completing the probation period as a District Conference minister and Annual Conference minister, and conditioned upon a satisfactory report from the field, they may be presented to the Annual Conference for ordination.

3. It shall be the custodian of the funds received for mission work.
4. It shall administer the Benevolent Fund in conjunction with the local Official Boards.
5. It shall have responsibility for the scheduling of the local mission appointments.

### ***ARTICLE V Missions Prayer Circles***

*Whenever members of a local congregation wish to form a missions prayer circle, they are encouraged to do so and shall adhere to the following guidelines:*

1. *They shall organize by electing a president, vice-president and treasurer who shall be members of the United Christian Church. A secretary is optional.*
2. *They shall meet monthly or however often they choose.*
3. *Prayer for missions and missionaries shall be a part of every meeting. Speakers may be invited in to share about what is happening in missions.*
4. *The treasurer shall submit an annual financial report to the entire group for their review and approval and also submit the same report to the Mission Board for their review.*

## **CHAPTER X UNITED CHRISTIAN CAMPMEETING**

### **SECTION I Purpose**

The purpose of the Campmeeting shall be the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the edifying of the saints and the salvation of souls.

### **SECTION II Religious Services**

The Presiding Elder and Assistant Presiding Elder is to have charge of all Campmeeting services. In addition, he shall have general oversight of all other religious services conducted at the camp grove as may be approved by a committee consisting of the Presiding Elder, a representative from the Annual Conference ministers, and one from the Campmeeting trustees.

### **SECTION III Organization**

The campgrounds shall be under the direction of a board of eight trustees who shall all be members of the United Christian Church.

One or two trustees shall be elected at each Annual Conference to serve for a term of five years.

### **SECTION IV Cottages, Tents and Campers**

1. Cottages, tents and campers may be placed on the campgrounds subject to the rules of the Campmeeting and the trustees.
2. Cottage owners shall have the right of ownership granted them by a ground lease furnished them by the Campmeeting trustees with restrictions and privileges upon payment of one dollar.
3. Cottage owners are allowed to transfer their cottages only by approval of the trustees; this approval is also necessary in transferring same from parents to children.
4. All cottages erected are to be of uniform design and size and shall conform to the building line, foundation level and location furnished by the trustees.
5. Cottages may be occupied when there are services in the grove. Moving on the Lord's Day shall not be allowed.

### **SECTION V Restrictions**

1. The soliciting of funds, other than offerings/donations during regularly scheduled services or other permitted activities, is prohibited on the campgrounds.
2. Distribution of literature, posters or other advertisements without prior approval of the Presiding Elder are prohibited except for scheduled activities or other church events.
3. The use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, dancing, profanity and rock music shall be prohibited on the grounds.

### **SECTION VI Amendments**

The foregoing rules and regulations may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Annual Conference.

*These guidelines shall be posted inside the building.*

### **SECTION VII Fellowship Center**

1. *The trustees may appoint a manager to operate the Fellowship Center.*
2. *As a building dedicated to the honor and glory of God, the following guidelines are adopted for the use of this Fellowship Center:*
  - (a) *The use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, dancing, profanity and rock music will not be permitted*

*on the premises at any time.*

*(b) The trustees may establish a rental fee schedule for its use.*

*(c) The trustees may require a Certificate of insurance from anyone using the building.*

*(d) These guidelines shall be posted inside the building.*

***SECTION VIII Weekend Camps***

*1. The purpose of these camps is to provide an opportunity for informal fellowship and worship*

*2. The committee composed of the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder and representatives from the Annual Conference ministers and Camp Meeting trustees shall oversee and organize details of these camps.*



## **CHAPTER XI BOARD OF YOUTH MINISTRIES**

### **SECTION I Purpose**

*The purpose of this Board is to coordinate the youth services and activities of the church in order to help our youth develop Christ-like character and mature in their Christian faith.*

### **SECTION II Organization**

*The Board shall consist of five members, consisting of one minister or lay minister and four laymen, each elected by the Annual Conference for a term of five years.*

## **CHAPTER XII CEREMONIES**

### **SECTION I**

#### **Ordination of Elders**

On the day appointed for the ordination service a suitable sermon shall be preached. The Presiding Elder shall ask one or more Elders to assist him in the ceremony of ordination.

#### **Address to the Candidate(s)**

After the name of the candidate(s) have been read aloud, the Presiding Elder shall address them as follows:

An Elder "must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers". (Titus 1:7-9).

