



[For] we are on our guard, intending that no one should find anything for which to blame us in regard to our administration of this large contribution. For we take thought beforehand and aim to be honest and absolutely above suspicion, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

— 2 Corinthians 8:20-21  
(Amplified Bible)

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A philosophy of ministry is an organized statement of purpose for why the local Church exists and how it is to serve the Lord. It is a blueprint that (1) steers the Church toward a particular vision; (2) helps streamline its activities; and (3) measures whether or not a ministry or method aligns with the Word of God. The following areas are those which BCC upholds as essential for an effective philosophy of ministry in the local Church.

## Leadership

It is clear in Scripture that biblical leadership is more aptly characterized as *service*. Leaders, in our view at BCC, must exhibit servitude by committing their lives to helping others, and especially in laboring for the spiritual good of all people. Christ conveyed this truth to his disciples who competed with one another over who would be greatest in the Kingdom:

“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your *servant*, and whoever wants to be first must be your *slave*—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, *but to serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for man” (Matthew 20:26-28, emphasis added).

Since God is not in need of our service (Acts 17:25) we serve Him best by serving our neighbor (Matthew 25:31-46). Leaders, therefore, are not to exploit their authority or lord it over others. Our success as leaders will be measured only by how we give of ourselves in service to Him who has called us (1 Peter 4:2b-3). Moreover, leaders must avoid self-promotion—which feeds the fallen ego—and instead focus on *humility* and biblical *servanthood*. In the words of John the Baptist, “[Christ] must become greater; I must become less,” (John 3:30).

Leaders should first and foremost be concerned with shepherding the local Church by accurately and clearly teaching the Scriptures. Contrary to the prevailing tide in many market-driven congregations, a leader’s primary function is not to induce people to faith by pragmatic methodology but by “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 3:15 KJV). Although pragmatics may benefit the local Church on occasion, it should not drive our approach to ministry. BCC would do well to remember that it is the Holy Spirit who calls the lost unto salvation through the proclamation of His Word and not the salesmanship or flamboyant personalities of its leaders (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:7).

Biblical leaders are to be “shepherds of God’s flock ... serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be,” (1 Peter 5:2). This “shepherding” involves several things:

1. *Knowing the Sheep*. Jesus said of his Father, “He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3). When God gathers His sheep, Christ leads on ahead, “and his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (v. 4). Effective Church leaders, therefore, know the sheep and look after them. As leaders, we are called to reach out to those unknown among the brethren and bring them into the intimate fellowship of the

local Church.

2. *Feeding the Sheep.* Scripture places the ability to teach and shepherd high on the list of qualifications for an Elder or leader. Jesus required this of Peter as a condition for his reinstatement (cf. John 21:15-20). Leaders should be equipped to do *some* Bible teaching, conducive to their own spiritual gifts and personality strengths.
3. *Overseeing the Sheep.* Oversight is part of the biblical prerequisite of an Elder or leader. It requires vigilance. Leaders should assist the Pastor in the supervision of the Church and its spiritual and managerial responsibilities.

## **Counseling**

Jesus Christ, through the Word of God, is sufficient for all our spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs. The writer of Hebrews reminds believers that the Word of God “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart,” (Hebrews 4:12). These two words, “thoughts” and “attitudes,” cover the motivations of man and his deepest values. The Word of God, we are told, is fully capable of passing judgment on the most hinder parts of man’s nature. When counseling from the office of the Pastorate, we must therefore allow the Bible to speak as our primary witness.

In certain cases that may go beyond the spiritual, such as chemical imbalances and diagnosed mental disorders, we recognize the benefit of secular counseling and the need for psychological medications prescribed by trained professionals and approved clinicians. But this does not negate the power of God’s Word to speak to such disorders from a spiritual perspective.

The leadership of the local Church must know how to apply the Scriptures to the significant problems and everyday challenges of the Congregation. We offer an all-sufficient Christ. It is to his glory that he brings healing to broken lives. Elders, leaders and Pastors should be fully trained and willing to lead people to the source of all wisdom and spiritual healing, Jesus Christ.

## **Discipleship**

New believers need to know immediately that Christ has saved them for his glory. To this end, they should be instructed in the Christian life and prepared to follow Christ in baptism. This instruction should be a combination of corporate (classes) and individual (personal discipleship) participation. We are not fulfilling the Great Commission given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 unless we nurture believers to maturity.

New believers should be instructed as soon as possible concerning what the Bible teaches about their responsibilities to Christ, the Church, and to one another. When new members are challenged to serve, and then equipped to do so, they seldom move on to another Church, but become part of the Church family.

Our young people are not the future of the Church. They *are* the Church, every bit as much as adults. This does not mean, however, that they are spiritually mature so we must also disciple our young people to spiritual maturity. Christian education should never be just entertainment or

‘baby-sitting.’ Children can and do rise to the expectations we have of them. Youth ministry should therefore be disciple-making in nature. Children and new converts should be taught the Bible in-depth and challenged to put it into practice in their homes and schools.

The Church should assist families and never take their place. Youth leaders and staff, for that reason, should practice turning “the hearts of children toward their fathers” (Mal. 4:6). Programs, events, and socials should all revolve around the teaching of the Word of God and the fellowship of young people with Christ and with one another.

Because service is an integral part of the Christian life, the Church should search constantly for ways to involve the young people in the Church’s ministry. Since young people are capable of doing many things, the Church needs to make them into fully functioning members and strive to train them for individual and corporate leadership, in accord with a young person’s spiritual gifts and divine calling.

Service within the local Church is a vital part of the Christian life. No Christian can ever be fully obedient to Christ without serving. Most believers fear service because they view themselves incapable. Part of the membership process is to identify every available area of service within the local Church and match each new believer or member to it. Gifts like “helps” and “mercy” have almost infinite applications and manifestations within the local Church. Generally, once people realize that they can serve God in a meaningful and spiritual way with the gifts they possess, they will be rewarded by their participation within the Congregation.

Discipleship is the process of taking people to Christian maturity through the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:1-2). Consequently, “Equipping Classes” should be offered to meet the spiritual needs of a variety of brothers and sisters who are at different stages of their Christian walk. These classes should provide the Elders and lay leaders the opportunities to serve in the teaching and shepherding roles that God has called them to.

Outreach brings the step of discipleship full circle. The brother or sister who was reached at the beginning of this process—discipled thoroughly through the Word of God (corporately and individually)—is now fully integrated into the body and trained for outreach. Stated differently, the disciple is to become a disciple-maker.

### **Equipping the Saints**

The Bible makes it clear that one of the primary purposes of the Church is to equip the saints. The apostle Paul wrote:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God’s people for works of service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:11-16, emphasis added).

If we neglect the feeding and building up of the local Church the universal Church will be weak and easy prey for the enemy. It is therefore imperative that the local Church teach and preach directly from the Word of God at all times. It is the Holy Spirit who, primarily through the exhortation of Scripture, changes lives and equips us to be approved workmen who do not need to be ashamed (2 Timothy 2:15).

In order to make disciples we must instruct men and women in the Word of God. The ministry of the spiritually effective Church will balance its service and ministries through a Scriptural understanding of its purpose. Ultimately, the saints are to be equipped in order to glorify Christ through the Holy Spirit.

## **Evangelism**

As a Church body, our command is clear in Scripture: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,” (Matthew 28:18-20). When Jesus spoke these words he made it clear that there is an authority granted by God to Christ to save the world. He, in turn, passed that authority on to the Church as his ambassadors. However, it should be noted that the purpose of the local Church is not to primarily evangelize but to “disciple” and to glorify God through worship, Bible teaching, and the instrumentation of the sacraments. Evangelism is a component of the local Church ministry (and a privilege we are obliged to uphold) but it is not to trump Bible preaching and worship; the two key components to disciple-making.

