

Constitution and Bylaws of Maranatha Bible Church

Adopted on January 23, 2022

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Article I: Name

The name of this church shall be "Maranatha Bible Church". It is incorporated in the State of Illinois as a religious non-profit organization. The word "church" as used in this Constitution shall refer to Maranatha Bible Church, whereas the word "Church" shall refer to the Body and Bride of Christ.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of Maranatha Bible Church, a religious organization, is to reach men, women, and children for our Lord Jesus Christ in Chicago and to the ends of the earth; help believers grow in Christian maturity; and equip believers for the work of the ministry.

As an independent, non-denominational local church, this Corporation prayerfully aims to exemplify the New Testament model of "how one ought to behave in the household of God." (1 Timothy 3:15). It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, the preaching of the Scriptures, consistent Christian living and service by its leaders and members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, and Christian education. (Ephesians 1:5-14; Colossians 1:9-10; Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:9-12).

Article III: Statement of Faith

The Scriptures:

We believe the Bible in its totality is God's sufficient and final revelation to mankind concerning the nature and character of God, saving knowledge, true religion, and obedience to His will. The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the only inspired, inerrant, and infallible rule of faith and practice (Proverbs 30:5-6; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We believe that the Word of God was ultimately authored by God and was given to mankind in its original form through the plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures testify that the Holy Spirit moved upon certain men to record divine revelation without error or fault, while maintaining their unique personalities and writing styles (2 Peter 1:20-21). We believe that the Bible is the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right, and governs all aspects of life (John 17:17).

God:

We believe there is only one living and true God who is an eternal, infinite, uncreated, and immutable Spirit (John 4:24). The Scriptures declare that God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent - perfect in all His attributes. He is one in essence yet exists in three persons, defined as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal roles but without division of nature, essence or being (Mathew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 13:14), and each equally deserving worship and obedience.

- a) *God the Father:* God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, is revealed to us as the Creator, Sustainer, and the Ruler of all things (1 Chronicles 29:11). His engagement with the universe is not limited to His initial acts of creation but to His continual provision of endless mercies and providential workings throughout human history (Psalm 145:9; Matthew 5:45). Though Sovereign over all, He is neither the author of evil nor approver of sin (1 Peter 1:16).

His fatherhood is recognized within His connection to the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. Although He is God over all flesh (Jeremiah 32:27), not all humans can relate to Him or experience Him as their spiritual Father. This right has only been granted to those who have been adopted into His spiritual family by receiving the Son through repentance and faith (John 1:12).

- b) *God the Son:* God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the exact imprint of the nature of God, meaning that He perfectly shares and displays the divine qualities and excellencies of the Father (Hebrews 1:3). It is through the Son that the Father created and is currently upholding and sustaining the universe (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:3).

Though eternal and uncreated, God the Son entered into the world fully human, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, yet was without sin (John 8:46; Galatians 4:4-5). The incarnation of the Son does not mean that He lost His divine nature or attributes but that He willfully surrendered His majesty and status of glory that He shared with the Father from eternity past for the sake of our salvation (John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9). The incarnation clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, being the only means of salvation for all by the shedding of His blood. After his salvific mission on earth was finished, God the Son resurrected bodily, ascended into heaven, and is currently seated at the right hand of the Father as our King and High Priest and will one day physically return to the earth to judge the living and the dead (Luke 24:39; Acts 1:11; Hebrews 4:14-16).

- c) *God the Holy Spirit:* God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is proven to be more than a powerful force or impersonal energy. He is a true divine person, possessing all the qualities of personality and deity which include His own mind (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), and emotions (Ephesians 4:30), while being described as omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent (Isaiah 40:13-14; Psalm 139:7-8; Acts 1:8).

The activity of the Holy Spirit includes His partnership with the Father and the Son in the work of creation (Job 33:4), the incarnation (Luke 1:35), the resurrection (Romans 8:11), and our sanctification (Ephesians 3:16). His engagement with the unregenerate is mainly defined by convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8), while He seals, indwells, empowers, transforms, and teaches those who have put their faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:13; 1 John 2:27).

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Son from the Father to glorify Christ on the earth (John 15:26; John 16:14). He does so by building up the Church as He administers gifts according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:11), and fills His people with His power for the sake of faithful witness by word and deed (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18).

