



ADOPTED JANUARY 2024

Risen Hope **Baptist Church** BYLAWS

VISION:

"Striving to be a healthy family of Christ-like believers, proclaiming a cross-centered gospel, living cross-centered lives."

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“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

– 1 Peter 1:3 –

ARTICLE 1. NAME AND ORGANIZATION

Jesus said, "I will build my church." | Matthew 16:18

- 1) **Name:** The name of this organization will be **"RISEN HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH"**
- 2) **Organization:** The organization took place on *The 2nd day of February 2023*.
- 3) **Incorporation:** This organization was incorporated under and pursuant to the provisions of the South Dakota Nonprofit Corporation Act on the 2nd day of February, 2023. The church will be authorized to exercise the general powers granted to such non-profit corporations by the South Dakota Non-Profit Corporation Act, as amended. The elder council is deemed to be the Board of Directors for the church as by South Dakota Law.
- 4) **Affiliation:** This church will maintain affiliation with Converge Worldwide and Converge Heartland.
- 5) **Purpose:** Risen Hope Baptist Church (the "church") is organized for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section(s) of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE 2. PREAMBLE

The church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. | 1 Timothy 3:15

In awe of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ we acknowledge His abundant mercy that has granted us a risen hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Placing our full trust in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, we embrace the teachings and practices of the word of God. The Scriptures are our unwavering authority for belief and conduct, we willingly unite as a community of baptized believers in Jesus Christ.

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples of all the nations, and we are committed to carrying out that mission. Our purpose is to build a family of Christ-like believers who proclaim a cross-centered gospel and live cross-centered lives. To reach that goal, we have adopted 5 Loves to maintain our focus. Everything we do at Risen Hope Baptist Church flows from our desire to grow in these loves:

- **Love God**
- **Love God's Word and Prayer**
- **Love One Another**
- **Love our Neighbors**
- **Love the Gospel**

In this pursuit, we establish these bylaws to guide our governance, affirm our faith, and establish a meaningful membership that directs our way of life.

ARTICLE 3. STATEMENT OF FAITH

I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed. | 2 Timothy 1:12

- 1) **The Word of God:** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (*John 17:7; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21*)
- 2) **The Trinity:** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (*Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-4; 1 John 5:7*)

- 3) **God the Father:** We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that he hears and answers prayer, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (*John 3:16-17; John 4:24; John 17:5*)
- 4) **Jesus Christ:** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death on the cross, bodily resurrection from the grave, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (*Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:2-3; 1 John 1:7*)
- 5) **The Holy Spirit:** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. (*John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:13-14*)
- 6) **Humanity:** We believe God created humankind immutably as male and female to reflect and bear His image. As such, human beings of every ethnicity, age, ability, as well as the pre-born deserve dignity, protection, honor, respect, and Christian love. Because of Adam and Eve's free choice to sin, God's image in all humankind has become distorted and relationship with God has become disrupted. (*Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:16-19*)
- 7) **Regeneration:** We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (*John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 16-17; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 3:5*)
- 8) **The Church:** We believe in the universal church; a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head, and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (*Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-41; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 5:25-27*)
- 9) **Christian Conduct:** We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. (*2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:14-16; Colossians 3:17-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18*)
- 10) **The Ordinances:** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32*)
- 11) **Religious Liberty:** We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. (*Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1-7; Romans 14:1-10*)
- 12) **Christian Marriage:** We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained by God for the well-being and propagation of humankind. It is a covenant representing the spiritual and physical union into which one man and one woman may enter for the glory of God, symbolizing the

relationship of Christ to his church. As the sign of this covenant, sexual activity is reserved exclusively for the marriage relationship. According to the scriptural ideal, marriage requires sacrificial love and faithfulness to each other for life. (*Genesis 1:28, 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:32-33*)

13) Church Cooperation: We believe that local Churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in an association of churches. Such an organization, whether it is Converge Worldwide or one of its regional districts, exists and functions by the will of the Churches. Cooperation in the association is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis. (*Romans 15:25-27; Philippians 1:3-6; Philemon 6*)

14) The Last Things: We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (*John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:1-15; Matthew 25:31-46*)

ARTICLE 4. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

You are the body of Christ and individually members of it. | 1 Corinthians 12:27

Section 4.01 Qualifications for Members

To become a member of the church, an individual must confess faith in Jesus Christ, provide reasonable and credible evidence to the elders and members of being born again, and be baptized by immersion. They should understand and accept the church's beliefs and practices as outlined in these bylaws and agree to the member covenant and expectations outlined below.