As the local Church builds up and equips the saints it must also teach the congregation to reach out to the lost. There are neighbors, co-workers, and family members who need to know the truth of the gospel. It follows, then, that the Church should encourage evangelism through prayer for the lost, training on how to effectively witness, and provide regular opportunities for the saved to cross paths with the lost.

## **Worship**

Worship is for God and it is what we offer to God. It is ultimately understood as our response to Him in respect to His power, holiness, righteousness, love, benevolence, forgiveness, grace, and mercy. In the recent past, evangelical worship has mutated into something that comes dangerously close to being man-centric rather than God-focused. In the American Church, particularly, worship has devolved into entertainment for a “fast-food” culture; a culture that wants to feel good about going to Church and not face the reality of our sin and brokenness and absolute need for salvation.

We worship God not simply because of what He has done for us but because His splendor is worthy of our adoration. While it is certainly appropriate for us to express gratitude to those who sacrificially lead worship services, the majesty of worship should never draw the attention of the congregants to the worship leader or the talent of those administering the music needlessly. Our worship must be theocentric and not men-centered.

The preaching of the Word is the centerpiece of acceptable worship because, unlike anything else we do, the proclamation of the Word calls men and women to respond to God. While music allows us to respond emotionally and outwardly to God's glory, preaching allows God to speak to us. Preaching should never be replaced or minimized in the worship offered by the local Church. It prepares our hearts for the preached Word to come and is the powerful means by which we adore the Creator and through which He speaks to His creation (Romans 1:16).

### **Church Councils**

In the first millennium, historians point to seven Councils that are accepted by the various prongs of Christendom,<sup>1</sup> in addition to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). These councils are as follows: (1) First Council of Nicea, (325 AD); (2) First Council of Constantinople, (381 AD); (3) Council of Ephesus, (431 AD); (4) Council of Chalcedon, (451 AD); (5) Second Council of Constantinople, (553 AD); (6) Third Council of Constantinople, (680-681 AD); and (7) Second Council of Nicea,<sup>2</sup> (787 AD).

These legendary assemblies were bureaucratic exercises in theology where written documents were circulated; speeches were made and responded to; votes were taken; and final documents were published and distributed in response to the prevailing issue of the day. Among other tenets, these councils effectively repudiated the false teachings of Arianism,<sup>3</sup> Nestorianism,<sup>4</sup> Monophysitism,<sup>5</sup> and Monotheletism.<sup>6</sup> Of the seven ecumenical councils held during the first few centuries of the Church, two of the more significant were the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. At those meetings, heretical teachings about the person and nature of Christ were condemned and the biblical position carefully crafted.

### **The Purpose of Bylaws at BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

1. BCC Bylaws preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. BCC Bylaws preserve the liberties of each individual member of the Church.
3. BCC Bylaws ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. BCC Bylaws provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and for governing Church members.
5. BCC Bylaws are written in the concept of a theocracy (i.e. "divine guidance ... by officials who are regarded as divinely guided")<sup>7</sup> and *not* a democracy (i.e. "government by the people").<sup>8</sup>

6. BCC Bylaws give headship and final authority of approving decisions for the local Church to the Senior Pastor and/or Governing Elder Board.
7. BCC Bylaws eradicates congregational voting.
8. BCC Bylaws do not adhere to denominational forms of hierarchy.
9. BCC Bylaws provide accountability for the Senior Pastor by the Governing Elder Board.
10. BCC Bylaws help avoid potential conflicts and unrest within the local Church.
11. BCC Bylaws are written for the benefit of the Senior Pastor so that he can correctly govern the local Church, alongside the Elder Board, in the New Testament manner.
12. BCC Bylaws allow the local Church to mold its Statement of Faith more closely to its personal beliefs and vision.



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## Secular Bylaws of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)

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**A**ny persons aspiring to marry at BCC, or be involved in Church leadership, at any level—especially with respect to working with minors—must be a member at BCC and endorse the ministry of the Church, together with its government, philosophy of ministry, vision and mission statements, and its ecclesiological and secular Bylaws, in accord with the governing laws of the State of New Hampshire.

### **Article 1. Human Sexuality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication (premarital sex), adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

### **Article 2. Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at the moment of conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified taking of an unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 2015-18; Luke 1:44). We accept abortion only as a last resort when the mother's life is gravely endangered. We deem this to be an unfortunate but perhaps necessary act of self-defense.

### **Article 3. Lawsuits between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the local Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. Pertaining to criminal matters, the local Church reserves the right to invoke secular authorities in the event a crime is committed against one of its members (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

### **Article 4. Civil Government and Politics**

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the Church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. The home, the Church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. Moreover, we believe it is wrong for Church government (in general) or church ministries (in particular) to endorse, sanction, or proselytize for any political party in the secular government (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-14).

## Article 5. Pastors, Elders, and Female Leadership at BCC

### Section 1. Pastors Professional Qualifications

BCC Pastors must be able to teach and to demonstrate the ability to instruct in doctrine (1 Timothy 3:2). A Pastor who is prudent and of sound mind should be able to naturally and effectively communicate the Word of God. His delight should be instructing the uninformed and correcting those who stray from biblical truth.

Secondly, BCC Pastors are to hold fast to the Word of God (Titus 1:9). They are not to introduce new revelations or doctrines contrary to what Scripture teaches or beyond what the universal Church has historically recognized. It is because the Pastor is a mature man of God that he will not compromise Scripture but will preach with biblical care and diligence. Due to the significant amount of false teaching which permeates the universal Church today, the local Church must make every effort to safeguard the Congregation by assuring that qualified men assume the Pastorate (cf. Acts 20:28). For this reason, BCC defines a Pastor's qualifications as follows:

1. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board/volunteer staff—including those in senior or junior Pastoral roles (i.e. teaching/preaching, worship, missions, youth, outreach and evangelism), together with those Pastors/teachers who share in the general pulpit rotation—**must** attest to the call of God in their ministry and exemplify such spiritual gifts in practice and in their demeanor.
2. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board/volunteer staff—including those in senior or junior Pastoral roles (i.e. teaching/preaching, worship, missions, youth, outreach and evangelism), together with those Pastors/teachers who share in the general pulpit rotation—are **encouraged** to have academic certification or to be in the process of achieving academic certification.
  - a. All BCC Pastors/teachers, at a minimum, are **encouraged** to have an undergraduate degree in biblical studies or Christian ministry, or in the process of attaining a degree, before overseeing a particular ministry.
  - b. Academic certification does not preclude participation by the laity in ministry as Deacons or Deaconesses but is recommended for formal oversight of a ministry or for Pastoral recognition.
3. The Senior Pastor position, together with the Associate Pastor position, is **required** to hold, at a minimum, an undergraduate degree in biblical studies or Christian ministry, or in the process of acquiring an undergraduate degree.
  - a. Missionaries and worship musicians are exempt from academic certification, although the specifications detailed in item 2 are binding in order to hold a Pastorate over missions and worship.

- b. Deacons and Deaconesses who teach or oversee children's ministries are exempt from academic certification (up to but not including junior high ministry), including special needs ministries, service ministries, music and worship, community ministry, and extracurricular programs; unless otherwise approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
- 4. All adults (including BCC staff and volunteers) participating in Children's Ministries—ranging from nursery age to senior high students—must pass a security background check with the state of New Hampshire before assuming regular duties.
- 5. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to consider the life experience, calling, spiritual gifts, and previous ministry work of any given applicant or intern in place of academic certification. Such a decision to grant an un-credentialed applicant ministry oversight, Pastoral recognition, or pulpit teaching responsibilities, must be reached by a unanimous decision by the Elder Board.

