

THE CORNERS CHAPEL

CONSTITUTION AND APPENDICES

But all things should be done
decently and in order.
- 1 Corinthians 14:4

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PREAMBLE

We the members of The Corners Chapel, desiring to glorify God and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the ends of the Earth; recognizing the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Word of God; pursuing the unity Scripture demands; endeavoring, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to live in obedience to the Holy decrees of God, and eagerly awaiting our Lord's return; do hereby ordain and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit for the operation of our local church.

ARTICLE I: NAME

Section I – Name

The name of this church shall be "The Corners Chapel". The word "church" as used in this Constitution shall refer to The Corners Chapel, whereas the word "Church" shall refer to the Body and Bride of Christ.

Section II – Inception

The Corners Chapel was originally launched as one of the campuses of The Chapel (Akron, OH) on August 30, 2020. Formerly known as The Chapel Nordonio, the church was born as part of The Saturate Movement, a church planting initiative of The Chapel. In 2023, following a collective congregational vote across all the campuses, The Corners Chapel became an independent, non-profit religious organization, according to the laws of the State of Ohio.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Section I – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, and with the ultimate purpose of fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). It shall seek to attain this end through:

- A.** The public worship of God.
- B.** Seeing people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- C.** The preaching of the Scriptures.
- D.** Consistent Christian living by its members.
- E.** Personal evangelism.
- F.** Encouraging, supporting, and participating in local, domestic, and global missions work.
- G.** Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- H.** Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers.
- I.** Equipping believers through Bible instruction and study.
- J.** Any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture.

Section II – Mission Statement

Our mission is to see lives transformed by the Word of God so that all the corners of the Earth will know the name of Jesus. It is the desire of our church to see this mission expressed in a Gospel-centered, multi-ethnic, multi-generational congregation. To further its purposes, the mission may be articulated in any mission and vision statements unanimously agreed on by the Board of Elders of The Corners Chapel that are in accordance with the church constitution and doctrinal statement.

Section III – Incorporation

To implement this purpose and mission legally, the church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio, so that it may own, provide and/or maintain a place of worship (including suitable real estate and buildings); receive, hold and disburse gifts, bequests and funds; and/or do any and all things necessary or incident to carry on such purpose.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINE & STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section I – Essential Doctrine (The Gospel)

The Corners Chapel is a church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). While our Elders and those in teaching positions must annually affirm their agreement with our full Statement of Faith (below), all members must agree with these essentials of the faith:

1. There exists one Holy, perfect, triune God who is sovereign over all of creation. (Ps. 99:9, 103:19; John 14:26; Eph. 1:11; Rev. 4:8)
2. We are all born with an inherent sin nature, which leads to death. (Rom. 3:23, 6:23; 1 John 3:4)
3. Jesus Christ, who was and is fully God and fully man, lived a perfect life, died as a substitute for our sins and rose from the dead. (John 3:16; Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; Heb. 2:17)
4. We are saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone in Christ's sacrifice alone, for the Glory of God alone. (Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 1:3)
5. Believers should strive to live like Jesus, and we should strive to live for Jesus as his ambassadors now. (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Pet. 1:16)
6. Jesus will physically return and reign for all eternity. (Rev. 19:11-21)
7. The Bible, which reveals the aforementioned truths to us, is authoritative and without error. (2 Tim. 3:16)

Section II – Statement of Faith

We accept the Scriptures as our authority in matters of faith and practice and adopt the following Confession of Faith as our interpretation of Bible doctrine:

- I. We believe the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are verbally

- inspired by God and inerrant and infallible in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority. (Mat. 5:17,18; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; John 10:35; Luke 16:17; 2 Pet. 1:20,21; Heb. 1:8)
- II. We believe in one God eternally existing in one essence, yet three co-equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:1-2; Gen. 1:1, 26; Mat. 28:19; John 1:1, 15:26; 1 Pet. 1:2; Acts 5:3-4, 9)
- III. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth—from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things. (Gen. 1; 1 Cor. 8:6; Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36)
- IV. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, became man without ever ceasing to be God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life. (John 1:1-3, 10:30, 14:9; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 1:26-35; Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21)
- V. We believe that the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and is truly and eternally God. He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, convicting, and empowering the believer for godly living and service. (John 15:26; Mat. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:7-11)
- VI. We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in the image of God (having rational, moral, relational, and spiritual capacities) as an expression of God's eternal love, to live in God's perfect will. (Gen. 1:27; Mat. 12:36; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:17; Mark 12:29-31)
- VII. We believe that sin and death came into the world through the disobedience of Adam, and that all of mankind thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature. (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 3:9-18)
- VIII. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood and saved from God's righteous wrath. There is no other way to be saved. (2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 Cor. 15:22; John 1:29, 3:16; Eph. 2:1-10; Acts 4:12)
- IX. We believe that Jesus rose bodily from the grave on the third day after His crucifixion and ascended into Heaven, where He is enthroned at God's right hand as our Intercessor, High Priest, and Advocate. (Luke 24:5-6; John 20:20; Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:3-4, 7:25, 8:1-2)
- X. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and receive the gift of eternal life. This is a relationship in which they are eternally secure. (John 3:3-5, 16; 5:24; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 5:13)
- XI. We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, by which the child of God is conformed more and more into the image of Jesus Christ. This is a progressive experience in the life of the believer. (John 17:17, 19; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 John 3:5-9)
- XII. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people, the everlasting conscious suffering of the unsaved in hell, and the everlasting joyous fellowship of the saved in heaven. (Mat. 25:46; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15)