Fall of Man:

We believe man was originally created by God in His own image, free from sin and corruption. God created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side, and together they were the historical, first parents of the entire human race (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:6; Genesis 2:21-23). It was through the temptation of Satan that Adam transgressed against God, causing our 'first parents' to fall from their original state of holiness and righteousness to one of rebellion and hostility against God. This act of rebellion caused the human race to be infected with a sin nature at birth, deserving the condemnation of God and the penalty of physical and spiritual death (Romans 5:12-19; Romans 6:23). Man is therefore born inherently corrupt with a disposition to break God's commands and laws, naturally walking in a way of life and mindset opposed to His word and His will (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 1:21; Romans 3:23; Romans 8:5-8).

Salvation:

We believe that salvation is the redemption of the entire individual (body, soul, and spirit) and is offered freely by the grace of God to those who repent and believe in the sacrificial and substitutionary life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The moment one genuinely repents and puts their faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross, they pass from death to life and are accepted by the Father as wholly justified. It is solely by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior that one may be saved from the judgment and wrath of God that rests on every human being (John 3:36; John 14:6; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10). Because of the sufficiency and finality of the finished work of Christ on the cross, those who are saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; Romans 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 1:24).

We believe that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Though it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, the Scriptures clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living (Romans 6:15-22; Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

The Church:

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is made up of born-again believers who have put their faith in Him. Although every Christian is joined to the spiritual Body of Christ, every believer is called to be a part of a local assembly for the purpose of accountability, discipleship, Christian service, hearing of God's word, corporate worship, prayer, and being equipped for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:11-14). We also believe the Church is distinct from the nation of Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; Ephesians 5:32).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the Church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated offices serving under Christ and over the assembly are the elders (also referenced as bishops, pastors, and shepherds (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)) and the deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

Baptism:

We believe baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, calling every believer to identify with His death, burial, and resurrection by being fully immersed in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-4). This ordinance is an outward sign of giving oneself to God and walking in the newness of life found in Christ (Acts 2:38).

The Lord's Supper:

We believe the Lord's Supper, also called Communion, is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, expressed by the eating of bread and the drinking of the cup for the sake of remembering the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. It has in no sense a sanctifying or saving work, but is designed to commemorate His death, creating a heart of thanksgiving and joy in the believer (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42), and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). Whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16). We also believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance open exclusively to those who have repented and put their faith in Christ, and is not open to those who do not believe the Gospel according to the Scriptures.

Death and Resurrection:

We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation

6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11; Romans 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15). We believe that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Great Tribulation:

We believe that the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world during a seven-year period (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

Second Coming and Millennial Reign:

We believe after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; Acts 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26), but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29). This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

Eternity:

We believe that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-21). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Marriage and Sexuality:

We believe that marriage was given by God as part of His common grace and that it has no meaning other than as He has provided (Genesis 2:18-24). The term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:23-24).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Hebrews 13:4). Any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to physically change one's sex or to deny one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Leviticus 18:1-30; Matthew 5:28; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1 and 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Maranatha Bible Church as the local Body of Christ and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is required that all persons employed by the church or who serve as volunteers in any capacity abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

Article IV: Board of Elders

The New Testament records a pattern for the local church to be governed by a plurality of biblically qualified elders. The Scriptures also teach that the role of an elder is synonymous with the role of a pastor (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4). These elders are called to shepherd God's people, to teach believers the Word of God, to set an example for the saints, to serve among the fold, to oversee the various ministries, and to keep watch over the souls of those who are under their care. Maranatha Bible Church will be governed by a Board of Elders, consisting of biblically qualified men, that exercises final authority on all spiritual, financial, administrative, and legal matters pertaining to this local body.

Section 1: Powers and Duties

All the activities and affairs of the church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to these same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Board of Elders shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated by these Bylaws:

- a) To select and remove all the officers, agents, Deacons, staff, members, and employees of the church; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- b) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the church as are required to fulfill the purposes of this church as are more fully set out in the Articles of Incorporation, thereof and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the church and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws, as they may deem best.
- c) To establish, review, and update as necessary the operating procedures and policies for the functioning of the church buildings, ministries, and operations to ensure physical, spiritual, and ecclesiastical security.
- d) To assist the Pastor-Teacher in the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- e) To annually review the Constitution and Bylaws with the Deacons and Ministry Team Leaders.