## **Section 2. Pastors Personal Qualifications**

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 the apostle Paul records two seminal passages that speak about the qualifications for oversight within the local Church. The Bible has a high standard of the moral, doctrinal, and social prerequisites for a Pastor which the Lord calls His leaders to, and yet a standard which we as a Church recognize cannot be fully attained in this life.

### **Morally Qualified**

Notwithstanding man's abject failure to achieve perfect holiness, members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are expected to be morally qualified. Although sinful by nature, both the laity and clergy are **positionally** holy and are to thus "live up to what we have already attained" (Philippians. 3:16). Members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, therefore, must be of good reputation and have moral standing within the Church and local community.

Because a Pastor is called to teach the morality of Scripture, he is expected to conduct his life with integrity. The moral qualifications for members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 as follows:

- 1. Husband of One Wife
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder must be faithful to his wife.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder adores his wife and does not invite flirtation with women other than his wife.
- 2. Practices Self-Control
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is in control of his behavior, both privately and publicly.

- b. A BCC Pastor/Elder's behavior does not control him.
- 3. Lives Wisely.
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder makes good choices.
- 4. Hospitable.
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder's home is open to others.
- 5. Not Addicted to Wine.
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder never gets drunk or over-indulges in alcohol.
- 6. Not Violent
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder resolves conflict peacefully.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder is not quick-tempered; his anger does not flare up at the least provocation.
- 7. Does Not Love Money
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is not consumed with riches or acquiring a lucrative income from the ministry.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder is expected to model before the Congregation generous and faithful giving in his tithes and offerings. (By definition, a tithe is 10% of one's income).
- 8. Loves Peace.
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is someone who works toward harmony in every relationship.
- 9. Gentle.
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder behaves in a manner that is not abrasive.
- 10. Not Arrogant
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder conducts himself with humility, thinking of others before himself.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder exemplifies a servant's heart, is a servant leader.

## **Doctrinally Qualified**

As noted in the preamble to Section 1, BCC Pastors must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2), that is, he must possess the ability to instruct in doctrine. A man that is prudent and of sound mind should naturally be able to communicate the Word of God. His delight should be instructing the uniformed and correcting those who stray from the truth of God's Word.

Secondly, BCC Pastors are to hold fast to the faithful Word (Titus 1:9). They are not to introduce theories, revelations or doctrines contrary to what Scripture teaches. It is because he is a mature man of God that he should not compromise Scripture, but to preach with biblical care and diligence.

BCC Pastors must teach sound doctrine both to exhort the faithful and to convert cynics (Titus 1:9). Not only is the Pastor to encourage and disciple believers through sound doctrine, but he must also correct and rebuke those who are teaching false doctrine.

It is important to note that none of the biblical qualifications for BCC Pastors are optional. This is proved by the word "must" that appears in Scripture before each of the qualifications. The reason Pastors need to meet these requirements is so that they may "gain an excellent standing" among the Congregation and from unbelievers, "and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13).

All BCC Pastors/Elders, including Deacons, Deaconesses, and small group leaders must unequivocally adhere to BCC's Statement of Faith.

All BCC Pastors/Elders, including Deacons, Deaconesses, and small group leaders, must subscribe unequivocally to the following essential Christian truths:

1. Monotheism as revealed in the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the one and only true God.
2. The Deity of Jesus Christ, as a separate person in the triune Godhead.
3. The Deity of the Holy Spirit, as a separate person in the triune Godhead.
4. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. The Bodily Return of Jesus Christ.
6. Jesus Christ is the only means to Salvation.
7. Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone.
8. Eternal Damnation (hell).
9. Eternal Glory (heaven).

## 10. The Divine Inspiration of the 66 Books of the Old and New Testaments.

### **Socially Qualified**

A BCC Pastor must be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). Literally, a BCC Pastor is to be ‘a one-woman type of man.’ To have one wife means to have one wife at one time. If a Pastor’s wife dies, he may remarry. In the event a Pastor is divorced, BCC will prayerfully apply 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 and Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9 in evaluating his qualifications. (Divorce on grounds of adultery/sexual immorality on the spouse’s part is acceptable and does not disqualify a man from being pastor).

Secondly, a BCC Pastor is to rule his house in a biblical fashion as the spiritual leader of his family (1 Timothy 3:4). He is the head of the household both by nature and by the will of God (Ephesians 5:22). He does not rule over his household harshly, but governs the affairs of his home as a servant to his family.

Thirdly, a BCC Pastor’s children are to be in subjection to him (1 Timothy 3:4) and are not accused of rebellion or being unruly (Titus 1:6). His children are in submission to him as a spiritual authority, not in compulsion but out of respect earned from a godly example. If a BCC Pastor cannot rule his own house, he cannot rule the Church of God (1 Timothy 3:5).

### **Section 3. Pastoral Ethics<sup>9</sup>**

Church Pastors are obligated to live by a specific code of Pastoral ethics. Each ministry and each Pastor is different. So these principles of Pastoral ethics will be applied differently. An understanding of these basic principles will better define the expectation of BCC leadership.

#### Confidentiality: on behalf of the Body of Believers

We are committed to strict confidentiality in ministry except when information must be released in accordance with state law.

1. We will seek to apprise individuals of all mandated disclosures.
2. We are committed to confidentiality in ministry and consider a statement made in confidence a trust not to be shared outside of our fellowship unless with that individual’s written permission indicating informed consent to such a release.

#### Stewardship: within the Church and our personal lives

1. We are committed to good stewardship in the Church and will be totally forthright in all financial undertakings.
2. We will be honest and open in all of our financial dealings.

- a. We will promptly pay all debts as soon as possible.
- a. We will not use our position to gain any financial privilege or leverage.
- b. While we advocate adequate compensation for God's servants, we do not expect or require honorariums for services rendered within normal duties.
- c. We will be careful to guard our hearts against greed and materialism.
- d. We view all contributions as gifts from the Lord that have been entrusted into our care.
- e. Our responsibility is to spend those gifts as wisely as possible and as led by the Holy Spirit in continuing the ministry.

Professionalism: *to communicate the Word of God effectively*

- 1. We are committed to accurately and skillfully communicating the Word of God, speaking the truth with conviction in love, and will acknowledge any extensive use of material prepared by someone else.
- 2. We are committed to honoring our fellow servants in God's household.
- 3. We will not seek to build our ministries at the expense of other legitimate ministries.

#### **Section 4. Women Leadership<sup>10</sup>**

Women excel in gifts of hospitality, mercy, teaching and helps. Much of the ministry of the Church depends on women. While women in the Church are restricted from having spiritual and teaching authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12), the Bible nowhere restricts women from exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Females are precluded from prophesying and speaking in tongues during the Church service so as to maintain order (1 Corinthians 14:34). Women, equally as men, are called to minister to others, to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and to proclaim the gospel to the lost (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15).

First Timothy 2:11-12 proclaims, "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." In the Church, God assigns different roles to men and women. This is a result of the way mankind was created (1 Timothy. 2:13) and the way in which sin entered the world (2 Timothy 2:14). God, through Scripture, restricts women from serving in roles of spiritual teaching authority over men. This precludes women from serving as Pastors, which definitively includes preaching to, and having spiritual authority over, the men in the Church.

It is the position of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that God has ordained only men to serve in position of spiritual leadership in the Church. Formally, therefore, BCC governance is *complementarian* and rejects on biblical grounds *egalitarian* rule. This is not because men are

necessarily better teachers, or because women are inferior or less intelligent. It is simply how God designed the Church to function. Men are to set the example in spiritual leadership—in their home, their workplace, and both in word and deed. Women are to take a less authoritative role.