- XIII.** We believe that angels are created beings and, therefore, are not to be worshiped. Although they are of a completely different and higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve and worship God. (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:11-12)
- XIV.** We believe in the existence of a personal devil (Satan), who is still working in the world to destroy the souls of all mankind, and that he and all his angels (demons) and all who do not receive Christ as their Savior will eternally perish in the lake of fire. (Gen. 3:1-19; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Rev. 20:1-3, 10)
- XV.** We believe that all those who are truly born again are members of the global (or universal) Church, which began at Pentecost, and have been commissioned by Christ to go into all the world as witnesses, preaching the Gospel to all nations. (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:11-3:6; Mat. 28:18-20)
- XVI.** We believe that the local church, the visible expression of the global Church, is a local assembly of believers who gather regularly to worship God, to observe the ordinances, to be equipped through the Word of God, to pray, to fellowship, and to testify in word and deed to the good news of salvation both locally and globally. (1 Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25; Eph. 3:21; Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17; 1 John 1:3; Mat. 28:19)
- XVII.** We believe that Christ is head of the Church, and that the local church should be led by a plurality of male Elders and supported by the wise stewardship of God's people. (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5)
- XVIII.** We believe that baptism (following conversion) and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the Church and that they are a Scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age. (Mat. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:21; Mat. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23-30)
- XIX.** We believe that all members of the Church are members of one body that is the body of Christ, and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all ancillary differences and loving one another with a pure heart. (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 4:3, 13)
- XX.** We believe in the blessed hope, which is the physical, visible, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:11; Rev. 22:7; Mark 13:32-37; Mat. 24:22, 24, 29-51)

We believe that the foregoing are Bible doctrines; therefore, we stand firm upon this Confession of Faith. A further explanation of the doctrine is contained in our *Expanded Doctrinal Statement* [DF: *what exactly is this? "Our Doctrine Statement" on web site ([Doctrinal Statement & Statement of Faith](#)) does not contain the expanded material Chase originally put together to explain the above in more detail.*]. Furthermore, in unity with the historic Christian Church, we believe and confess the Apostles', Nicene, and Chalcedonian Creeds as accurate representations of Scripture's teaching.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section I - Qualifications

- A. Membership at the Corners Chapel shall be open to individuals who are 12 years old and older upon professing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting the membership covenant, and satisfactorily meeting the requirements set by the Board of Elders.
- B. Additionally, any individual seeking membership who is under the age of 16 must obtain parental/guardian approval and be vetted by the board of elders before beginning the membership process.
- C. Voting Eligibility: No member under the age of 16 shall be permitted to vote on church matters, including, but not limited to elections, resolutions, and amendments to the constitution.

Section II - Responsibilities

The responsibilities of church membership are defined in the membership covenant. The purpose and contents of the membership covenant as well as procedures for members' acceptance of and revising of the membership covenant are defined in Appendix C.

Section III - Discipline

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church. Any member of this church who teaches or insists on holding false doctrine, persistently conducts himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with Biblical teaching or persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church shall be dealt with in accordance with the process described in Appendix D which follows the Biblical pattern outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

Section IV - Termination

Membership may be terminated in one of the following ways:

- A. By transfer: When it is requested, the Board of Elders may grant a departing member in good standing a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The Board of Elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is, in their judgment, disloyal to the faith (Jude 3).
- B. By exclusion: If a member habitually absents himself from the worship service and church gatherings without valid reason, or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain contact with the church, he may be excluded from membership. If an excluded member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth in Section I of this Article will again be followed.
- C. By dismissal as a final step of church discipline, as outlined in Appendix D.
- D. By physical death.

ARTICLE V: QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH LEADERS

All persons who hold or desire any position of leadership (including but not limited to teachers, church staff, and church workers) must meet and maintain the following spiritual qualifications for such responsibilities:

- A. Is a member of The Corners Chapel. (Non-members may be invited to teach on a temporary basis.)
- B. Teaches no doctrine contrary to the Doctrine and Statement of Faith as put forth in the Constitution of The Corners Chapel.
- C. Is known for a dedicated Christian life according to the standards of God's Word, and will purposely put any sin, including divisive conduct and conversation, out of his or her life so that the resulting influence is helpful rather than a hindrance.
- D. Fulfills such specific Biblical requirements as may apply to the position of responsibility.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF THE LEAD PASTOR, ELDERS, AND STAFF

God has provided various forms of leadership for His Church. At The Corners Chapel, we recognize and seek to channel this leadership focus through a variety of positions, including Lead Pastor, Elders, and Staff. Those who serve and minister in these roles shall collectively and individually oversee, provide for, and encourage the spiritual life, welfare, and total ministry of the congregation to ensure the proper equipping of the saints for His service.

Section I - Duties of Lead Pastor:

As an Elder of this church the Lead Pastor shall:

- A. Give himself to prayer and the study of the Scriptures.
- B. Preach and expound the Scriptures.
- C. Arrange for coverage of his preaching duties in his absence.
- D. Administer the Ordinances in accordance with the Scriptures.
- E. Share in the pastoral care of the congregation along with the other Elders and members of the pastoral staff.
- F. Perform the marriage ceremony at his discretion in accordance with the laws of God and the State.
- G. Officiate at funerals of members of the church and nonmembers at his discretion.
- H. Together with the other Elders, maintain church discipline.
- I. Participate in the installation of newly elected Elders.
- J. Act as a voting ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
- K. Act as moderator at church business meetings.
- L. Administer day-to-day church affairs, including oversight of all church ministries, boards, and

staff.

- M.** Recommend for approval by the Board of Elders all pastoral and managerial staff hires or removals.
- N.** Oversee and approve of all hiring or removal of all other staff in accordance with the documented church policy.
- O.** Perform other constitutional, Scriptural, and general pastoral duties.

Section II - Duties of Elders

An Elder of this church shall be devoted to prayer and the study of the Scriptures and sustain a caring ministry for the flock as a relational shepherd, which involves:

- A.** Serving as a partner with the Lead Pastor for the church's spiritual growth.
- B.** Praying for and meeting with the members of the congregation.
- C.** Watching for and seeking to restore members of the church who have strayed away.
- D.** Holding firm to the trustworthy word of the Scriptures.
- E.** Teaching and instructing the church in sound doctrine.
- F.** Encouraging unity of the faith and knowledge of Christ leading to maturity in Him.
- G.** Recognizing and refuting false teachers for the protection of the church.
- H.** Leading by Christ-like example, which involves:
 - i. Consistently modeling spiritual character, attitudes, values, and behavior among the congregation.
 - ii. Providing and inviting the opportunity for frequent and ongoing contact with members of the congregation.
 - iii. Serving humbly, with willingness and eagerness, not under compulsion or for personal recognition or gain.

Section III - Duties of Staff

To perform such duties as are outlined by the Lead Pastor or Board of Elders and are in alignment with the Scriptures.