Section 4.02 Adding New Members

All candidates for membership will be interviewed by the elders to affirm their qualifications. Upon recommendation from the elder council, a candidate will be presented to the church at a business meeting by an elder. The church will then vote upon a recommendation from the elder council regarding the candidate. A majority vote is required to accept the candidate into membership.

Section 4.03 Member Covenant and Expectations

(a) Member Covenant

With great delight in the grace of God, who has called us out of darkness and into the light of His Son, Jesus Christ, as God's holy people having been born again to a living hope through the gospel, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, upon profession of our faith, and having found a home with the faith, mission, vision, ordinances, doctrine, and discipleship of this church, we do now affirm our covenant together. (*Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:9-10; John 3:3, 16; Acts 2:38; Titus 1:9, 2:1*)

- 1)** Humbly seeking God's help by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will protect the testimony and unity of this church by acting in love toward one another, refusing to gossip or slander one another, and graciously following those who lead us. (*Ephesians 5:18; Romans 14:19; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 13:17*)
- 2)** Our sincere desire is to contribute to the health and vitality of our church by praying regularly for its growth, warmly inviting others to attend, and joyfully welcoming all who visit. We will apply the truth of the gospel in our homes, teaching our children to love the gospel, God's word, and prayer. (*Colossians 4:2; James 2:1-4; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7; 2 Timothy 1:5*)
- 3)** We will serve this body in the strength which God supplies, discovering and using our spiritual gifts and talents, actively sharing the gospel, entering into the discipleship and growth of

others, and cultivating the heart of a servant. We will joyfully sit under the preaching and teaching of God's word, desiring by it to grow stronger, deeper, and more devoted in our faith and service to Christ. (*1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-16*)

- 4) With God as our witness, we will endeavor to faithfully attend worship services, live a life pleasing to our Father in heaven, humbly confess when we have failed to do so and receive His discipline. We will lovingly care for others in their spiritual journey and share the Christian life with them. As God provides, we will happily give our resources so that the needs of this church and its wider kingdom ministry are met. Together we long to see our city, region, nation, and world reached with the gospel, and confident of God's promises we will labor side-by-side until this great work of grace is accomplished. (*Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 1:27; Hebrews 12:7-11; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Philippians 4:14-20; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)

To God be the glory, Amen.

(b) Additional Member Expectations

Adult members over the age of 18, as much as possible, are expected to:

- 1) Participate in church business meetings
- 2) Affirm and welcome new members into church membership
- 3) Select church officers and members of financial review and nominating teams
- 4) Approve pastoral search team members
- 5) Approve changes to these bylaws
- 6) Affirm the call and hiring terms for pastoral candidates
- 7) Suggest names of members for open church positions
- 8) Propose action for the removal of an elder or dismissal of a pastor if necessary
- 9) Request special business meetings when appropriate and necessary
- 10) Approve the annual budget and any expenditures greater than five percent (5%) of the total annual budget and not originally included in the approved budget
- 11) Vote on any decisions regarding the use or disposition of church real estate, including but not limited to leases, sales, mortgages, encumbrances, or easements
- 12) Admonish sin in other member(s) in accordance with Matthew 18
- 13) Follow appropriate communication guidelines with others in the church, including:
 - a. Praying about an issue before speaking to another person
 - b. Seeking clarity and committing to believing the best about others
 - c. Seeking others directly and privately when dealing with conflict
 - d. Not sending unsigned letters or notes
 - e. Not dealing with personal conflicts via email or text
 - f. Not manipulating others nor allowing oneself to be manipulated

Section 4.04 Member Removal

(a) Inactive removal

The membership status of all members will be reviewed annually by the elder council. A member is deemed inactive if they have had no meaningful interaction with the church for one year or longer. Elders will make every attempt to contact inactive members and encourage their return to church life before informing them of their impending release from membership. Unless there is reasonable justification given as to why an inactive member should remain in membership, their release from membership will be communicated by the elders at the next business meeting.