Although excluded from Pastoral recognition, women in lay leadership at BCC warrant the title of Deaconesses (cf. Romans 16:1-2).

1. Deaconesses include, but are not limited to, Women's Ministry leadership, Children's Ministry leadership (up to but not including Junior High Ministries), spiritual counseling for women, prayer ministry, and service ministries.
2. Deaconesses may address the corporate Church under the authority of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
3. Deaconesses may co-lead Sunday School class with Deacons or their husbands particularly with lessons geared toward Church membership, marital sexuality, and the institution of marriage.
4. Deaconesses are expected to conduct their lives in accord with the moral principles stipulated in the New Testament.
5. Deaconesses are *not* to be new converts or spiritually immature. Rather, Deaconesses are to be doctrinally adept, socially qualified (above reproach), temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, not given to drunkenness or an excessive love for money, not violent but gentle, and have a good reputation with others.
6. All Deaconesses fall under the headship of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and are subject to their leadership authority.

## **Article 6. Church Governance<sup>11</sup>**

The Lord is very clear in His Word about how He wishes His Church on earth to be organized and run. First, Christ is the head of the Church and its supreme authority (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18). Second, the local Church is to be autonomous, free from any external authority or control, with right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). Third, the local Church is to be governed by spiritual leadership consisting of Pastors/Elders, with Deacons and Deaconesses serving in a support/lay capacity.

Both as doctrine (1 Corinthians 12) and through living example, the New Testament reveals the nature of the Church and all its members and activities. It also provides clear teaching about Church officers and their functions.

- **Pastor/Elder** (*presbyteros*) = a title highlighting the administration and spiritual guidance of the Church (Acts 15:6; 1 Timothy 5:17; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4)



- **Bishop or Overseer** (*episkopos*) = titles which emphasize the guidance, oversight, and leadership in the Church (Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 1:7)
- **Shepherd** (see **Pastor/Elder**) (*poimēn*) = a title denoting leadership and authority (Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11) as well as guidance and provision (1 Peter 2:25; 5:2-3)
- **Preacher** (*kērux*) = a title which points to the public proclamation of the gospel and teaching of the flock (Romans 10:14; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11)
- **Teacher** (*didaskalos*) = a title referring to one who is responsible for the instruction and exposition of the Scriptures whose teaching is both instructive (1 Timothy 2:7) and corrective (1 Corinthians 12:28-29)
- **Deacon/Deaconess** (*diakonos*) = a title suggesting one who executes the commands of another, such as caring for the poor or fiscal management, on behalf of the Elders

The term “Elder” and “Bishop” are synonymous in Acts 20:17 and Titus 1:5-7. The terms “Elder”, “Bishop”, and “Shepherd” are synonymous in 1 Peter 5:1-2. First Timothy 5:17 and Hebrews 13:7 associate the terms “Teacher” and “Preacher” with each other. Ephesians 4:11 connects “Shepherds” with “Teachers”, as do 1 Timothy 5:17 and Hebrews 13:7. For this reason, BCC recognizes the ministry offices of (1) Pastor, (2) Elder, and (3) Deacon and Deaconess as the sum total of all Church leadership positions.

It is the interpretation of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that the Bible teaches local Church leadership as a plurality of male Elders who serve the local Church. (Deacons and Deaconesses, as lay leaders, are subject to the Elders). Moreover, it is not contrary to this plurality of Elders to have one Elder serving in the major “Pastoral” role. God calls some as Pastor Teachers (even as He called some to be missionaries in Acts 13) and gives them as gifts to the local Church (Ephesians 4:11). Thus, BCC may have many Elders, but not all Elders are necessarily called to serve in the Pastoral role (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17). But, as a part of the Elder Board, the Pastor or ‘Teaching Elder’ has no more authority in decision-making than any other Elder.

Unless determined otherwise by the governing Board of Elders or if circumstances warrant further consideration, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall make no government decisions contingent upon Congregational voting. This does not preclude the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board from inviting feedback, opinions, or soliciting the advice of Congregation members for any matter they deem necessary (whether formally or informally).

All local Church matters shall be determined by vote among the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and recorded by the Church secretary in the meeting notes.

A majority vote will be considered sufficient for a given proposal to pass. A unanimous vote is necessary for Church legislation to pass only in circumstances where the full BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board is not present. If less than three-quarters of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are present, no vote can be taken.

## **Article 7. Church Finances/Treasury/Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee will be made up of the Church Treasurer, a Church member with gifting and aptitude in finance, and a minimum of one Elder. The Finance Committee shall conduct a Quarterly Budget Meeting to review the active budget and ministry allotments. Once the Finance Committee approves the quarterly allotment it is to be submitted to the Pastor/Elder Board for approval, requiring a unanimous vote. (In the event the Pastor/Elder Board exceeds five members, a majority vote is required). Any changes that the Pastor/Elder Board considers appropriate will be noted and entered into record by the Treasurer.

1. The Quarterly Budget Meeting shall be recorded by the Church Treasurer and published in the meeting notes.
2. BCC shall disclose the Church's financial books upon request to members in good standing or to any governmental bodies properly credentialed.
3. The Congregation as a whole shall receive quarterly updates in writing of the Church's financial standing in relation to the approved budget.
4. Each financial giver to BCC shall be given a year-end receipt that details tax-exempt gifts and total year-to-date giving.
5. BCC shall be generous in financially supporting other ministries as the Lord prospers so as to keep an active ministry and missions focus.

## **Article 8. The Sacraments<sup>12</sup>**

Denominations often differ over the amount and the mode of the sacraments. Some recognize as many as seven sacraments; others have no sacraments in the life of the Church. BCC recognizes only two sacraments: (1) Baptism and (2) The Lord's Supper. Both sacraments are to be administered only to believers in Jesus Christ.

Before administering the sacraments to children, the main requirement for all children (as with all adults) is that they have surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Even though some children make their salvation decision at an early age, being baptized and partaking in the Lord's Supper should be a reverent act. As a child matures in his/her faith and it becomes evident that he/she is truly born again, the father and/or mother (or legal guardian) should discern whether he/she is ready to receive the sacraments. The spiritual maturity level of one child differs from that of another, even in the same family.

### **Baptism<sup>13</sup>**

Christian baptism, according to the Bible, is an outward testimony of what has occurred inwardly in a believer's life. Christian baptism, therefore, illustrates the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible states:

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:3-4).

In Christian baptism, BCC recognizes two requirements before a person is baptized: (1) the person being baptized must confess allegiance to Jesus Christ as Savior, and (2) the person must understand what baptism signifies.

1. Because the word "baptize" is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptismos*, which means "*to dip in or under water*,"<sup>14</sup> baptism, by its inherent definition, shall be an act of immersion in water at BCC.
2. As there is one body, there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). BCC recognizes all baptisms by immersion administered by other Protestant Churches in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. All baptisms shall be administered by a confirmed Christian in the name of the Trinity; and applied to confessing believers only.
  - a. Based on Matthew 28:18-20, it is the position of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that true believers hold the necessary authority to baptize, just as every believer has the authority from God to evangelize and teach all that Christ commanded.
4. Concerning an individual who was baptized before he/she became a Christian— (e.g. one who was baptized as an infant or baptized later in life but did not truly know Jesus as Savior)—such a person warrants re-baptism.
  - a. BCC holds the view that baptism is a post-salvation act. The symbolism of baptism (which pictures a believer's spiritual death and resurrection in Christ and the washing away of sins) is lost if a person has not truly experienced salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.
  - b. Also, in the case of those who were baptized after faith in Christ, but in a method other than immersion, such a person can consider re-baptism. Again, the word 'baptize' means "*to dip in or under water*." However, the Bible nowhere specifically addresses those who have been baptized but not immersed. This issue, then, is a matter of conscience for a believer in light of his/her personal relationship with God. A believer who has been baptized unbiblically should ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5). If the believer remains uncertain, it would be best to go ahead and be re-baptized biblically to put the conscience at ease (Romans 14:23).