Section 2: Qualifications of Elders

Each member of the Board of Elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. He shall be:

- a) Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6–7)
- b) Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- c) Sound in mind (1 Timothy 3:2)
- d) Exemplifying self-discipline in all matters (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- e) Of good behavior; orderly, respectable in speech and conduct (1 Timothy 3:2)
- f) Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- g) Able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- h) Sober with alcohol and other substances (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- i) Not violent; not quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- j) Patient, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)
- k) Not physically aggressive; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered (1 Timothy

3:3; Titus 1:7)

- l) Not covetous; not a lover of money (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- m) Rules well his own house; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7)
- n) Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- o) Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- p) Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- q) A lover of good men and things (Titus 1:8)
- r) Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)

Section 3: Nomination, Selection, and Tenure of Office

Potential elders are recognized and appointed by the Board of Elders of Maranatha Bible Church. The Scriptures indicate that the established leaders of the church are those who identify and appoint future leadership (Acts 14:32, 2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5), though potential elders may be recommended by church members. The term of an elder is lifelong unless an elder chooses to resign from his position or is removed from his position for the reasons stated in Section 4 and Section 5, as seen below. The name of any man that the Board of Elders is considering to appoint as an elder shall be disclosed to the congregation at least one month before the Board of Elders makes such an appointment. All newly appointed elders shall be publicly ordained before the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service.

Section 4: Resignation of an Elder

An Elder may choose to resign from his position but must provide to the Board of Elders a written notice one month in advance. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected by the Board of Elders before that time.

Section 5: Removal of an Elder

Any Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated, spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9), or teaches anything contrary to the Statement of Faith, the Constitution and Bylaws, or the Distinctives of the church. Such a removal must be preceded by a thorough corroborating investigation by the Elders, in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15–18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. When an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20. Any decision by the Board of Elders to remove a current Elder must be unanimous, in accord with Article IV, Section 8 of these Bylaws, with the exception of the Elder subject to removal.

Section 6: Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held without call or notice on the evening of the first Sunday of each month unless otherwise modified by the Board.

Section 7: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called at any time by order of a majority of the Board of Elders. Special meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held upon at least a forty-eight-hour notice given personally or by telephone, email or other similar means of communication to all members of the Board of Elders.

Section 8: Decisions of the Board of Elders

All decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself. If no unanimous decision can initially be made, then the Board of Elders will continue to seek the Lord in prayer, other meetings will be held, and the issue will be discussed again. As a final resort, the counsel of other spiritual leaders may be sought.

Section 9: Fees and Compensation

Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services (except for the Pastor-Teacher). However, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any Elders from serving the church in any other capacity and receiving compensation in that capacity. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Maranatha Bible Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

Article V: Board of Officers

Section 1: Officers

All members of the Board of Elders shall also be deemed Directors of the Corporation. Designated Elders shall serve as the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, and Secretary of the Corporation, while a church member (who may or may not be an Elder) with the worthy skills and character shall serve as Treasurer of the Corporation. A minimum of three Elders, including those serving as Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary, as well as the Treasurer shall constitute the Board of Officers of the Corporation. The officer positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be chosen by the Board of Elders on an annual basis with no limitation on individuals serving indefinite, consecutive terms.

Section 2: The Chairman

The Chairman shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation and, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, shall have general supervision, direction, and control of the activities and officers of the Corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Elders, which are to be conducted according to the scriptural principles such as set forth in Philippians 2:2–8. He shall be an ex officio member of all the standing committees, if any, and shall have powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders or the Bylaws.

Section 3: Vice-Chairman

In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, shall perform all the duties of the Chairman, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chairman. The Vice-Chairman shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed for him by the Board of Elders or the Bylaws.

Section 4: Secretary

The Secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, shall keep, or cause to be kept, a book of minutes at the principal office or such other place as the Board of Elders may order, of all meetings of church members, the Board of Elders, and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at the meetings, the Board of Elders and committees' meetings, and the proceedings thereof. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office in the State of Illinois the original and a copy of the Corporation's Articles and Bylaws, as amended to date. The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the Board of Elders and any committees thereof required by these Bylaws or by law to be given, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Elders. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Corporation, a church membership register, or a duplicated membership register, showing the names of church members and their addresses.

Section 5: The Treasurer

The Treasurer, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the Corporation, "that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man." (2 Corinthians 8:20–21). The Treasurer shall ensure that all financial activities and transactions are consistent with the Bylaws as well all applicable State and Federal Law. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any current Elder.

The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the unanimous decision of the Board of Elders. The Treasurer shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board of Elders, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the Chairman and the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders. The Treasurer shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports at each regular Board of Elders meeting and at any meetings of church members where such financial reports are to be provided.

Article VI: The Pastor-Teacher

Section 1: Election

The Pastor-Teacher shall be selected and confirmed by the Board of Elders at its sole discretion. He shall remain in office an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: after a thorough investigation by the Board of Elders, the Pastor-Teacher has disqualified himself in a noteworthy manner according to the Scriptures and/or Section 5 of Article IV. The Pastor-Teacher must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor-Teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor-Teacher and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

Section 2: Duties

The Pastor-Teacher shall be an ex officio member of all councils and committees, and he shall be responsible to the Board of Elders. The Pastor-Teacher shall arrange for and conduct all public and regular services of the church, shall be the main teacher of the church, and shall be responsible with the Board of Elders for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church. In the absence of the Pastor-Teacher, the Board of Elders shall be responsible to arrange for the public and regular services of the church.