(b) Member requested removal

Any member desiring to remove their membership will be voted on at an upcoming business meeting. This request may be accomplished via letter from another church or through written communication between an elder and the member. Membership removal will be communicated at the next business meeting.

(c) Member dismissal as discipline

If a member is living a life contrary to biblical truth and refuses to change course or show reasonable and believable repentance, elders and members will follow the process outlined in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 for admonishment and discipline.

- 1) The first step is speaking directly to that person, preferably in private.
- 2) The second step, if necessary, is to speak with the person again but with one or two witnesses.
- 3) If the first two steps fail to rectify the issue(s) the elders will be informed, taking further steps as needed leading up to, and including, dismissing the member, and requesting they not participate in the Lord's Supper. Prior to dismissal actions, the member will be given a written basis for the dismissal and will be provided an opportunity for rebuttal to the elders. The elder council will bring dismissal actions to the next business meeting. Dismissal as discipline requires a majority vote.
- 4) The elders will continue to pray and make every reasonable attempt to pursue an ongoing relationship with the dismissed individual, as is deemed appropriate, with the aim to restore the member spiritually, strengthen the church, and honor the Lord. Church discipline seeks to guide believers back to a pure relationship within the assembly, not to cast them out shamefully or exercise prideful authority.

ARTICLE 5. CHURCH GOVERNANCE

All things should be done decently and in order. | 1 Corinthians 14:40

We recognize that the church of Jesus Christ is unlike any other organization on earth and should not be governed like any other organization. The church is neither a democracy nor an autocracy. In order for Risen Hope Baptist Church to accomplish its mission and purpose, we adopt an elder-led congregational structure of governance for the church, recognizing:

- 1) Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and earth and is the true head of the Church.
- 2) The members of the church (as defined above) have the biblical responsibility and unique authority from Jesus to carry out the mission of the church and guard the doctrine of the church.
- 3) It is the members who are called upon in Scripture to appoint biblically qualified elders from within the congregation to exercise oversight and equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

ARTICLE 6. OFFICE OF ELDER

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. | 1 Timothy 3:12

Section 6.01 Qualifications for Elders

An elder must be a male who has been a Christian for at least five years, a church member for at least two years, is at least twenty-five years of age, and meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Section 6.02 Elder Expectations

The church may have non-vocational (unpaid) elders and vocational elders (paid pastors). Non-vocational elders will serve on the elder council for four-year terms pursuant to Article 7 and take office the day after the annual business meeting. After one year off, an elder may serve again. Due to

resignation, death, or removal of an elder, a replacement may fulfill the term remaining for that member. If an elder comes in as a replacement and performs only a portion of a term rather than the full four-year term, he would be eligible to move into a new four-year term without a year off.

Section 6.03 Adding a New Elder

Non-vocational elder candidates will be identified by the elder council in collaboration with the nominating team (see 10.03.C) and are subject to a selection and interview process deemed appropriate by the current elder council. Candidates will require approval by majority vote of church members at a business meeting. Elder council elections are to be non-competitive.

Section 6.04 Elder Dismissal

(a) Elder resignation

A non-vocational elder may request temporary leave or they may resign from the council. Leave shall be granted subject to the approval of the majority vote of the elder council. Vocational elders shall be removed from the elder council upon termination of employment or resignation.

(b) Elder dismissal for cause

An elder is presumed to have vacated his office if he ceases to be an active church member. An elder may also be removed from office for conduct impairing his efficiency. If removal is deemed advisable by vote of three-fourths of the other elders, the elder council may bring the dismissal action to the church for a vote. A majority vote at a business meeting can then remove the elder.

If a member has a grievance with an elder and the communication covenant steps as well as the discipline steps have failed to remedy the grievance, action to remove an elder may be initiated by the church by providing a written request signed by twenty percent of the active membership to the elder council. The reason for removal must be clearly documented in the written request. The elders will review the request and come to a final decision regarding the request within sixty days. Information about the decision and any associated actions will be presented by the elder council to the church at the next business meeting.