## **The Lord's Supper<sup>15</sup>**

The Lord's Supper is to be administered only to believers in Jesus Christ. The same requirement for baptism holds true for partaking in Communion: the participant must be a believer in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

BCC defines Open Communion as allowing professing believers other than members of our local Church to receive Communion, contingent upon an evangelical declaration of faith in Jesus Christ. Communion at BCC is open to all believers in Jesus Christ regardless of whether or not they are members of BCC.

1. BCC defines Closed Communion as restricting the partaking of the elements to believers in Jesus Christ only.
2. Communion at BCC is closed to non-believers.

If the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board suspects that desecration of the Lord's Table has occurred by the participation of an unbeliever, the matter is to be addressed privately between the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and the offender.

## **Article 9. Church Membership**

Any Christian who has completed the BCC Membership Class is eligible for membership with BCC. (The Church reserves the right, however, to postpone or reject membership at the discretion of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board). A member in good standing is a member who has consistent attendance, provides identifiable financial support, contributes to the Church's ministry, and demonstrates continued interest and loyalty.

*BCC Membership Class.* A mandatory class for prospective members where they can learn about the history, theology, government, beliefs, and finances of the Church.

1. Each prospective member shall be required to complete the BCC Membership class before submitting a membership application to the Church leadership. Wherein signing and submitting the Church membership application—where the prospective member affirms a credible declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and to support the Church with his/her time, faithful attendance, tithes and talents, and to submit to the leadership of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board with a teachable spirit—the applicant will be considered for membership.
2. Each membership applicant will be required to sign a copy of the BCC Bylaws, Doctrinal Statement, Mission Statement, and Vision/Constitution as a written declaration/adherence to the items of note contained herein and shall be filed with the Church administrator along with a membership application form.
3. The application shall be reviewed by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, and approved or rejected accordingly.

*Membership List*—The list of members in good standing shall be maintained by the Church administrator, who shall report changes quarterly to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

*Membership Review*—The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall review the membership list in January of each year.

1. A member who does not have registered attendance, identifiable financial support, definite service contribution, or demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the list of members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive members.
2. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall notify this member in writing that he/she has been placed on a list of inactive members and is not eligible to vote on any business issue that the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board decides to open to the Church (see Church Governance).
3. If the inactive member has not attended service, provided identifiable financial support, and demonstrated further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following notification, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to drop any such member from the local Church membership roll.
4. The inactive member may be restored to the list of active members in good standing by a majority decision of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board without public reception.
5. The inactive member who is not restored during the period of two (2) months immediately following notification shall be considered a former member. A former member may be restored to the list of active members in good standing, or inactive members, after meeting the criteria for membership.

## **Article 10. Church Discipline/Excommunication**

BCC recognizes two forms of Church discipline: 1) formative, and 2) corrective. *Formative Discipline* is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercising of other ministries in the Church through which the people are conformed to the image of Christ. Conversely, *Corrective Discipline* occurs when a member is found in sin, and the Church seeks his or her repentance and restoration “to the obedience that comes from faith” (Romans 1:5).

Any member of BCC who is victim of an offense should go privately to the offender to seek a resolution to the matter (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17). If the matter is unresolved, either because the accused denies wrongdoing or refuses to repent, the second step is for one or two members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board to join the reconciliation process. If the matter remains unresolved, the third step is to encourage individual Church members to go to the offender individually and seek his/her restoration. If the offender will not listen to individual Church members, further corrective discipline will be applied by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

Corrective Discipline is a result of imperfection and a tendency to sin and to cause offense. Every effort should first be made, therefore, to clear up difficulties and remove offenses before BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board action is taken publicly.

1. Corrective Discipline shall not to be entered into lightly. The results desired are that the erring member will be brought to full restoration within the Church.
2. Corrective Discipline is warranted when a member of BCC conducts himself or herself in contradiction to, whether orally or practically, the statutes contained in the Word of God as enumerated in the theology, government, philosophy, vision, mission, and ecclesiological and secular Bylaws of BCC.
3. Corrective Discipline may include individual confrontation and admonition by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, and it may possibly extend to excommunication from the membership of the Church by recommendation of the Board of Elders.
  - a. A unanimous vote by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall be needed for excommunicating a Church member.
  - b. A non-Church member does not qualify for excommunication.
  - c. An excommunicated Church member shall be removed from the list of members in good standing and placed on a list of former members.

The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board may recommend different kinds of discipline in accordance with the offense. In some cases, which may not be adjudged as deserving excommunication, suspension from ministry within BCC or abstinence from the Lord's Supper may be warranted. At the end of the suspension, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall determine whether the member shall be restored to good standing because of evidence of repentance and right living, or whether further corrective measures shall be imposed.

Corrective Discipline shall always occur in person and by a team of at least two approved leaders from the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

Corrective discipline will be carried out under the authority and guidance of Scriptures including, but not limited to: Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 6:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

The purpose and practice of Corrective Discipline shall be:

1. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the disciplined party.<sup>16</sup>
2. For the instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians as an example to them.<sup>17</sup>
3. For the purity of the Church as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

4. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians.<sup>19</sup>
5. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

## **I. God's Word (The Holy Bible)**

We believe the Holy Bible is the eternal Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments, transmitted by plenary inspiration through men who were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). We regard the Scriptures as the supreme authority concerning all matters of life, faith, conduct, teaching, and training (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 24:35; John 17:17; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:19).

## **II. The Doctrine of God**

We believe there is only one true and living God who is perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, discipline, and love. We believe that within the hypostatic union of God, there are three eternal and co-equal Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although One in nature and substance, They hold distinct roles in creation, providence and redemption.

We believe God concerns Himself with the affairs of men; hears and answers our prayers; and saves us from sin and death when we come to Him through repentant faith in Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:1, 26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 18:30; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 3:16-17; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4-5; Hebrews 12:9).

We believe in the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and God the Son, possessing both natures of complete humanity and full deity. We believe Jesus Christ, in his sinless humanity, is the only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. We believe in the penal-substitution of his atonement on the cross. Moreover, we believe he physically resurrected from the grave in the very body in which he was crucified and ascended into heaven where he is seated on the right side of God making intercession on behalf of His people before the Father (Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14, 18; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:23; 1 John 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Acts 1:10-11).

We believe the Holy Spirit is currently present, sent by the Father and Son, to convict the world of sin and to testify in the heart and conscience of mankind to Christ's redemptive work on the cross. He also holds the role of regeneration, sanctification, and empowerment in all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ acting as a helper, teacher, and guide. Moreover, we believe the Holy Spirit to be in very nature God (John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30) who baptizes every believer in Christ into the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13).

## **III. Salvation**

We believe that all mankind are sinners by nature and by choice (Genesis 3; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-12). We believe the way that we can enjoy fellowship with God forever is threefold: (1) repent of our sin (Acts 2:38; 20:21); (2) believe in our heart that Christ alone paid for our sins by



his death on the cross and provides salvation as a gift apart from human merit (John 3:16-18; Romans 5:6-8; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:1-9); (3) surrender the leadership of our life to Jesus Christ, following him daily in his Kingdom (Luke 9:23; John 5:24; Philippians 2:5-11).