ARTICLE VII: GOVERNANCE

Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members and led by its Elders. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to vote on the election of the Board of Elders, thereby submitting themselves to the leadership of the Board of Elders.

Section I - Qualifications for the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders will consist of men who, in addition to meeting the qualifications for church leaders, have consistently demonstrated the following:

- A.** Qualifications as given in Scripture. (1 Tim. 3:1-13, 5:19-25; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; Acts

6:3-6)

- B. Adherence to the doctrinal basis of this church.
- C. Soundness in the faith and an ability to serve that has been examined and approved by the church.

Section II - Duties of the Board of Elders

To oversee the affairs of the church, which involves:

- A. Meeting regularly for prayer over the congregation.
- B. Being responsible for the employment, terms of employment, direction, and termination of employment of all pastoral staff.
- C. Installing the duly elected Pastor and/or Pastors.
- D. Approving subordinate organizations of the church.
- E. Approving all applicants for church membership.
- F. Maintaining the legal status of the church.
- G. Overseeing the stewardship and management of funds and approval of the budget of the church.
- H. Conducting the Annual and special business meetings of the church.
- I. Submitting the approved budget to the congregation at the Annual Business Meeting of the church.
- J. Approving nominations for the Board of Elders.
- K. Communicating to the congregation on a regular basis concerning the activities and concerns of the Elders.
- L. Performing other constitutional, Scriptural, and general duties of oversight.

Section III - Composition of the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of three members and a maximum to be determined by the Board. The number of Elders serving on the Board who are paid by the church shall be less than the number of unpaid Elders. Certain pastors may be chosen by the Board of Elders to serve without term limits, including but not limited to the Lead Pastor.

Section IV – Meetings of the Board of Elders

- A. Frequency
 - i. The Board of Elders will meet no less than once per month.
- B. Quorum
 - i. The Board of Elders may not conduct any business unless a majority of the nonpastoral Elders are present at a meeting. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, any matter requiring a vote by the Board of Elders shall be by a majority of the Elders present at a meeting at which a quorum exists. An Elder is considered present for the purposes of establishing a quorum if he participates using audio, video, or any other technological means that allows similar active participation.
- C. Action Taken Without a Meeting
 - i. The Board of Elders is authorized to vote on matters affecting the church outside of regularly scheduled or special meetings. The vote shall be conducted in writing, and each

Elder shall register his vote, for or against, or abstain from the resolution either in writing or by email or other similar mode of communication. The results of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes of the next regularly scheduled meeting. The affirmative vote of a majority of the Elders is necessary for the passage of any matter voted on using this method unless the Constitution otherwise requires a supermajority.

D. Conflicts of Interest

- i. All members of the Board of Elders are duty bound to disclose all conflicts of interest upon becoming aware of them. No member of the Board of Elders may vote on any action in which he has an interest, but he may be counted for the purposes of establishing or maintaining a quorum.

Section V - Term Limits for The Board of Elders

The term of office on the Board of Elders shall be for three years. An Elder may continue for a consecutive second term on the Board of Elders without an additional congregational vote. After that, an Elder shall not be eligible for election to the same office until after an interval of one year. A term on the Board of Elders shall commence and expire at midnight on the day of the Annual Business Meeting.

Section VI - Offices of the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall annually appoint officers of the church in accordance with state law. Each officer shall hold the office until the end of the fiscal year.

**ARTICLE VIII: NOMINATION AND SELECTION
OF LEAD PASTOR AND BOARD OF ELDERS**

Section I - The Lead Pastor

- A. When the role of Lead Pastor of this church becomes vacant, it shall be the duty of the Board of Elders, after prayerful consideration, to provide for the filling of the pulpit ad interim. The Board of Elders will then initiate the process for selection of the new Lead Pastor.
- B. Before the Board of Elders nominates a Lead Pastor:
 - i. The Board of Elders shall appoint a special Search Committee consisting of both men and women who are members of the church and representative of the total life of the church. The minimum number of members for this committee shall be three.
 - a) The committee shall bring only one name at a time to the Board of Elders, and no nominations shall be made except by the unanimous recommendation of the committee.
 - ii. Upon receiving a recommendation from the Search Committee, the Board of Elders shall review the recommendation, interview the applicant, and satisfy themselves of his

Scriptural, personal, and professional qualifications for the particular needs of the church.

- iii. In carrying out this process, the Board of Elders shall directly communicate to the congregation regularly and at reasonable intervals.
- C. When the Board of Elders is unanimous in its satisfaction with the candidate's qualifications and prayerfully concludes that he should be considered further, they shall arrange for one or more visits and speaking opportunities for the candidate with the congregation.
- D. After hosting the visits and speaking opportunities, if the Board of Elders is still unanimous in its determination that the candidate meets the necessary Scriptural, personal, and professional qualifications and has firm conviction that the candidate is the right choice for Lead Pastor of The Corners Chapel, they shall call a Special Business Meeting for the purpose of an official vote to affirm the candidate as the Lead Pastor.
 - i. This meeting shall be announced at least two Sundays in advance during the Sunday service.
 - ii. A period of at least two weeks shall be provided during which church members desiring to submit questions, comments, or suggestions concerning the individual being considered for nomination are encouraged to do so. These submissions must be entered in writing at least three days before the Special Business Meeting.
- E. The election and its returns shall be conducted and announced publicly at the election meeting and shall be communicated to all church members promptly. A three-fourths majority of all votes cast shall be required for an election.
- F. After the Lead Pastor has been duly elected by the congregation, the Board of Elders will extend an official offer to him.

Section II – The Board of Elders

A. Nomination and Evaluation of candidates for the Board of Elders

- i. Following the Annual Business Meeting, a month-long period determined by the Board of Elders may be announced wherein members of the congregation may nominate members for consideration as candidates for the Board of Elders.
 - a. Nominees must exhibit the biblical qualifications for elders as outlined in Article VII, section I, and be submitted using the Elder Nomination Form.
- ii. The Board of Elders shall oversee a prayerful and structured evaluation process, which may include personal assessments, theological questionnaires, interviews, development opportunities, and a season of discernment. The structure and timeline of this process may vary depending on church needs and at the discretion of the Board of Elders. Participation in this process does not guarantee advancement or installation.
- iii. The Board of Elders will determine which candidates advance to the Elder-In-Training phase. The number of candidates selected shall reflect the needs of the church at the

discernment of the current Board of Elders.