The Pastor-Teacher shall be free to accept invitations to preach the Word of God to other groups or organizations, provided such engagements do not interfere with the work of the church. Before accepting invitations to speak for other groups which require his absence from the church and its activities, the Pastor-Teacher shall consult with the Board of Elders and obtain its permission.

The Pastor-Teacher also retains all the rights to intellectual property that he creates in the form of sermons, interviews, blogs, books, and writings of various kinds. If he chooses to either resign or if he is removed, the intellectual property of the Pastor-Teacher shall not be used by the church unless authorized by the Pastor-Teacher.

Article VII: Deacons and Ministry Teams

Section 1: Deacons

The Deacons shall consist of men possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and shall be selected among church members annually by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall post a written notice in January of each year of the deacons serving that year and will also announce the deacons who have been selected during the first Sunday worship service of the new year.

The Deacons shall serve for a term of one year, though they may be reelected for the following year(s). The Deacons shall assist the Board of Elders by exercising general practical oversight of the Ministry Teams, help the Pastor-Teacher at communion and baptismal services, aid in logistical affairs, help manage the facility, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. A Deacon shall be a man of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach.

Section 2: Ministry Teams

The Ministry Teams are composed of church members and regular attenders who have dedicated their gifts to voluntarily serve in various ministries within the church, which include but are not limited to: ushering, hospitality, media, music, Sunday school, youth group, etc. Each ministry will have a Team Leader (who is a church member approved by the Board of Elders) who will be responsible for organizing the ministry they are assigned to, while also working under the general practical oversight of the Deacons. The Board of Elders will hold meetings with the Ministry Team leaders and the Deacons at least twice a year on a day that will be announced in advance. A notice will go forth during a regularly-held worship service and via email/social media platforms to prepare representatives for the meeting. These gatherings will be dedicated to prayer, communication, and future planning with the Board of Elders to ensure the organization, focus, and development of these ministries.

Article VIII: Church Membership

Section 1: Purpose of the Fellowship

The congregation of Christian believers who have applied for church membership and have been duly accepted shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in the Scriptures.

Section 2: Qualifications for Membership

Those seeking membership must, through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as

personal Lord and Savior, having been evidenced by giving of that testimony to an Elder.

- a) They must be at least 18 years old and renounce sin and endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord.
- b) They must have regularly attended Maranatha Bible Church for at least six months.
- c) They must have been water baptized following a profession of faith as a believer in Christ as Lord and Savior.
- d) They must be willing for the Board of Elders to contact any previous churches that applicants have attended.
- e) Prior to becoming a member, the Board of Elders shall interview all prospective members and may require class(es) in doctrine, polity, and vision of Maranatha Bible Church.
- f) The Board of Elders will prayerfully discern requests for membership, which will be granted upon approval of the Board of Elders and upon the candidate signing the membership covenant.

Section 3: Duties and Privileges of Members

On becoming a member of Maranatha Bible Church, each member covenants to love, honor, and esteem the Elders of this church; to pray for them; to recognize their authority in the spiritual and day-to-day affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, word, and deed, as well as to give time, talents, and treasure as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to affirm the beliefs and practices of the church through a lifestyle that honors Christ. Only church members shall be considered for the roles of Ministry Team Leaders, Deacons, or Elders.

Section 4: Voting

Membership in this church shall not vest in any church member any proprietary rights in the Corporation but shall only entitle the church member to vote at a meeting of the church members on those matters that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for affirmation. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to church members who are in good standing and are not under any disciplinary action.

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 5: Applications for Membership

All requests for membership shall be made to an Elder. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws with the Statement of Faith and the church Distinctives included. An Elder or Elders shall meet with the applicant following receipt of the application. Each applicant shall assent to the

Statement of Faith and Distinctives, subscribe to the Constitution and Bylaws, and shall testify publicly before the Board of Elders at a special meeting for prospective church members. Any questions about or disagreements with the Statement of Faith, Distinctives, or Constitution and Bylaws must be indicated on the membership application.

Section 6: Denial of Membership

If upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective church member, the Board of Elders determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, or holds to unsound doctrine as determined by the Board of Elders, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Board of Elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

Section 7: Admission of Applicants

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the Pastor-Teacher and Board of Elders, at which service such applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as church members. Approved applicants shall also sign a covenant agreement that will be held on record for the church.