ARTICLE 7. ELDER COUNCIL

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight. | 1 Peter 5:2

Section 7.01 Council Structure

The church is to be led by a plurality of male elders who govern the church as godly servant leaders and guard the beliefs, mission, and values of the church.

1. The elder council shall be made up of both vocational elders (paid pastors) and non-vocational (non-paid) elders. A bi-vocational elder (part-time paid pastor) is the same as a vocational elder.
2. The elder council shall elect its chairman and vice chairman from the non-vocational elders. The chairman will be responsible for business and elder meeting facilitation as well as representing the elders in communication to the congregation. The vice chairman shall fulfil the role of the chairman in his absence.
3. The elder council will determine the total number of elders needed for the council, but the number will never be less than three elders. At least a 2:1 ratio of non-vocational to vocational elders must be maintained. In the situation where the 2:1 ratio is not being met due to insufficient non-vocational elders; the associate pastor last hired shall not vote in elder council decisions. The 2:1 ratio does not need to be maintained if the church has no vocational elders.

Section 7.02 Council Responsibilities

The elders of the church are charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Teaching, shepherding, and protecting the congregation from false teaching
2. Devoting time to prayer for the church and its members
3. Monitoring the church's overall spiritual condition
4. Exercising pastoral care and church discipline as necessary
5. Maintaining regular services of the church
6. Interviewing prospective members
7. Delegation and oversight of all ministry teams and support staff
8. Produce and authorize written policies and ministry job descriptions as appropriate
9. Act in accordance with public laws which may apply, such as notification of law enforcement officials when sinful actions may be against the law

Section 7.03 Council Procedures

1. The elder council will meet no fewer than once per month.
2. All decisions will be documented in meeting minutes.
3. Vocational elders will be excused from discussion and decisions regarding their salaries or other matters as deemed appropriate by a majority vote of non-vocational elders.
4. Non-vocational elders will be excused from discussion and decisions where conflicts of interest exist as deemed appropriate by a majority vote of the other elders.
5. The elders, in cooperation with the finance team (see 10.03.A) and financial review team (10.03.B), will oversee the finances necessary for supporting the church and its mission shall be obtained through voluntary tithes, gifts, and offerings. The elders will bring additional appeals for funds, budgeted or non-budgeted, to the congregation as needed.
6. The elders will bring the annual budget and fund designations resulting from any end of the year excess funds to the congregation for approval by majority vote. These fund designations will be honored unless changed by congregational approval.
7. The elders will bring expenses to the church that are greater than five percent of the annual budgeted expense that were not originally in the budget or stipulated for within a designated fund. The expenditures must be approved by ballot majority vote at a business meeting, except in the case of emergencies in which case the elders would brief the church on the details in the next business meeting.
8. The elders will bring any conveyances, sale, mortgage, encumbrance, lease agreement, or easement of church real estate to the church for approval by majority vote at a business meeting.
9. The elders may vote to remove a ministry leader, ministry team member, support staff, or deacon from their position at any time and communicate to the congregation as they see appropriate. The elders may appoint a replacement to finish the term of elected individuals.

ARTICLE 8. PASTORAL STAFF

Those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. | 1 Corinthians 9:14

Section 8.01 Qualifications for Pastors

The qualifications of a senior pastor or associate pastor are the same for elders of the church set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Pastors must be cooperative with Converge Heartland and in agreement with the statements of faith of both Risen Hope Baptist Church and Converge Heartland. Pastors will serve for an unspecified term and will be known as vocational elders.

Section 8.02 Pastor Responsibilities

(a) Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, exercise a concern for the spiritual needs of the church and organize and develop its ministries to best fulfill the stated mission of the church. The church will only have one senior pastor and he shall report to the elder council.

(b) Associate Pastor(s)

Associate pastor(s) report to the senior pastor and elder council for ministries as per their job description. In addition, they assist the senior pastor in the ministries of preaching, administering of ordinances and in the organization and administration of the church and its ministries.