B. Elder-In-Training Phase

Prior to being presented for congregation affirmation, each candidate shall complete a period of intentional training and evaluation, referred to as the Elder-in-Training phase. This phase is designed to develop, assess, and affirm the nominee's readiness to serve in the role of elder.

C. Elder Board Vote

Upon completion of the Elder-in-Training phase, the current Board of Elders will vote on each candidate. Those selected will be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

D. Congregational Affirmation

New elder candidates shall be affirmed by a vote of the members at the Annual Business Meeting (or Special Business Meeting, if applicable). A three-fourths majority of members voting is required for affirmation.

E. Installation

Upon affirmation by the congregation, new elders shall be publicly commissioned at a Sunday worship service through prayer and the laying on of hands by the current elders.

F. Special Nominations

Should the need arise outside of the normal cycle, the Board of Elders may nominate additional candidates and call a Special Business Meeting for their consideration. Any questions concerning a nominee shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Elders at least one week prior to the scheduled Business meeting.

ARTICLE IX: RESIGNATION, REMOVAL, AND TERMINATION OF LEAD PASTOR, ELDERS, STAFF, AND LEADERS

Section I – The Lead Pastor

- A. Resignation.** When the Lead Pastor wishes to resign to pursue another ministry calling or for other personal reasons, he shall give the church three months' notice in writing of his intention to do so. If it is not deemed wise by the Board of Elders for him to continue his duties for the three months' period, he may be released anytime therein with the balance of his three months' pay due, except in a case of immorality or gross misconduct when he would be dismissed immediately without pay.

- B. Termination.** The Lead Pastor may be permanently removed by three-fourths vote of all members present at a Special Business Meeting called for that exclusive purpose. All members desiring to make a comment or suggestion as concerns the removal of the Lead Pastor shall do so in writing to the Board of Elders at least five business days in advance of said meeting. Removal shall be effective immediately upon the adoption of a motion terminating the pastor, but salary and benefits shall continue for no less than thirty days, except in the case of immorality or gross misconduct. Any resolution to dismiss may also contain recommendations concerning other financial aspects of the termination, including severance pay.
- i. The Board of Elders and the members shall make every effort to follow Biblical principles, including the process set forth in Matthew 18, in dealing with conflicts. An effort should be extended to permit reconciliation of conflicts in a manner consistent with our Christian faith and doctrine.

Section II - The Board of Elders

- A. Resignation.** The term of office shall be ended upon departure of the Elder from the church or by resignation from the Board of Elders.
- B. Termination.** Any two church members with reason to believe that a member of the Board of Elders should be dismissed from the Board should express such concern to the Board and, if not thereby resolved, to the members of the congregation at a church business meeting. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matt. 18:15–17 and 1 Tim. 5:17–21. Termination shall be decided by two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Elders at any regularly scheduled Board meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section III - Pastoral Staff

- A. Resignation.** A Pastoral staff member shall give the church two weeks' notice in writing of the intent to resign.
- B. Removal.** Pastoral staff may be removed by the Lead Pastor with approval of the Board of Elders. Unless due to misconduct, the staff member shall receive two weeks' notification of termination.

Section IV - Non-Pastoral Staff and Leaders

- A. Resignation.** A non-pastoral staff member shall give the church two weeks' notice in writing of the intent to resign. A non-staff leader is encouraged to provide church leaders with as much notice of the intent to resign as possible to allow time for identification of a replacement
- B. Removal.** Non-pastoral staff and leaders may be removed by the Lead Pastor in accordance with the documented church policy. Unless due to misconduct, the non-pastoral staff member shall receive two weeks' notification of termination.

ARTICLE X: CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

Only members of this church who are at least eighteen years of age shall have the right to vote in person or by absentee ballot at any business meeting of the church.

Section I – Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held on a Sunday in May.

- A. Written notification to the congregation shall be communicated at least four weeks prior to the meeting.
- B. This notification shall include a written agenda of business.

Section II – Special Business Meetings

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Board of Elders or the Lead Pastor at any time of the year.

- A. Written notification to the congregation shall be communicated at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XI: ASSETS AND PROPERTY/FINANCES/DISSOLUTION

- A. The church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and so hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Ohio and deemed necessary for the functioning of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, bill of sale, deed, or otherwise. All property shall be held in the name of the church.
- B. In case of division of the church caused by conflict (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), all property and assets of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution.
- C. In case of dissolution of the church organization, the property and all assets shall be sold, either through private or public sale. From the proceeds, firstly, all current and long-term obligations of the church shall be paid. Secondly, all remaining funds shall be directed to such one or more Christian organizations of like purpose and belief qualified under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of like purpose and belief, for the benefit of the church's supported missionaries and/or such other Christian endeavors as the congregation shall determine. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the congregation or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years.
- D. Any sale or other disposition of the church's facilities shall be approved by a majority of voting members of the church. All other real estate transactions shall be approved by majority vote of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XII: INDEMNIFICATION

The Corners Chapel will indemnify and hold harmless any and all officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, ministry leaders, and business administrators for any expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with any action, suit, or proceeding against said officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, ministry leaders, and business administrators. This indemnification shall include costs for attorney fees.

The indemnification shall occur as the expenses are incurred and in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, on receipt of the officer's, director's, Elder's, Minister's, Pastor's, ministry leader's, or business administrator's promise: (1) to repay the amount advanced if it is proved by clear and convincing evidence in court that the officer's, director's, Elder's, Minister's, Pastor's, ministry leader's, or business administrator's conduct involved a deliberate intent to injure the corporation's best interests, (2) to reasonably cooperate with the church in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

This indemnification shall be available to any officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, ministry leader, and/or business administrator who is made or thereafter to be made a part to any action, suit, or proceeding because of the person's relationship with the corporation. Persons who are officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, ministry leader, and/or business administrators at the time of being made a party, or threatened with being made a party, to any action, suit, or proceeding, or were officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, ministry leaders, and/or business administrators shall be allowed indemnification. Indemnification will also be available in criminal actions only if it is found that the officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, ministry leader, or business administrator had no reasonable cause to believe that the subject acts were unlawful.