Section 8: Church Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

- a) Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15–18.

Before such dismissal, however, (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning church member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders determines—after a thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15–18 and 1 Timothy 5:19—that there is corroborating evidence that the

erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Board of Elders shall inform the church at a special meeting called by the Board of Elders with active members of Maranatha Bible Church in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance.

If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given to the members of the church. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a special meeting with members of the church. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

- b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church thereof at a special meeting for the members in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:
 - i) Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole church (1 Corinthians 5:1–5)
 - ii) Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the Board of Elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the Board of Elders (Romans 16:17); or
 - iii) Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10–11).
- c) The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members of this church who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by church members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

Section 9: Termination of Membership

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Board of Elders, a church member, non-member regular attendee, or other individuals may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a

period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Board of Elders, the names of any church members who have not attended a worship service, Bible Study session, or Fellowship Group meetings at Maranatha Bible Church for a period of six months or longer may be removed from the membership rolls.

The membership of any individual member shall be terminated if the member, in a spirit of dissension, actively engages in secretive discussions and/or intentionally organizes secretive meetings in a concerted effort to overthrow the Pastor-Teacher or present church leadership. This provision shall not inhibit the ability of members to openly address grievances.

No member of this church may hold a formal membership in another church, since membership identifies the individual with a local body of believers for the purposes of spiritual authority and accountability.

Section 10: Special Meetings of Church Members

Special meetings of church members may be called at any time by order of the Pastor-Teacher or the Board of Elders. The functioning of the church requires that members participate in church meetings. We function best when we pray together, seek God's will, and act accordingly. Church meetings should be celebrations of what God is doing in our midst and opportunities for open communication in a spirit of unity and trust.

Section 11: Annual Meeting of Church Members

An annual meeting will be held for all church members for the purposes of presenting the updated church budget, ministry updates, potential questions to be answered, and corporate worship and prayer.

Section 12: Notice of Meetings

Notice of the annual meeting and special meetings of church members shall be given from the pulpit at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Article IX: Corporate Records and Reports

Section 1: Records

The Corporation shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business in the State of Illinois, as fixed by the Board of Elders from time to time.

Section 2: Inspection of Books and Records

Every current Elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind, and the physical properties of the Corporation, and also of its subsidiary organizations if any.

Section 3: Fiscal Year of the Corporation

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on January 1st and end on December 31st.

Article X: Amendments

Section 1: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended and new and additional Bylaws may be made from time to time at any time by the Board of Elders in the exercise of the power granted to said Board of Elders in these Bylaws. Any updates will also be announced to the church members at a regular worship service, or a special meeting, depending on the nature of the change.

Section 2: Record of Amendments

Whenever an amendment or new Bylaw is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Bylaws, in the appropriate place. If any Bylaw is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in said book.

Article XI: Dissolution

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, the Board of Elders shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to another Corporation with purposes similar to that identified in Article II of these Bylaws and Article IV of the Articles of Incorporation as amended.

Article XII: Other Provisions

Section 1: Conflicts of Interest

All Officers, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and Ministry Team Leaders of Maranatha Bible Church should scrupulously avoid transactions involving the church in which the Officer, Pastor, Elder, Deacon, or Ministry Team Leader has a personal or material financial interest, including transactions between the church and entities in which the church Officer, Pastor, Elder, Deacon, or Ministry Team Leader is an owner, officer, director, or general partner unless full disclosure is

made to the Board of Elders and adequate steps are taken to avoid self-dealing or prejudice to the church or the appearance thereof.

Section 2: Confidentiality

Maranatha Bible Church Officers, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and Ministry Team Leaders who obtain non-public information in the course of performing their duties shall make a reasonable effort to prevent its disclosure beyond those who have a need to know such information in order to effectively carry out their church-related responsibilities.

Non-public information may be disclosed when necessary in order to effectively carry out the functions of the church; seek advice or counsel from a person within or outside the church in carrying out a church function; prevent or reduce the risk of imminent danger of serious harm to any person; perform church discipline or other functions authorized by this Constitution and Bylaws; or comply with the law.

Information otherwise regarded as confidential or non-public may be disclosed if its designation as confidential or non-public is removed by the Board of Elders.

Section 3: Severability

If any provision of this Constitution and Bylaws or any application thereof is determined by any court, tribunal, administrative agency, or other competent supervisory authority, to be invalid, unenforceable, or contrary to applicable law or public policy, the remainder of this Constitution and Bylaws, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.