#### **IV. The End Times**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of his physical Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous with God in heaven, and the eternal suffering of the wicked apart from God in hell (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:1-15; Matthew 25:31-46).

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### **The 7-Point Mission of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

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OUR purpose at BridgeWay is to "bridge" the divide in the local church between tradition and modernity. Our Mission (by which we operate) and Vision (for which we strive), together with our core principles (on which we stand) are borne from the evangelical mandate taught in Acts 2:42. Our 7-Point Mission is:

1. EXALT Christ
2. EXPOSIT the Bible
3. EXAMINE the Sacraments
4. ESTEEM Church history
5. EDIFY believers
6. EXCEL a biblical worldview
7. EVANGELIZE the unsaved

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### **The 3-Point Pillars of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

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#### **SCRIPTURE-FOCUSED**

Our standard bearer is sacred Scripture: We study its theology and history, uphold its eternal truths, and apply its instructions, exhortations, and precepts. We place a high premium on the expository preaching of God's Word and endeavor to exposit all 27 books of the New Testament in twenty years.

#### **GOD-CENTERED**

Our primary focus is the adoration of God: We praise His splendor, exalt His name, worship His majesty, and bask in His presence through song, study, and submission. We believe the purpose of the church gathering, first and foremost, is to honor God for who He is and what He has done.

#### **BELIEVER-ORIENTED**

Our intended audience is Christ-followers: We teach, preach, admonish, encourage, discipline, care for, disciple, and support our fellow saints in the covenant community of Jesus Christ. While evangelism is commanded in Scripture, and therefore expected of the Church, we believe that the local church gathering is specifically for believers.

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### **The 7-Point Vision of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

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1. To be a church of PRAYER (growing in communion with Christ)
2. To be a church of FAITH (trusting unwavering on Christ)
3. To be a church of FAMILY (loving each other in the name of Christ)
4. To be a church of FELLOWSHIP (enjoying each other like Christ)
5. To be a church of SERVICE (giving to one another as unto Christ)
6. To be a church of STUDY (applying the wisdom that comes from Christ)

7. To be a church of OUTREACH (proclaiming salvation only in Christ)

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## Addendum

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June 1, 2013

### Addendum to:

### *Article 5. Pastors, Elders, and Female Leadership at BCC / Section 3: Pastoral Ethics*

#### **GENDER ACCOUNTABILITY**

Female members/attendees in need of counsel shall first be directed to female leadership within the Church. In the event female leadership is not suitable, a BCC Pastor/Elder (to include male Deacons) shall not meet privately with female members/attendees without proper supervision and/or public awareness.

1. Any and all meetings conducted face-to-face between a Pastor/Elder/Deacon and female members/attendees shall be conducted with another Pastor/Elder (or Deacon/Deaconess) present.
2. If and when a Pastor/Elder/Deacon is required to meet face-to-face with a female member/attendee, *and another Pastor/Elder/Deacon is **not** readily available*, then a universally trusted member of the congregation is to be present.
  - In the event that the female member/attendee requests only one Pastor/Elder/Deacon to be present for the sake of privacy, the Pastor/Elder/Deacon shall get permission from the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board to meet in a *public* arena with one or more universally trusted members *within the line of eyesight and/or within earshot*.
3. Any and all unsolicited correspondence (i.e. electronic or written) between a Pastor/Elder/Deacon and female members/attendees—specifically those correspondences that fall outside the work of ministry—shall be made public to either (1) one or more members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board; or (2) one or more accountability partners related to the female attendee/member.

### Addendum to:

### *Article 6. Church Governance*

#### **BOARD MEMBERS**

All active BCC Board Members shall be official members of BCC, having agreed in writing (by way of an approved membership application) to the Church Constitution (i.e., the Bylaws, 7-Point Vision, 7-Point Mission, and 3-Point Foundational Pillars).

1. By definition, Church boards currently include, but are not limited to, the Women's Advisory Group (WAG), the women's Bible Study Advisory Group (BAG), the Finance Committee, and the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board (including Deacons). Moreover,

BCC Board Members, by virtue of their position, are considered lay leaders in an office of Church management.

2. In the event that the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board recognizes in a particular non-member leadership capability beneficial to the Church, such individuals can in fact serve on a BCC Church board contingent upon their willingness to attend the next annually scheduled membership class and on condition they submit a membership application thereafter. (Should they decline either, they are to forfeit their position on the board).
  - Exceptions to this policy are granted only to those attendees at BCC who served on a Church board prior to BCC's formal recognition of members in October 2012 (as agreed upon in advance by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board).

In accordance with the Church Bylaws (Section 2: #7b) which states, *"A BCC Pastor/Elder is expected to model before the Congregation generous and faithful giving in his tithes and offerings. (By definition, a tithe is 10% of one's income)"* we recognize this bylaw to infer all individuals who serve in the capacity of leadership at BCC, to include those serving on various boards and committees.

3. It is incumbent upon BCC Board Members to lead by example and model the 10% tithe in their giving (to BCC directly as their home of worship) in accordance with Church Bylaws (Section 2: #7b).
  - Since BCC Board Members are formally recognized members of BCC (see above), having agreed in writing to the Church Constitution by their respective membership application, it is assumed they are faithful and active *tithers* (10%) to BCC.
4. This expectation goes into full effect September 1, 2013.

**Addendum to:**

***Article 7. Church Finances/Treasury/Finance Committee:***

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Finance Committee at BCC shall be to plan, direct, and coordinate the financial activities of the Church. The Finance Committee shall consist of one or more Elders of the Church, a certified Bookkeeper, and up to five (5) official members of the Church (or more as needed) who are recognized for their personal and spiritual integrity, thought-leadership, and trusted discretion.

Each member of the Finance Committee (1) shall be screened and nominated by the Finance Committee; (2) shall be approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board for appointment/installation; (3) shall have some experience/knowledge in budgetary matters; (4) shall demonstrate personal character that is beyond reproach; (5) shall serve a term of three (3) years for no more than two (2) consecutive terms or at the discretion of the BCC Pastoral

Staff/Elder Board (or for a specific period of time determined by both parties); (6) shall be subject to removal by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board at their discretion.

The Finance Committee shall have the authority to (1) approve/reject all incurred expenses for Church members. (The BCC Pastoral/Elder Board shall be responsible for approving/rejecting all incurred expenses for Elders); (2) authorize the use of money from the Church savings account for an expenditure; and (3) transfer funds from one line item to another in the budget.

1. Members of the Finance Committee, to exclude the sitting Elder(s), shall fulfill the billets of financial officer(s).
2. The Bookkeeper responsible for all data entry is not required to be an official member of BCC, nor an attendee, but must hold a degree, or have equivalent work experience, in the field of accounting/bookkeeping.

To achieve its purpose, the Finance Committee shall perform the following:

1. Prepare and recommend to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board the quarterly budget within fourteen (14) days of the ensuing quarter.
  - The submitted budget must be approved and signed (electronically in email) by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board within five (5) business days of receipt in order to take effect.
  - Budgeted items shall be considered pre-approved. All unbudgeted items will require committee approval.
2. Administer the quarterly budget within the income of the Church (i.e. not exceeding the income from the previous quarter) in consultation with the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
  - Any surplus from a previous quarter shall be deposited into the savings account.
3. Recommend to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board the financial policies of the Church for approval and implementation.
4. Oversee financial matters pertaining to receiving and spending of funds as outlined in this policy and presenting reports to the Church.
  - In addition to a quarterly report to be made available to the membership at the close of each quarter (see *Financial Reports* below), the Finance Committee shall present a yearly review of the budget and expenditures of the Church funds to the membership.
5. Allocate funds as necessary to finance the programs of the Church.