Section 8.03 Adding a New Pastor

(a) Pastoral Search Team

When it is necessary to call a pastor, a representative pastoral search team consisting of at least five members, including one or more elder council members and four non-elders, shall be appointed by the elder council and ratified by a majority vote at a business meeting of the church. The team will be subsequently commissioned to seek a suitable candidate and arrange for the church to become acquainted with him. In seeking a suitable candidate, the team may consult the leaders of Converge Heartland District, take suggestions from the members of the church, or pursue other outside candidates as appropriate. It shall investigate the merits of a candidate, considering his personal character, education, ministerial record, and abilities. The team will recommend to the elder council its candidate for their approval and recommendation to the congregation. The elder council is permitted to recommend a qualified candidate to the congregation for associate pastor without a search team in the event there is a well-known candidate who is an obvious fit for the position either from within the church, the community, or has some other relationship to the church.

(b) Extension of the Call

The recommendation of the elder council concerning (a) the call of a pastor and (b) the terms of such call shall be presented to the church at a specially called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read at the regular services for two consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting. A vote of three-fourths majority shall be necessary to extend a call and a majority vote is required to approve the terms of the call. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at a time. The votes for the call and for the terms will be by written ballot. When the call has been approved by the church, it shall be sent to the candidate by the elder chairman. Upon the candidate's acceptance of the call he will first be instituted as a member of the church, added to the elder council, and then start an at-will employment agreement as of the date agreed upon by the church and the candidate.

(c) Working Arrangements with the Pastor

The pastors' salary and other benefits (i.e., housing, utilities, insurance, travel, retirement, vacation, sabbatical etc.) shall be agreed upon within the terms of the call and will be reviewed by the elder council at least yearly when preparing the annual budget.

Section 8.04 Pastor Dismissal

(a) Pastor Resignation

A pastor resigns to the elder council. The elder council shall announce the resignation to the church, provide the effective date of resignation, and make recommendation to the church

regarding the financial terms for termination of the pastoral relationship at a regular or special business meeting. The date of termination shall be no more than sixty or less than thirty days after the effective date of the acceptance of the resignation by the church unless recommended differently by the elder council. If, in the judgment of the elder council, the continuance of the pastor's ministry shall be undesirable, the elder council shall recommend to the church that the employment relationship be discontinued immediately.

(b) Pastor Dismissal for Cause

A pastor may be dismissed from office for conduct impairing his efficacy. If dismissal is deemed advisable by the elders, the elder council may bring the dismissal action to the church for a vote. A majority written ballot vote at a business meeting can then dismiss the pastor.

If a member has a grievance with a pastor and the communication covenant steps as well as the discipline steps have failed to remedy the grievance, a proposal to dismiss a pastor may be submitted to the elders in writing with signatures from twenty percent of the qualified voting membership of the church. The elder council will be given an opportunity to work with the pastor to address the grievances. If the grievances are not or cannot be corrected, the church may dissolve the pastoral employment relationship upon recommendation from the elder council and carried by a majority written ballot vote at a business meeting. If such a petition fails to carry the majority vote, all elder council members signing such a petition shall automatically relinquish their office as elder.

When dismissing a pastor, he will be dismissed as a member, removed from the elder council, and the at-will employment agreement will be terminated. The elder council will determine severance package details, if applicable, and report these details to the congregation.

ARTICLE 9. DEACONS

Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves. | 1 Timothy 3:13

Section 9.01 Qualifications for Deacons

To be eligible to be a deacon a person must be a member and must meet the standards for being a deacon set forth in the New Testament, including the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. A deacon may be a man or woman.

Section 9.02 Deacon Expectations

Deacons shall be responsible for serving the practical needs of the members, leading ministry teams (when applicable), and protecting the unity of the church in the love of Christ. Elders shall oversee deacon ministries. A person will serve as a deacon for an initial two-year term with unlimited one-year renewals upon review from the nominating team and elder council.

Section 9.03 Adding a New Deacon

A biblically qualified church member shall become a deacon when he or she is nominated by the Nominating Team and affirmed by a majority vote of the members at a business meeting before the annual business meeting. Their term shall start after the next annual business meeting. The elder council, in partnership with the deacons, will determine the total number of deacons needed.

Section 9.04 Deacon Dismissal

(a) Deacon resignation

Due to life and/or ministry circumstances a deacon may request leave. Leave shall be granted subject to the approval of the majority vote of the elder council.