ARTICLE XIII: STATEMENT OF POWER

Section I - Statement of Power of Constitution

This Constitution shall take effect immediately upon its ratification by a two-thirds vote of the members of The Corners Chapel. This Constitution shall remain in force as presently formulated or as duly amended according to Article XIV until this corporation is legally dissolved. This Constitution shall not be suspended or abrogated.

Section II - Statement of Power of Extra-Constitutional Church Documents

- A.** The Board of Elders may draft, approve, revise, and/or remove Bylaws as deemed necessary by the Board. Any official changes to the Bylaws must be approved by a simple majority vote of the members of the Board of Elders.
- B.** The Board of Elders shall approve, revise, and/or remove position papers, policies, and official documents which become the official positions, policies, and documents of the church, provided that they do not conflict with the Constitution of the Church. The Elders and the church administration shall maintain an updated Procedural Manual containing the Constitution and all current policies, position papers, and documents.
- C.** The Board of Elders shall regularly review the Bylaws and the Procedural Manual.

ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Articles of The Corners Chapel Constitution may be amended at any business meeting by a two-thirds majority of the members voting, provided that both the text of such an amendment and the basis for its consideration have been communicated and sent to all members at least 30 days in advance of any meeting at which such a proposal will be considered or voted upon.

Minor edits to the Appendices that do not alter the meaning of the text may be made by the Board of Elders at any time without notice. Any changes to the Appendices will be formally announced to the church membership and members may be asked to reaffirm the revised covenant.

All amendments to or revisions thereof shall be dated and attached to copies of the Constitution and Appendices and made available to the church members upon request.

Appendix A: Definitions

Business Meeting. A church Business Meeting is the gathering of members of The Corners Chapel for the express purpose of conducting the official business of the church. Such meetings shall take place when an appropriate Notice of Meeting has been communicated and a quorum is in place.

Elder. An Elder of The Corners Chapel is a man in the church who has spiritual authority in the church. The term “elder” is rooted in the Bible (the Greek word *presbýteros*), with Acts alone mentioning it about 20 times. Depending on the translation, an elder is often labeled an “overseer” in the Bible, although we can assume it refers to the same role.

Board of Elders. The Board of Elders consists of recognized Elders in the church who, having met the qualifications in Scripture and in Article VII.II, are elected by the congregation to lead the church for an appointed time. The goal of the Board is not to lead a church to become an efficient organization, as important as that may be. Rather, The Board should strive to lead church members toward maturity in Christ.

Gospel. The word “Gospel” means “good news.” It is the good news about who Jesus Christ is, what He has done, and how that changes everything for all who believe. While this is elaborated on in both Article III and our *Expanded Doctrinal Statement*, the term “Gospel” in our church shall refer to nothing less than the substitutionary death of Jesus, his burial, his literal resurrection, and his promise of restoration.

Lead Pastor. The Bible does not make a formal distinction between the Lead Pastor and the rest of the Elders, but instead seems to establish a formal parity. This means he has one vote among the Elders. He is an equal. The title of Lead Pastor of The Corners Chapel is given to the Elder who the congregation has selected as the primary teaching pastor for the congregation. Consequently, when it comes to his relationship with the rest of the Board of Elders, he is what is referred to as “the first among equals.”

Quorum. According to Robert’s Rules, the definition of a quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present at a properly called meeting in order to conduct business in the name of the group. A quorum should consist of a number that is as large as can be depended upon for being present at all meetings, when the weather is not exceptionally bad. The quorum of a meeting of The Corners Chapel congregation shall be not less than one tenth of the members. No meeting of fewer than three members shall be considered a congregational meeting.

Appendix B: Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage

GENDER

God immutably creates each human being as either male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image of God in mankind (Gen. 1:27, 2:18, 2:21-23). When individuals struggle with their identity as male or female, we believe that our duty is to lovingly support them in embracing this truth and finding contentment as God created them, not to encourage them in the deception that this reflection of God's image in them can be changed.

GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

God designed us as sexual beings, with the intent that this sexual relationship be exercised exclusively in a lifetime marriage between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:28, 2:23-24; Matt. 19:4-6). Throughout Scripture, we see God's exclusive design for the sexual relationship in marriage affirmed not only explicitly, but also implicitly. This includes condemnation of the sinfulness of any other form of sexual relationship, including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bestiality, and incest (Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:7-18; Lev. 18:23; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Additionally, the use of pornography is condemned due to the sinful thoughts engendered by it (Matt. 5:27-28). Given these clear teachings of Scripture, we are committed to encouraging marriage and strengthening marriage relationships for the good of individuals, families, and the church. Conversely, we do not recognize any other definition of marriage or condone any sexual practice contrary to its Scriptural definition. Even so, we know that there are some among us who are single, including those who are so by choice or calling, as well as those with a desire to be married. We are thankful for their presence in the church and their opportunity to have more of an undivided focus on the things of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-25). We also acknowledge the unique struggles they may face and are committed to helping them experience fullness of life in Christ.

DIVORCE

Divorce is not an acceptable position or action except in the case of infidelity or desertion of a non-believing spouse (Matt. 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:12-15). Even in those instances, divorce is not required, and reconciliation may be encouraged. We understand that these are extremely difficult situations and in some cases reconciliation may not be possible or recommended.

SEXUAL TEMPTATION AND SIN

We are committed to loving support of both married and single persons in facing sexual temptation, acknowledging that in His divine power God provides all that we need to live a godly life (2 Pet. 1:2-3), that He understands and will provide protection against temptation (1 Cor. 10:13), and that He gives us the help of other believers in standing against temptation (Gal. 6:12). However, when sexual sin does occur in a church member, the process of church discipline will be undertaken with the hope of bringing about repentance and restoration of relationship with one's family, the Lord, and His church.

All church policy shall be consistent with the aforementioned understanding of gender, sexuality, and marriage.