Are you assured that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the office of the ministry to serve God in the church of Christ to the honor and glory of his holy name? If so, answer, "I trust I am".

Do you believe the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testament as the infallible Word of God? If so answer, "I do". Will you apply due diligence to frame and fashion your life according to the doctrine of Christ? If so, answer, "I will, the Lord being my helper".

Will you obey those to whom the charge and government over you is committed and follow their holy admonitions with a willing and ready mind? If so, answer, "I will endeavor, through the grace of God, to do so".

#### **Prayer**

The candidate(s) shall kneel and the Presiding Elder, Assistant Presiding Elder and one or two other Elders shall lay hands on him and pray.

#### **Charge to the Candidate(s)**

After prayer and while hands are still resting upon the head of each one of them, the Presiding Elder shall say;

"Bro.                                    take thou authority to execute the office of an Elder in the church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen."

The candidate(s) shall rise and the Presiding Elder shall deliver to each one of them the Holy Bible saying:

"Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to administer the ordinances in the Church of Christ.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily, I say to you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." (Luke 12:35-38)

### **Benediction**

The following benediction may be used: "The peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord."

### **Welcome**

While a congregational hymn is sung, all the Elders are invited to welcome the newly-ordained brother into the office of Eldership.

### **SECTION II Dedication of Missionaries**

Applicants for mission work who have been recommended by their home congregation and accepted by the mission board shall be dedicated as missionaries.

At an appropriate service featuring missions and mission work, the need for workers, etc., the candidate shall be asked to come forward and in the presence of the congregation, affirm the following dedication vow:

"Do you now assume, in the presence of God and these witnesses, the obligation to faithfully perform to the best of your ability the duties of a mission worker as outlined by the mission board?

Do you promise to cooperate with your fellow workers in the performance of your duties, recognizing those under whose supervision you are called to labor?"

The candidate shall then be asked to kneel, facing the altar, and the Presiding Elder or his designee shall solemnize the dedication by laying on of hands and a dedicatory prayer.

The one solemnizing the dedication shall then offer the candidate the right hand of fellowship, and say, "Take to thyself the office of a missionary in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".

### **SECTION III Suggested Wedding Ceremony**

The Minister shall say:

"Dearly beloved, We are here in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses to unite together these two persons in Holy matrimony. God's Word has declared marriage to be honorable in all. It was designed and ordained by God in the Garden of Eden before man had sinned against his Maker and was banished from Paradise. It was given in wisdom and in kindness to repress immoral affections, to support social order, and to provide that truth and holiness might be transmitted from one generation to another through the family. Marriage, as a divine institution, lies at the basis of all human legislation and civil government and the peace and well-being of a nation.

Jesus honored a wedding ceremony with His presence where He performed His first miracle. Speaking through the Apostle Paul, the Lord Jesus selected the marriage union of one man and one woman as the appropriate symbol of the indissoluble union between Jesus Christ himself and His church, which is composed of all true believers worldwide. Therefore, any couple entering marriage should do so only after careful and prayerful planning, desiring the will of God, and because of genuine mutual love and a desire to commit themselves to this life-long relationship.

May you both seek the help of God in this moment and in all the privileges and responsibilities of marriage. May the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your marriage with love, joy, peace and deepen your faith and commitment to the cause of Christ."

The minister shall then say to the groom:

\_\_\_\_\_, will you have \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance? Will you love, honor and comfort her, cherish and protect her in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto her so long as you both shall live? If so, answer, "I will."

Then the minister shall say to the bride:

\_\_\_\_\_, will you have \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance? Will you love, cherish, honor and submit to him, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him so long as you both shall live? If so, answer, "I will."

If rings are to be exchanged, the minister may use one of the following options:

1) "What symbols do you offer that will represent your fulfilling of these vows?" The minister takes the rings and says, "May the circle of these rings represent your unending love, commitment and faithfulness to each other".

Groom to Bride:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give you this ring as a seal of my commitment and responsibility to you in the presence of these witnesses in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Bride to Groom:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give you this ring as a seal of my commitment and responsibility to you in the presence of these witnesses in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

2) Minister:

"The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love. It is an outward and visible reminder to all of the vows \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have made to one another. The unending circle serves as a daily reminder that there is no separation in your love for each other, so long as you both shall live. The open circle symbolizes the openness, the transparency, and the trust that builds the strength and character of the other. Further, let the rings continually remind you of the eternal life which each of you have in Jesus Christ."

Minister; " \_\_\_\_\_ (Best Man), would you give to the groom the ring he has for (Bride)?"