(b) Deacon dismissal for cause

A deacon is presumed to have vacated his office if he or she ceases to be an active church member. A deacon may also be removed from office for conduct impairing his or her efficacy. If removal is deemed advisable by the elders, the elder council may bring the dismissal action to the church for a vote. A majority vote at a business meeting can then remove the deacon. The elders may also recommend removing the deacon from membership in the same vote.

If a member has a grievance with a deacon and the communication covenant steps as well as the discipline steps have failed to remedy the grievance, action to remove a deacon may be initiated by providing a written request signed by twenty percent of the active membership to the elder council. The reason for removal must be clearly documented in the written request. The elders will review the request and come to a final decision regarding the request within sixty days. Information about the decision and any associated actions will be presented by the elder council to the church at the next business meeting.

ARTICLE 10. MINISTRY TEAMS

To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. | Ephesians 4:12

Section 10.01 Ministry Teams

The elders and pastors are responsible for creating and overseeing the various ministry teams needed to carry out the mission of the church. Ministry team leaders and members may be either male or female.

Section 10.02 Ministry Team Roles

(a) Team Leaders

Ministry team leaders will be selected and appointed by the elders and must be a member of the church. The elders will maintain a role description for each ministry leader and will meet with the ministry leader at minimum once per year to re-affirm the ministry leader's position.

(b) Team Members

Church membership is preferable, but not required for ministry team members. The elders may decide that certain team member roles need to be members. The ministry team leader is responsible for selecting and recruiting team members.

Section 10.03 Standing Ministry Teams & Officers

(a) Finance Team

The finance team helps the elders oversee the church finances by keeping records of giving and expenses. This team is made up of at least a treasurer and one financial secretary. Additional financial secretaries, an elder liaison, and non-pastor church staff member(s) may also join as needed. Finance team members must have been a member for at least one year.

(i) Responsibilities

- a. Meet no less than once per quarter.
- b. Lead the annual budget process working closely with the elders to present annually for congregational approval.
- c. Responsible for the distribution of annual giving statements before the 31st of January.
- d. Generate monthly financial reports sent to the elders
- e. Complete bank and other financial reconciliations.

(ii) Roles

1) Treasurer

The treasurer is the chair of the finance team and is responsible for scheduling and leading regular team meetings. The treasurer will review and approve expenses as outlined in an expense approval policy that has been approved by the elders. The treasurer will monitor the financial health of the church and offer financial expertise to the staff and elders when necessary. The treasurer will monitor bank statements and make sure monthly, quarterly, and annual financial statements are prepared and are accurate. The treasurer serves a one-year term and is either voted in or reaffirmed at a business meeting before the annual business meeting via a non-competitive majority vote. Their term shall start after the next annual business meeting.

2) Financial Secretaries

Financial Secretaries will count the weekly offerings from Sunday worship services pursuant to a documented process. The financial secretaries serve a one-year term and are either voted in or reaffirmed at a business meeting before the annual business meeting via a non-competitive majority vote. Their term shall start after the next annual business meeting.

(b) Financial Review Team

A financial review team of three members shall be nominated by the nominating team, agreed to by the elder council and ratified by a majority vote at a business meeting. They will follow an approved financial review process to review the financial statements of the finance team once a year and at such other times as the elder council may request. They will submit a written report to the elder council at the completion of their annual review or any other requested review. Financial review team members shall serve three-year terms with one third of each team to begin service each year. Financial review team members are eligible for re-nomination after one year off.

(c) Nominating Team

The nominating team shall nominate the treasurer, financial secretaries, financial review team members, nominating team members at large, and other positions as identified by the elder council. They will also work with the elders regarding elder and deacon candidates. This team will consist of at least 4 members consisting of one elder identified by the elder council, and at least three members at large to be elected by the church. The elder council will determine the total number of members needed for the team. Nominating team members shall serve three-year terms. Nominating team members are eligible for re-nomination after one year off. Election of an at large nominating team member will be a competitive ballot between a minimum of two members.

(d) Church Clerk

The clerk shall keep a record of proceedings of the church, take charge of all records, issue letters of transfer or dismissal as directed by the church or elder council and keep a register of the names of all members of the church. The clerk will keep the books and records and attend all meetings to take notes on the proceedings. The clerk is appointed by the elder council and must be a member.