Appendix C: Explanation of Membership Covenant

The Corners Chapel Membership Covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

1. To clarify the Biblical obligations and expectations for both the Elders of The Corners Chapel and the individual members of The Corners Chapel.
2. To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for The Corners Chapel.
3. To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

Each of these functions is in accordance with the church's vision to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that The Corners Chapel would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

The membership covenant is formed and revised by The Board of Elders. Minor edits that do not alter the meaning of the text may be made by the Board at any time without notice. Any changes to the membership covenant will be formally announced to the church membership and members may be asked to reaffirm the revised covenant.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is generally defined as “a written agreement or promise, usually under seal, between two or more parties, especially for the performance of some action.” Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Gen. 6, 9, 15; Ezek. 20; Hos. 2; Jer. 31; Matt. 26), while others are solely between men (1 Sam. 18; 2 Sam. 5). In some covenants, one party binds himself or herself to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the agreement. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to adhere to the obligations. While God's covenant with the Church is an example of the former, the local church covenant represents the latter. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations.

The covenant of The Corners Chapel contains many conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether members of The Corners Chapel or another church, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ follower regardless of any failure on the part of the local church to live up to her covenant obligations.

If at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate church body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church Elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church's disobedience. In addition, personal circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her Elders, and her individual members, the covenant is first and foremost an acknowledgment of general Christian obligations and an agreement to enter into those duties for God's glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

I covenant to the following:

1. To submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues. (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)
2. To be supportive of the church by:
 - Not challenging the Doctrinal Statement of The Corners Chapel, being careful not to be divisive about any area of disagreement.
 - Submitting to the Board of Elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently striving for unity and peace within the church. (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5)
3. To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines. (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22)
4. To follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church by:
 - Being baptized after my conversion.
 - Regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through the Lord's Supper.
5. To regularly participate in the life of The Corners Chapel by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community, and serving those within and outside of this church. (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Titus 3:14)
6. To steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary. (Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Pet. 4:10-11)
7. To, by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:13-16, 4:1-3) by:
 - Striving to put sinful attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds.
 - Refraining from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish.
 - Taking seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another. (1 Cor. 8:1-13, Rom. 14:14-23)
8. To treat other members as brothers and sisters in Christ by:
 - Fellowshiping with them in Christian love.
 - Pursuing the peace and unity of the Body, refusing to involve ourselves in gossip and slander.
 - Praying with and for one another, sharing our burdens, sorrows, and joys.

- Looking for opportunities to meet one another's needs as the Lord provides means.
9. To submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
- Following the Biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another—the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
 - Receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached Biblically by fellow believers. (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Heb. 12:5-11)
10. To do the following when I sin:
- Confess my sin to God and to fellow believers. (James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10)
 - Repent and seek help to put my sin to death. (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5)
11. To endeavor by example, by work, and by prayer to win others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
12. To do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
- Notify church leadership.
 - Seek another church with which I can carry out my Biblical responsibilities as a believer.

Appendix D: Church Discipline – Purpose, Procedure, and Cautions

THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The church is the bride of Christ, set apart to be holy. “Just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Pet. 1:16) Discipline is an integral part of the way that God deals with His children and shows His love for them. “The Lord disciplines those He loves...” (Prov. 3:12a) “God disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness.” (Heb. 12:10b)

The word “discipline” comes from the Latin “discipulus,” meaning “student or pupil,” referring to that which corrects, molds or perfects. Discipline is a part of discipleship and includes training, exhortation, encouragement, and correction.

In this regard, “discipline” involves every aspect of the church’s ministry to help its members address sin and pursue holy living. There is positive or “formative discipline” that involves preaching, teaching, worship, prayer, Bible study, small group fellowship, service and other instructive and encouraging activities that help us to grow in truth and love. Just as in families, God has provided for “corrective” or “restorative discipline” in the church. When we sin or disobey God’s commands, He corrects us. One way He does this is to call the church, out of love for us, to seek after us and help guide us back to a right relationship with God and others. Restorative church discipline takes place in the context of community and involves warnings, admonishment, exhortation, and other corrective actions intended to help the person correct his or her sinful way.

These guidelines address the corrective or restorative church discipline process for The Corners Chapel. In general, the term “church discipline” below shall refer to restorative church discipline.

Church discipline is not an option but a command of Christ. There are at least three purposes or motivations of church discipline:

1. Love for the person motivates us to take action to seek restoration and reconciliation of the fallen Christian to a healthy relationship with Christ and others. (Matt. 18:12-15; 2 Cor. 2:5-11, 7:8-10; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 3:12; James 5:19-20)
2. Love for our Lord motivates us to guard and preserve the honor of Christ. (Rom. 2:24; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:12)
3. Love for the Church motivates us to protect the purity of the Church, the Bride of Christ. (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:6; Eph. 4:3, 5:27; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Pet. 3:14)

God, through Christ, is the great reconciler and restorer. Each believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ has been reconciled from hopeless sin to redeemed life with his or her Savior. This is evident in Scripture from passages such as Romans 5:10-11 and Colossians 1:21-23. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, God reaffirms this fact and also gives believers this ministry of reconciliation.

A common misconception is to measure success of church discipline by the response of the person involved as well as the church member’s support. It is important to realize that there are multiple purposes

of church discipline and that, unlike us, God considers success in terms of faithfulness to His Word regardless of the immediate results.

In contemplating the responsibility of the body in church discipline we recognize that all Christians sin. In most cases, however, the individual believer, either alone or in fellowship with other believers, deals with his or her sin through repentance and continues to grow in faith. In no way should the procedure outlined below usurp the ordinary sharpening process of individual believer to individual believer. Use of this procedure is expected in the case when the usual and ordinary methods have failed.

In considering what sins are to be subject to church discipline, the New Testament examples addressed sins that were publicly known or outwardly evident. This meant that Christ's Name was being dishonored, reproach was being brought on the church, and there was likelihood that others would be influenced by the sinful pattern of life.

In summary, the primary goal of church discipline is restoration -- not to throw people out of the church, not to embarrass people, and not to exercise authority or power in some un-Biblical way. Therefore, appropriate confidentiality in the early steps is important, and the circle of people involved should be as small as possible for as long as possible. Church discipline in the life of The Corners Chapel should follow the steps outlined below. Except in extenuating circumstances, the process should be followed with faithfulness and an expectation of the Holy Spirit to work through God's intended means.