To the Groom: \_\_\_\_\_, as you take this ring and place it on \_\_\_\_\_ 's finger, please repeat after me: 'With this ring I commit all my love to you. As I love the Lord, so do I love you. I receive you as God's gift to me. As God empowers me I will strive to be the God-given leader in the home under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. All that is mine is yours until death and death, and death alone, should part us."

Minister:" (Maid of Honor), would you give to the bride the ring that she has for \_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) ?"

To the Bride: " \_\_\_\_\_, as you take this ring and place it on \_\_\_\_\_-s finger, please repeat after me: "With this ring I commit all my love to you. As I love the Lord, so do I love you. I receive you as God's gift to me, As God enables me I will seek to follow your leadership and support you in every challenge that life may bring. All that is mine is yours until death, and death alone, should part us. "

Then the minister shall require them to join hands and, placing his hand upon theirs, shall say:

"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Inasmuch as you have consented together in marriage, and have declared the same before God and in the presence of these witnesses, I pronounce you husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

#### **SECTION IV Burial Committal**

At the graveside, the minister may read the following:

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. In the midst of life we are in death. To whom should we go for refuge but unto thee, O Lord? Our only hope is in thy Son Jesus Christ, who hath said, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Forasmuch as the Almighty God in His wise providence has taken out of this world the spirit and-soul of this loved one; we, therefore, commit the body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the assurance that He who is the judge of all the earth shall do right. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they are awaiting the resurrection of the saints when their corruptible bodies shall be changed and made like unto His glorious body, and anticipating the life of the world to come through our Lord Jesus Christ."  
Benediction.

#### **SECTION V Church Building Dedication**

The following order of service may be used:

1. Singing.
2. Scripture reading (Ps. 84; or Isa. 62 and Ps.122).
3. Prayer.
4. Singing.
5. Sermon.
6. Offering.
7. Singing.

8. Scripture reading: I Ki. 8:27-43; Ps. 132:7, 13-16; II Ch. 6:40-41; Ps. 106:48

9. Dedicatory Prayer.

"And now, Lord God of our fathers, we give this house to Thee. As Thy people have built it for Thy worship and glory, we pray Thou wilt accept it in the name of Thy Son our Savior and manifest Thyself approvingly to all who have given to this work with a sincere desire to honor Thee and to save men. As Thou didst dwell in the temple at Jerusalem, so make this Thy resting place. Show forth Thy power and glory here in the salvation of sinners and in the edification of Thy people. When Thy servants preach the Word in this house, be Thou in them and accompany the truth by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of all who shall hear. And when Thy people meet in this place for prayer and praise, reveal Thyself graciously to them and bestow unto them the joys of Thy great salvation.

Preserve this house, we beseech Thee, from fire and storm and make it a very great blessing to as many as worship before Thine altar. May the people remember that this is Thy house, the place where Thy honor dwelleth, and approach it with reverence and gladness. And not only accept this house, but also accept our hearts as we dedicate them anew to Thee. Cleanse them and make them fit temples for the indwelling of Thy Spirit. Accept, we pray Thee, all we bring in this hour of consecration, sealing it with Thine own approval. And at last gather us all into that eternal temple not made with hands, and Thy name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, worthy and glorious, shall have all the praise evermore. Amen."

10. Address to the trustees of the church (standing in front of the altar).

"Brethren, you have been selected by the church to hold the honorable and responsible office of trustees of this house of worship, now dedicated to the service of Almighty God. In this office you represent the church and will act on its behalf and for its welfare, but also considering the needs and interests of the larger community.

It is your duty to protect and to improve or repair this building and grounds as occasion may arise; also, to provide suitable fuel and, further, to appoint a janitor, who shall open and close the house for all appointed services, keeping it properly warmed during the cold weather, correctly ventilated at all times, and always clean and inviting, as becomes the house of God.

The house of God is sacred, where He is to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness and love; therefore, do nothing in vain glory but by love serve one another. Nothing should enter this sacred place that will defile the house of God; but at the same time let it ever be remembered that all works of justice, mercy, love, and helpfulness are proper in this place. Anything that will edify men will glorify God and should not be foreign to this house.

You hold your office at the discretion of the congregation. Therefore, seek its counsel in all important matters and attempt to secure the goodwill and cooperation of all who attend. You are the assistants of the Pastor; honor and aid him in all the work of the church.

I now present you with this key as the symbol of your authority to hold in trust for God and the United Christian Church in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I pray that Christian faith, hope and love may dwell in your hearts, and that the Holy Spirit may be your guide and comforter."