6. Encourage a sense of stewardship among Church members by modeling proper stewardship.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE POLICY**

### *Fiscal Year*

The Church fiscal year shall begin January 1 and conclude December 31.

### *Financial Committee Meetings*

The Finance Committee shall meet no less than once a quarter (four times a year) and no more than once a month (barring unforeseen emergencies) to manage the financial affairs of the Church. Each meeting shall produce detailed meeting notes to be electronically submitted to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board for approval and filed by the Church Administrator upon ratification.

All finance meetings are to be conducted with a majority of financial officers in attendance and a BCC Elder present. If a meeting is convened with only a *minority* of officers in attendance and/or a BCC Elder not present, and/or meeting notes *not* recorded, the BCC Pastor Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to deem the outcome of the meeting as unbinding.

### *Budget Expenditures*

Standard line items in the budget, such as rent imbursement, utilities payment, and pastoral payroll, are considered pre-approved and may be spent by the Finance Committee provided cash funds are available at the time of the expenditure. All expenditures should be reasonable and appropriate. The Finance Committee has the responsibility of determining if the funds are available.

### *Emergency Expenditures*

Emergency expenditures are disbursements that require immediate attention to address a matter that affects the safety and welfare of the Church. Emergency expenditures may be made by an authorized individual on the Finance Committee. Emergency expenditures up to \$500 may be made without BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board approval. Emergency expenditures over \$500 may be requested, but must be approved by a majority of the Finance Committee and the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. If budgeted funds are not available from the general operating budget, the Finance Committee will determine the source of funding. All emergency expenditures not involving the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall be reported to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board by way of written notification (electronically in email).

### *Disbursement of Funds*

Only pre-approved financial officers (i.e. on record with the bank) shall be responsible for the disbursement of Church funds and the signing of checks, in a timely matter, according to the budget adopted by the Finance Committee and the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

1. In the absence of a pre-approved financial officer (i.e. on record with the bank), the Senior Pastor is authorized to sign checks (as he is on record with the bank).
2. With the exception of standard line items in the budget, such as rent imbursement, utilities payment, and pastoral payroll, etc., all checks shall be written at the discretion the Finance Committee with written notification by email made to the sitting Elder(s) on the board.

### *Expense Reports*

A completed/approved/signed expense report, to include all applicable receipts, shall be submitted to the Bookkeeper for any expenditure made with personal funds (for reimbursement purposes).

1. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for approving all expense reports related to Church members.
2. The BCC Pastoral/Elder Board shall be responsible for approving all expense reports related to the Elders.
3. It is unacceptable for anyone on the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board or Finance Committee to approve expense reports for family members.

### *Receipts*

All expenses are to be properly documented. The purpose of the documentation is to confirm the validity of all expenses and provide confirmation about the good stewardship of Church funds. It is recognized that some expenditures will be difficult to document but, generally, receipts should be given to the Finance Committee.

1. All receipts shall pertain to Church purchases *only*, unless otherwise approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, in consultation with the Finance Committee, and must be submitted to the Finance Committee no later than two weeks following the date the purchase is made.
  - The Finance Committee, in turn, shall make all receipts available to the Church Administrator no later than two weeks following the date the receipts are received.
2. All submitted receipts shall be accompanied with a completed Church expense report.

### *Church Credit Card Use*



When goods and services are bought for the Church, the vendor shall be requested to bill the Church directly. The Church credit card is to be used for Church purchases *only* and shall be kept in the possession of the Senior Pastor, or an Elder, or a financial officer. All receipts for credit card charges must be submitted to a financial officer on the Finance Committee who, in turn, shall submit it to the Bookkeeper, no later than two weeks following the date the charge is made.

### *Undesignated Funds*

Members are encouraged to support the ministry of the Church through regular tithes and offerings to the general operating budget of the Church. These funds may be used as directed by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and/or Finance Committee to fund any area of ministry that the Church may designate. Each quarter a budget shall be prepared that directs how the gifts from the congregation will be used. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to move money from one budget item to another to ensure adequate resources for ministry areas. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board may authorize the Finance Committee to adjust items within the budget as necessary.

### *Designated Funds (Non-Cash)*

Designated gifts may be received from individuals for the ministry of the Church. When the designated gift is a gift of property, not cash or cash equivalent, the Church reserves the right to use the property for purposes designated by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. The Finance Committee will work to honor the intention of the donor; however, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, acting on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, reserves the right to use or dispose of the property in a way that benefits the ministry of the Church.

### *Existing Funds (Cash)*

The process of establishing a designated cash fund at the request of a donor is as follows:

1. The individual making the gift shall present a written request to the Finance Committee requesting that such a fund be established or clearly delineate the fund on the paper check (if applicable) in the Memo section.
2. The Finance Committee must approve the establishment of the requested fund and recommend the establishment of such a fund to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board for final approval.
  - The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, in consultation with the Finance Committee, must approve the establishment of the requested fund before a contribution can be accepted.
3. If the Finance Committee or the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board fails to approve a request for a designated fund, the designated fund cannot be established and the Church shall not accept the gift.

### *Financial Reports*

Quarterly budget reports shall be made available to the membership at the close of each quarter. The Finance Committee will produce such reports to be disseminated to Church members electronically by email once approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. The Finance Committee shall also provide an annual report each year at the close of the fiscal year.

### *Mission Giving*

The Church believes in the biblical concept of mission-giving as commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. The Church will commit to giving 10% of its income as stated in each quarterly budget to ministry causes approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

1. In accordance with Church Bylaws (Article 7; #5), *“BCC shall be generous in financially supporting other ministries as the Lord prospers so as to keep an active ministry and missions focus.”*

### *Special Mission Offerings*

The Church supports and encourages all Church members to give to special mission offerings *over and above* their tithes.

### *Savings Funds*

Notwithstanding extenuating circumstances or economic climate, the goal of the Church is to maintain at least six (6) months of reserve funds (in the amount of the average of the quarterly budget from the previous year) to be used in the case of emergency or temporary budget shortfall.

### *Contribution Statements* (expanded upon Article 7, #4 of Church Bylaws)

The Finance Committee shall provide in the month of January contribution statements to each donor of the Church for the previous year. These statements shall annotate the name and address of the Church, the name and address of the donor(s), the respective dollar amounts with dates and purpose of contribution, and the grand total of all contributions.

1. As required by law in the state of New Hampshire, all financial statements provided to individual donors shall include the following notation: *“Except for intangible religious benefits, no good or services were provided to the donor in exchange for the contribution received.”*

### *Church Facility Usage Fees*

Pending approval by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, only Church members and regular attendees may reserve the Church facilities for personal use so long as the reservation is in

keeping with the Church's schedule and published bylaws. The Church will determine the usage fees, if applicable. All renters/leasees must ensure that the facilities are thoroughly cleaned after usage, according to the standards set forth by the Board of Trustees, and compensation made for any damages to the premises during the rental period.

### *Secure Financial Records*

The Finance Committee and/or Bookkeeper shall be responsible for maintaining adequate financial records. These records include individual contributions to the general operating budget, contributions to designated funds, and quarterly/annual budget reports. These records are to be stored on a computer with a backup system in place to secure the records in the event of a fire or natural disaster.

### *Charitable Contributions*

Since the Church is funded by charitable contributions, it must be governed by the six (6) requirements of the IRS for a contribution to be tax deductible. The requirements are:

1. The contribution must be a gift of cash or other property and not for personal services rendered.
2. The contribution must be delivered before the close of the year. Charitable contributions must be claimed in the year in which they are delivered to the Church.
3. The contribution must be unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor.
4. The contribution must be made to or for the use of a qualified tax-exempt charitable organization. Contributions made directly to individuals are not deductible.
5. The contribution must be within the allowable legal limits as specified by the IRS.
6. The contribution must be properly documented.