THE PROCESS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

In Matthew 18:15-17, the Lord Jesus tells the church the basic steps of church discipline:

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

Jesus sets forth a four-step process for church discipline:

- A. Individual, private confrontation.
- B. Confrontation in the presence of two or more witnesses.
- C. Report of the transgression and transgressor to the church and disciplinary response by the church.
- D. Withdrawal of fellowship.

The following sections contain the specific processes that will be implemented by the church.

A. INDIVIDUAL CONFRONTATION (Step 1)

According to Matthew 18:15, the first step of discipline is for the offender to be confronted about his or her offense individually. In every case where a member has been wronged by another member, the offended member is required by Scripture to confront the offender, unless it is an offense that can be overlooked (Prov. 19:11). If the member has not first confronted the offending member individually, prior to reporting to an elder or pastor, the reporting member will be first required to confront the offending

member privately. If the situation is too volatile to allow a one-on-one confrontation, then designees of the Board of Elders (pastor or elder) shall be requested to accompany the offended member. If the offender confesses, asks forgiveness of the offended party(ies), and forsakes his or her sin, then further discipline should not be necessary.

B. GROUP CONFRONTATION (Step 2)

If the offender refuses to repent in response to individual confrontation, the offended member, in accordance with Matthew 18:16, should involve one or two other church members to approach the offender. This is both to reflect a more serious level of concern to the offender and to confirm every charge by two or three witnesses (2 Cor. 13:1). These other witnesses may also discern that the offended member is not being unreasonable. This provides some protection for all parties, including the alleged offender.

Depending on the responsiveness of the offender, multiple meetings and various approaches may be appropriate to encourage the offender to repent. If the offender continues to refuse to repent and the matter is too serious to overlook, it should be referred to an Elder of the church for consideration of formal church discipline.

C. DISCIPLINE BY THE CHURCH (Steps 3 and 4)

If the preceding steps of reconciliation have failed, in accordance with Matthew 18:17, the offender and the offense are then reported to the Elders as representatives of the Church (Step 3).

1. Behavior Subject to Discipline

Any action or behavior by a member of The Corners Chapel which is a flagrant contradiction of the teaching of Scripture, or an egregious, habitual sin of an outward, visible nature that violates the moral, ethical, or legal standards of the Scriptures (such as, but not limited to, sexual immorality in any of its forms, illegal or unethical business practices, contentious or divisive conduct, abusive behavior, or other actions deemed to be harmful to the name and testimony of Jesus Christ) is subject to church discipline.

2. Initiation of Discipline Process

Note: Repentance, as determined by the Board of Elders, at any step in the discipline process prior to removal from membership, shall end the church discipline process.

If the person reporting an offense was simply identifying a situation that may exist in which discipline may be necessary, then the Board of Elders must decide if further inquiry is necessary. To initiate the discipline process, an Elder will review with the Board of Elders the information and determine whether to refer the matter for investigation. The notifying person need not be the one who was wronged or a member of the church. The person, if a member, is told by the Elder or pastor to carefully and prayerfully consider the allegation, to go to the offending member first, and to remember that, should the allegation be unsubstantiated, the notifying person might be subject to discipline for slander.

If it is determined that inquiry is appropriate, an investigation will be initiated in a non-judgmental, prayerful, and open-minded manner to determine wrongdoing or to exonerate the accused, before

proceeding further with the church discipline process.

3. Selection of Disciplinary Panel

The Board of Elders shall select a Disciplinary Panel, which shall consist of church leaders and members considered appropriate by the Board of Elders. Generally, such a panel would consist of three members, including at least one member of the Board of Elders, and one or two other members deemed appropriate by the Elders. The Board of Elders may choose to not have anyone from the board on the Panel in which case they can appoint a Panel Moderator to be the primary interface with the Board of Elders. If a woman is the subject of church discipline, the Disciplinary Panel should include at least one female member.

4. Disciplinary Panel Process

When a matter has been referred to a Disciplinary Panel, then the Panel will seek to meet with the offender to hear his or her story and to encourage repentance where appropriate. If Group Confrontation from Step 2 has not taken place, then the Disciplinary Panel should serve in this capacity and go with the wronged person to confront the offender. If the offender repents, then further discipline should not be necessary.

If further investigation is necessary, then the Disciplinary Panel shall investigate, take evidence in whatever form it deems appropriate, and further confront the offender. If the offender is not willing to repent, but agrees to counseling or other appropriate remedies, then the Panel shall designate appropriate individuals to work with the offender and specify appropriate conditions. If no resolution is reached through the mediation within a reasonable time (generally no more than three months), then the Disciplinary Panel shall recommend an appropriate response to the Elders.

Contact with the offender should be by any and all appropriate means, including personal contact (visit, phone, email, text, etc.) and postal mail. If the offender is unresponsive to the attempts by the Disciplinary Panel, then letters on behalf of the Elders sent by postal mail with return receipt should be used. Unresponsiveness of the offender to the Panel will be evaluated in the Panel's recommendation to the Elders.

In identifying an appropriate response, the Disciplinary Panel should consider the specific nature of the sin, in light of Biblical authority. The Disciplinary Panel shall recommend an appropriate disciplinary action and provide any supporting evidence to the Board of Elders for approval and implementation. Such disciplinary action may range from a lesser action, such as a form of probationary membership where certain membership privileges are withheld (which may or may not be communicated to the church), all the way to full discipline—removing the offender from church membership.

5. Offender Appeal Process

The offender shall be given an opportunity to present any appropriate evidence or argument he or she deems helpful. The Disciplinary Panel shall have the opportunity to reply to the presentation of the offender.

Those desiring to address the Elders shall present to the Board of Elders at least 48 hours before the Elders' meeting a summary of the proposed presentation. The Chairman shall have the authority to rule upon whether any evidence or argument is inappropriate and shall establish appropriate time

frames and format for the presentations.

6. Board of Elder Actions

Should the Board of Elders approve further disciplinary action, then the identity of the offender and the offense shall be set forth at a Business Meeting of the church (Step 3). Such discipline should be added to the agenda and that portion of the meeting should be reserved for church members only. The Chairman of the Board of Elders, or his designee, shall announce that, should the offender refuse to repent during a specified thirty-day period, then he or she will be removed from church membership (Step 4). This time provides a last chance for the congregation to minister to and pray for the offender and to restore him or her before fellowship is broken (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

If the offending member repents, as determined by the Board of Elders, within the specified thirty-day period, then the discipline process is ended and the Chairman of the Board of Elders or his designee announces (or appears with the offending member) at the next Business Meeting of the church that repentance has occurred. However, if the member is removed from membership in the church, this action will be communicated to the church by the Board of Elders at the next business meeting of the church.