ARTICLE 11. SUPPORT STAFF

My partner and fellow worker for your benefit. | 2 Corinthians 8:23

Section 11.01 Employment and Duties

For additional staffing needs, the elder council may extend and revoke at-will employment agreements to members of the church. Employees shall be under the general supervision of the elder council, but the elder council may have the employee report to someone other than an elder. The elder council shall present to each employee a written description of his or her duties and responsibilities.

Section 11.02 Working Arrangements with Employees

Salaries, other benefits, and vacations shall be fixed at the time of employment, presented to the employee in writing, and may be changed upon recommendation of the elder council. Compensation arrangements shall be reviewed by the elder council at least yearly when preparing the annual budget.

ARTICLE 12. MEETINGS

Not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another | Hebrews 10:25

Section 12.01 Worship

- 1) The church will meet every Sunday for worship and may schedule other meetings as deemed necessary unless unforeseen acts of God prevent such meetings.
- 2) The Lord's Supper will be observed at least once every two months. The first Sunday of each month is the normal time of observance.

Section 12.02 Business Meetings

- 1) Any ordinary matter of business requiring action by the church may be presented and acted upon at any scheduled meeting of the congregation.
- 2) Special business meetings of the church may be held at any time by order of the elder council or upon written request of a quorum. Such requests must be submitted to the elder council. The time and place of the meeting and the nature of the business to be acted upon shall be read at the regular services for two consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting.
- 3) The annual business meeting must be held on or before the first Sunday in February.
- 4) Quarterly business meetings are to be held in the months of April, July, and October.

Section 12.03 Voting Process for Business Meetings

- 1) A quorum consisting of at least twenty percent (20%) of the active membership and qualified to vote is required to vote on a matter of business as defined in these bylaws.
- 2) Ballots: Any ballot item must be announced during a designated church gathering, such as a worship service or business meeting, providing sufficient notice to the members of at least two Sundays prior to the business meeting allowing members to ask questions, seek clarification, or express concerns.
- 3) Announcement: During a business meeting the proposed matter for voting shall be announced or re-announced before a time of discussion and deliberation. Non-ballot items may be announced within a business meeting.
- 4) Discussion and deliberation: Following the announcement, members may ask questions, seek clarification, express concerns, and provide input on the matter being voted upon.
- 5) Motion: A motion is made by a member of the church, stating the specific proposal or action to be voted upon.
- 6) Second: Another member of the church seconds the motion, indicating their support and willingness to move forward with the vote.
- 7) Voting: The church conducts a vote to decide on the proposed matter. The method of voting is verbal yes or no unless otherwise stated to be by ballot.

- 8) Recording: The results of the vote, including the number of votes, if by ballot, in favor and against are recorded in the official minutes of the church meeting.
- 9) Any officer or elected position shall start their term the day after the annual business meeting which they were voted in.

ARTICLE 13. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. | Acts 2:44

Members of this church have no property rights and, upon termination of membership, shall be entitled to no interest in the assets. No part of the net earnings of the church shall be distributable to its members, elders, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation may pay for services rendered.

Section 13.01 Division

In the case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by these bylaws. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding, the question shall be submitted to the overseers of the Converge Heartland and their decision shall be final.

Section 13.02 Dissolution

Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all the assets of the Church, including its personal and real property, appurtenances, and effects, shall become the property of Converge Heartland or its successor or its parent organization; Converge Worldwide.

ARTICLE 14. MERGERS AND AFFILIATIONS

Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace | Ephesians 4:3

Any mergers or changes in affiliation, including a religious denomination, must receive the approval of the members by a two-thirds vote. Any recommended mergers or changes in affiliation must be announced to the church membership three months prior to a vote.

ARTICLE 15. AMENDMENTS

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven | Ecclesiastes 3:1

To amend these bylaws, the proposed changes must be presented and discussed at a quarterly or special business meeting. The presentation should occur at least three months before the voting meeting. Approval requires a two-thirds majority written vote at a special or regular business meeting.

- V1.0 – New Bylaws for Risen Hope Baptist Church
- V1.1 – Revised membership removal process, updated nominating team size requirements, and clarified the officer election timing