Charitable contributions are deductible only to the extent that they exceed the value of any benefit received by the donor. When donations to a fundraiser include a service such as a meal or car wash, only the portion of the donation that exceeds the value of the service will be deductible. Registration fees for camps, retreats, concerts, etc. are not considered tax deductible because the donor is receiving "value" for the donation.

### *Fundraising Events*

The Church believes in the biblical practice of financing the work of the Church through the faithful giving of tithes and offerings; however, there are some ministries of the Church which require additional funding, such as men and women retreats, pastoral retreats, and summer camps for youth, etc. Additional funding should be in the form of donations at fundraising events or by designated giving. The people contributing to these programs should consider their giving "in

addition to,” and not “in place of” normal giving. Contribution credit will be given according to IRS guidelines.

Fundraising events must be approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. Money raised from fundraising events should be counted by, and given to, officers on the Finance Committee.

### *Special Offerings*

The Finance Committee shall review all requests for special offerings other than mission and benevolence offerings. Once the request is made to the committee, it shall be submitted to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board for approval.

### *Retention of Church Financial Records*

The Church will retain its records for a period of seven (7) years. Records that shall be kept indefinitely are the following:

1. Articles of Incorporation
2. Audit reports
3. Bank statements
4. Cash books/check register/canceled checks for important payments
5. Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases (still in effect)
6. Copyright registration
7. Correspondence (legal and important matters only)
8. Deeds and bills of sale
9. Financial statements (end of year)
10. Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, etc.
11. General and private ledgers/journals
12. Minute notes for stakeholders, including Bylaws
13. Property records and outside appraisals
14. Up-to-date asset inventory

### *Financial Handouts*

Unless otherwise agreed upon by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, and in consultation with the Finance Committee, BCC is *not* to engage in cash handouts for members, non-members, visitors, or strangers.

1. Bearing the hardship burdens of our brothers and sisters in Christ is to remain a priority at BCC but such burden-bearing can and should take on many forms other than cash handouts.
  - In cases where a financial need is great, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to give a monetary donation. But the consensus for such action must be unanimous among the leadership.
2. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board is not precluded from making cash donations, in consultation with the Finance Committee, to attendees/members at BCC for ministry purposes (i.e. missions, training, education, etc.) and/or visiting missionaries.

### *Pastoral Spending*

The BCC Senior Pastor is allowed limited discretionary spending for ministry and Church-related expenditures, apart from BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board approval.

1. By definition, pastoral discretionary spending is **limited** to any and all expenditures made by the pastor which pertain to the promotion of the Church, the support of the Church vision, the implementation of the Church mission, and the upkeep of the Church facility.
2. Any and all pastoral discretionary spending exceeding \$100 a purchase and/or \$300 a quarter is prohibited without written approval from the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
3. The Finance Committee is to be made aware *in writing* of any pastoral discretionary spending (approved in advance by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board) that exceeds \$100 a purchase and/or \$300 a quarter.
4. Any and all receipts for pastoral discretionary spending are to be remitted to the Finance Committee (either electronically or physically), along with a completed expense report no later than two weeks following the date the expenditure.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE PROCEDURE**

Any and all weekly tithes and offerings shall be accumulated and counted by no less than two financial officers *simultaneously* and no earlier than twenty minutes after Sunday service.

1. The duties of collecting, counting, reporting, and depositing the weekly tithes and offerings shall be a shared responsibility between two or more financial officers.

- At *no time* is the weekly collection to be accumulated and counted by only one officer.
  - In the event a second officer is not readily available, a BCC Pastor/Elder/Deacon or a universally trusted member of the congregation shall be consulted to assist.
2. The weekly collection form shall be completed in its entirety by the collection officers, to include annotating check numbers, cash donations, and respective dollar amounts, and then cross-checked.
    - The weekly collection form shall be signed by each officer performing the counting and submitted to the Bookkeeper for record-keeping.
  3. One financial officer shall be responsible for depositing the weekly monies into the Church bank account while another responsible for sending the deposit information in written form to the Church Bookkeeper (for data entry), including the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board (for visibility).
  4. The Finance Committee shall provide the Bookkeeper a detailed list of all weekly donors, to include their full name, address (if not on record), dollar amount, payment type, check number (if applicable), and offering type (if designated to BCC approved funds other than the general operating budget).
  5. The Church Bookkeeper shall electronically record all monies received and their respective donors (to include visitors, attendees, and members) so as to provide year-end financial statements for each respective donor.

Both the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and the Finance Committee are to be notified in writing within 72 hours after the collection is tallied as to the total dollar amount received.

**Addendum to:**

***Article 1. Human Sexuality***

**MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is therefore a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the BCC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by BCC in any capacity, to include non-paid lay leaders and volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of BCC.

### **Church Facility Use Policy**

The Church's facilities were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of Church members. The Church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we reserve the right to make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the Church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the Church's constitution and bylaws. Nor may Church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the Church's faith or moral teachings. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board is the final decision-maker concerning use of Church facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the Church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the Church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity and would be a grave violation of the Church's faith and religious practice. (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Second, it is especially important that the Church present a consistent message to the community, and that the Church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the Church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the Church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to Church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that

by allowing use of our facilities, the Church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the Church's faith use any Church facility. Nor may Church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the Church's faith. This policy applies to all Church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the Church's sanctuary, because the Church sees all its property as holy and set apart to worship God (Colossians 3:17).

### **Approved Users and Priority of Use**

The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board must approve all uses of Church facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to Church members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the Church. Church facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the Church's faith and practice.
2. The group or person seeking facility use must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request & Agreement" form.
3. The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the Church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below and as described in any additional instructions by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.



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<sup>1</sup> Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

<sup>2</sup> In place of the Second Council of Nicaea, Protestant denominations instead prefer the Council of Constantinople, which condemned the veneration of icons.

<sup>3</sup> Arianism erroneously taught that God the Father and the Son were not co-eternal.

<sup>4</sup> Nestorianism erroneously taught that Jesus exists as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God (or Logos), rather than as a unified person.

<sup>5</sup> Monophysitism erroneously taught that the Divine essentially obliterated the human nature of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Monotheletism erroneously taught that Jesus Christ had two natures but only one will.

<sup>7</sup> [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

<sup>8</sup> [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from *Pastoral Ethics*, Dan Sherman; [www.my-pastor.com](http://www.my-pastor.com); 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from *Women and Men In Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* by Robert Saucy & Judy TenElshof; Moody Publishers; 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government* by Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan, Zondervan; 2004.

<sup>12</sup> First Presbyterian Church of Shelbyville, TN ([www.firstprez.net/sacramentspage.htm](http://www.firstprez.net/sacramentspage.htm)).

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* by Thomas R. Schriener and Shawn D. Wright; B & H Publishing Group; 2007

<sup>14</sup> Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*.

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from *The Lord's Supper is a Celebration of Grace* by Gordon Keddie; Evangelical Press; 1999.

<sup>16</sup> See Prov. 15:5; 17:10, 25:12, 27:5; 29:15; 1 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 1:20; 3:4-5; Heb. 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115, 141:5; Eccl. 7:5; Matt. 7:26-27, 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1-5; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 1:13-14; Jam. 1:22.

<sup>17</sup> See Prov. 13:20; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 5:11, 15:33-34; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:11-12; Heb. 10:24-25.

<sup>18</sup> See 1 Cor. 5:6-7; 2 Cor. 13:10; Eph. 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Rev. 21:2, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> See Prov. 28:7; Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Pet. 2:2; 1 John 3:10.