In Step 4, when the offender is removed from membership, Matthew 18:17b instructs the church to “let them be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” The term “Gentile” was primarily used to refer to non-Jews who were considered pagans and had no part of the covenant, worship, or social life of the Jews. However, a “tax collector” was often considered a traitor to his own people and was an outcast from the Jews by his actions. Jesus’ use of these terms does not mean that the church is to treat these people badly. They are to be treated as those outside the fellowship—who don’t identify with the church’s beliefs. Thus, they are not allowed to share in all the blessings and benefits of the church. For example, they would not be welcome to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Also, participation in various fellowship or ministry aspects of the church may be withheld as determined appropriate by the Elders. Such actions are not done to punish the offender, but to seek to awaken him or her to consider the cost of their sin. Therefore, such break in fellowship should be done prayerfully and in humility and love, but never with a spirit of self-righteousness. The church should pray for the offender as one in need of salvation, but also as one who has rejected the obedience required by the faith. Contacts with the offender should include loving encouragement to repent, in order to admonish and to point him or her to the Gospel.

7. Persistence of Church Discipline

The final steps (Steps 3 and 4--Disciplinary Panel involvement and intervention by the Board of Elders) cannot be circumvented by the offender voluntarily withdrawing or transferring membership since the offense occurred during their time as a member and is subject to the disciplinary action of the church. Furthermore, the congregation must be given an opportunity to minister to the member for restoration (see 1 Cor. 5:1-13). This step is vital to the health of our church given the impossibility of staying abreast of the activities of all other members. The membership must be made aware of members who have seriously stumbled and failed to repent and, if necessary, when church fellowship may be withdrawn. The church shall report any ongoing, unresolved, or unfavorable discipline proceeding to any church to which a member seeks to transfer membership.

8. Addressing Public Offenses – Alternative Discipline Procedure

As an alternative to the discipline procedure described above, any public offense, as determined by the Board of Elders, may require public confession of repentance at a regular business meeting of the church.

9. Restoration to Membership and Fellowship

Any person who has been removed from membership through the discipline procedure, who repents of the previously unresolved sin and desires again to become a member, must consult the Elders. With the concurrence of the Board of Elders, the person can apply for membership as any other new member. In celebration of such repentance, the Elders should announce (or appear with the offending member) at the next business meeting of the church that repentance has occurred and encourage the congregation to embrace the restored member.

CAUTIONS DURING CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. The church is not to extend discipline beyond its intended purpose. (2 Cor. 2:3)
2. Failure to forgive may result in:
 - a. The believer being swallowed up by too much sorrow. (2 Cor. 2:7)
 - b. Satan taking opportunity and advantage. (2 Cor. 2:11)
3. When exercising discipline, we must treat the offender as a family member, not an enemy. (2 Thess. 3:15)
4. Discipline must be exercised with impartiality. (See further down.)
5. God will bless the efforts of the church when we follow Biblical steps with the proper attitude.
6. All steps are to be made only with a desire for restoration and healing (Gal. 6:1-4). Nothing is ever to be done with punishment or revenge in mind; that is at God's discretion.
7. Restoration to public ministries should only be after a prescribed program of revived spiritual health and readiness to serve and be accepted as a leader and minister. Restoration does not always imply a return to teaching or public ministries.

RESULTS FROM FAILURE TO DISCIPLINE

Failure to discipline greatly hinders the testimony of the local church, particularly its influence and power for good. It is a curse and results in a process of corruption and spiritual decay. Within the sphere of grace, there must operate standards for faith and conduct.

THE PAIN OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The church is to expect the discipline process to be a grievous one. Discipline is never pleasant when administered, and the church must anticipate it to be painful at the time of its implementation. (Heb. 12)

IMPARTIALITY DURING CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The principle of impartiality requires that no member of the Disciplinary Panel have a particular interest in the matter under discussion. He or she cannot be a witness to or a victim of the alleged misconduct. In cases where the member is alleged to have done something or said something against the Pastor, the Pastor cannot serve on or be the Moderator of the Disciplinary Panel.

Anyone involved in the church discipline process shall have the duty to disclose their interest in a matter.

SELF DEFENSE OF INDIVIDUAL IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE PROCESS

An accused individual has the right to speak and to offer evidence in his or her own defense. The Individual shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting with the Disciplinary Panel by two Members who may act as observers during the hearing but who shall not be entitled to participate thereat.

Both the Individual and the Panel may call any witnesses or evidence that is relevant to the allegation being made. No party to the hearing shall be represented by legal counsel. However, either the Individual or the Board of Elders may require that the church, at the expense of the church, retain a lawyer or other person with experience in the law of evidence to act as an adjudicator to determine the admissibility of evidence presented before the hearing.

There shall be an equal allocation of time for the presentation of evidence by both the Panel and the Individual. The Panel may designate a time limitation on the hearing, provided that such limitation is applied equally to the presentation of evidence by both the Board of Elders and the Individual and provided further that notice of such limitation of time is first given to the Individual at least three (3) hours before the hearing is required to end.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As Christians, we want to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons. Church discipline is a good and helpful thing when it is done wisely and in accordance with the teaching of Scripture and the principles of natural justice. Done correctly, it is an expression of loving concern for our brother or sister in Christ. Done incorrectly, it exposes the church to the judgment and censor of the World.

May God be with us as we seek to live and love like Him, even though the process of church discipline.

Revision History		
Version Number	Date	Brief Description of Change
Final Draft	May 21, 2023	Approval by the Members of the Corners Chapel
Version 1.1	May 19, 2024	Membership Age Requirement Amendment Approved by Members of The Corners Chapel
Version 1.2	May 18, 2025	Elder-in-Training and Elder selection process approved by Members of The Corners Chapel
Version 1.3	05/15/2026	Add scripture references to Article III, Section II
Version 1.4	7/20/2026	Article X, Section I Amendment to “a Sunday in May”