11. Doxology.

12. Benediction.

**CHAPTER XIII CERTIFICATES AND LICENSES**

**Certificate of Transfer of Member**

This is to certify that.....is a member in good standing of the..... United Christian Church, and is hereby transferred to the..... United Christian Church.

Date ..... Pastor

(NOTE: This is not a letter of dismissal from our Church, and it does not terminate the connection of the member with the local Church which grants this transfer until it is accepted by the local Church to which it is given, and the granting Church officially notified of its acceptance.)

(Void after six months)

**Return Certificate**

This is to certify that .....was received into the fellowship of the United Christian Church on a certificate of transfer from the United Christian Church.

Date .....  
..... Pastor

(Fill out and return promptly to..... )

**Certificate of Recommendation**

This is to certify that is a member in good standing of the United Christian Church atand is hereby recommended to the confidence and fellowship of Christians everywhere.

Date.....  
..... Pastor

(Void after six months)

**Return Certificate**

This is to certify that on .....20..... was received into the fellowship of the .....at on a certificate from the United Christian Church at .....

..... Pastor

(Fill out and return to .....)

**Certificate of Withdrawal**

This is to certify that ..... has been until this date a member of the United Christian Church at .... and is granted this letter of withdrawal from the church by a vote of the Official Board.

Date .....

Pastor.....

**District Conference Minister's License**

This is to certify that ..... is an approved minister of the gospel in the United Christian Church, as long as his conduct and doctrine are conformable with the gospel of Christ. Given at a District Conference, held at .....this .....day of .....in the year of our Lord .....

..... Presiding Elder

(Void unless renewed annually)

**Annual Conference Minister's License**

This is to certify that ..... is an approved minister of the gospel in the United Christian Church, as long as his conduct and doctrine are conformable with the gospel of Christ. Given at the Annual Conference held at .....this day of

.....in the year of our Lord,.....

Signed on behalf of said conference.

..... Presiding Elder

**Elder's License**

This is to certify that ..... is an approved minister of the gospel in the United Christian Church, as long as his conduct and doctrine are conformable with the gospel of Christ and has been ordained to the office of Elder by the laying on of hands. Given at the Annual Conference held at..... this

.....day of ..... in the year of our Lord .....

..... Presiding Elder



**Lay Minister's License**

This is to certify that ..... is an approved minister of the gospel in the United Christian Church, as long as his conduct and doctrine are conformable with the gospel of Christ. Given at a District Conference held at.....this day of .....in the year of our Lord, .....

..... Presiding Elder  
(Void unless renewed annually)

**Field Questionnaire for Renewal of Temporary Eider's Privileges**

Date .....

Greetings.....(Superintendent)

1. Does.....continue to render an acceptable and needed service in the work of .....?

2. Is the applicant of good Christian standing and true to the Faith?

3. In your opinion does he merit a renewal of his temporary Eider's privileges?

Remarks:.....

Date.....

Signature

## **CHAPTER XIV MORAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS**

### **SECTION I OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY (SUNDAY)**

The Sabbath Day (Saturday) was given by God to mankind as a day of physical rest and He commanded His people to "keep it holy". Later, the Sabbath became a day for worship as well as rest. Clearly, it was given for the physical and spiritual welfare of mankind.

The early church, while also observing the Sabbath for a time, soon began to worship on the first day of the week (Sunday) in celebration of Christ's resurrection on that day and designated it as the Lord's day.

Accordingly, we encourage our members to set an example for society by keeping the Lord's day as a day of rest and public worship.

### **SECTION II SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

1. We believe the Bible teaches that all people are created in God's image and that all human life begins at conception and is sacred.
2. We believe that abortion, infanticide, euthanasia and cloning are wrong and violate the sanctity and value of human life.
3. We believe the church needs to faithfully teach Biblical standards of the sanctity of human life.
4. While taking a stand against these wrongs, we need to be loving and caring as **we** seek to deal redemptively with those involved and share with them the message of forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

### **SECTION III MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

1. We believe that marriage is of divine authority; that it is the mutual union of one man and one woman; that the relationship is most sacred and morally binding so long as both shall live. Accordingly, it cannot be dissolved at will, nor should it be by civil decree, except as permitted by Scripture (Matt. 19:8, 9; I Cor. 7:12-16). Even then it is best to seek reconciliation because the Scripture clearly states that God hates divorce. (Mal. 2:14-16)
2. We deny the right of marriage by virtue of a divorce except as permitted by Scripture.
3. This section shall not exclude from membership in our church those who give satisfactory evidence of true repentance and/or conversion after having entered into a marriage in violation of Scripture.
4. Any minister who shall knowingly solemnize the marriage of persons, either of whom has been divorced except as set forth in Paragraph 1 above, shall be amenable to the Church.
5. No minister shall solemnize or participate in the civil union or marriage of two persons of the same birth sex, or any other deviant form of marriage, since the Scriptures clearly teach that marriage is between only one man and one woman. Any minister who participates in such a union or marriage shall forfeit his license.

### **SECTION IV HUMAN SEXUALITY**

We believe that human sexuality (sexual desire and awareness) is a gift from God that has biological, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions. God made us male and female, but, unlike the animal world, He also gave us the capacity and responsibility to choose our responses to our sexuality by either a life of celibacy or marriage between one man and one woman.

The Bible clearly teaches that the sexual relationship and passion is designed by God the Creator to be expressed only between a man and a woman in the context of a life-long marriage. Sexual activities outside of such a marriage union, whether they are premarital, extramarital, homosexual, incestuous or bestial, are condemned as sin in the Scriptures. (Ex. 20: 14; Lev. 18:22-23 and 20:10-16; Rom. 1:18-32; I Cor.6:9-11; Gal. 5:16-21; Col., 3:5-6; I Tim. 1:9-10; and Rev. 21:8).

The church must, however, reach out in love and compassion to those involved in or who lust for such activities (or any other sin) with a message of forgiveness and enabling grace to overcome. It is also important for the church to provide encouragement, support and counsel to its members to live out their human sexuality in the holiness and righteousness of God and relate redemptively to those who fail.

### **SECTION V OATHS**

We believe that the mode of testifying to the truth when required to do so in legal form should be by way of affirmation since God requires Christians to tell the truth at all times without the necessity of an oath.

### **SECTION VI MILITARY SERVICE**

We live in a fallen world. Many times nations and people groups resort to armed military action as a means of trying to achieve their goals. At the same time others feel compelled to respond in a similar way to defend themselves.

We believe that war causes much devastation, heartache, pain and loss of life, If any of our members feel constrained to enter military service out of a sense of duty to their country or are drafted into service, we strongly encourage them to (1) enter a noncombatant branch of the military (medical corps, food service, communications, etc.) or (2) choose a government-approved form of civilian service as a conscientious objector to war.

### **SECTION VII MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

1. No member shall belong to an organization whose teachings and beliefs on the deity of Christ and the way of salvation are not compatible with the teachings of the Bible, or shrouds it's ceremonies, obligations and workings in secrecy. We believe such organizations are evil, and that Christians ought not to be connected with them for the Bible expressly says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial)? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:14-15, 17"18)
2. Any member who shall join such an organization shall be regarded as withdrawn from the church. However, if such member shall sever his/her connection with the organization, he/she may be reinstated as a member of the church.
3. In the annual revision of the membership book, each Pastor shall see to it that no names of members of such organizations are retained on the membership book.

### **SECTION VIII TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

In light of the fact that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), the Scriptural condemnation of drunkenness (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18), the dangers of even social drinking, the harmful effects upon our mind and body, the dangers of addiction and the poor example to others, we strongly advise and entreat our members to refrain from the use of tobacco,

alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and the abuse of other controlled substances.

We further forbid our members to be involved in the distilling, trafficking, sale or distribution of such products, or the leasing of property for such purposes.

However, this rule shall not be construed to prevent physicians, pharmacists or other health-care professionals from prescribing or dispensing such products for medicinal purposes.

## **SECTION IX GAMBLING**

There is a growing trend today across our country to legalize gambling in various forms as a means of raising revenue in lieu of direct taxation. Even many local organizations are caught up in this trend as a means of raising funds for their causes.

Research, however, shows that gambling may be addictive, feeds upon greed and exploits people, especially those who can least afford it. It is known that it contributes to the breakup of families and increase in crime, diverts money from basic needs and services, and the cost to society is staggering. It is not a victimless activity.

We believe it discourages honest labor, encourages "get rich quick" thinking and promotes materialism, all of which are unbiblical attitudes. (Prov. 28:19, 20; 1 Tim. 6:6-10) It also contradicts the biblical commands to trust our Heavenly Father to supply all our needs. (Mt. 6:28-34; Phil. 4:19)

Accordingly, we encourage and entreat our members to abstain from gambling in all its various forms.