

CONSTITUTION OF CHAGRIN VALLEY CHAPEL

An Ohio Nonprofit Corporation

DRAFT for adoption by the Founding Trustees

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Preamble

Chagrin Valley Chapel (the “Church”) exists to glorify God, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and to build up His people through the Word, prayer, the ordinances, and mutual love. This Constitution sets the Church’s governing order under the headship of Christ, who alone is Lord of His Church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22–23). It is to be read in submission to Holy Scripture (i.e., the Bible, meaning the sixty-six (66) canonical books of the Old and New Testaments), the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Article I — Name and Incorporation

The name of this organization is Chagrin Valley Chapel (the “Corporation” or the “Church”). The Church is incorporated under Chapter 1702 of the Ohio Revised Code as a nonprofit corporation. This Constitution is adopted under, and shall be read consistently with, the Church’s Articles of Incorporation; in the event of a direct conflict between this Constitution and the Articles of Incorporation on a matter governed by Ohio law, the Articles of Incorporation control, and the Church shall promptly conform the two.

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”), and intends to be recognized as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) (including by application on IRS Form 1023 or 1023-EZ). Notwithstanding any other provision, the Church shall not carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. The distribution of assets on dissolution is governed by Article XV.

Article II — Purpose; Replacement of the Bylaws

The purposes of this Constitution are to provide the legal and biblical framework for the governance of the Church, to order the admission and discipline of members, and to order the recognition, affirmation, and oversight of the Church’s officers.

Upon adoption by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Founding Trustees, this Constitution amends, restates, supersedes, and replaces in their entirety the First Amended & Restated Bylaws of the Church. This Constitution is the “Constitution” referred to in the Bylaws, and the Statement of Faith set forth in Schedule I (incorporated by Article IV) is the “Statement of Faith” referred to in the Bylaws.

Article III — Authority

The Church is subject to the Lord Jesus Christ as His will is revealed in Scripture. Under Christ, the Elders are the governing body of the Church, leading, teaching, and shepherding the congregation. The Elders shall serve and communicate diligently with the members and shall be attentive to the needs of the congregation as those needs align with Scripture.

The gathered membership retains those matters reserved to the congregation by this Constitution — chiefly the affirmation of the Church’s officers, the amendment of this Constitution and the Statement

of Faith, and the approval of dissolution. The reserved authority of the congregation is principally the authority to **affirm**; the ordinary leadership, oversight, and administration of the Church belong to the Elders.¹

Article IV — Statement of Faith

The doctrinal confession of the Church is the Statement of Faith set forth in **Schedule I** and incorporated herein by reference. The Statement of Faith is not reproduced in the body of this Constitution; it has the same force and effect as if fully set forth herein, and may be amended only as provided in Article XII (eighty percent (80%) vote; thirty (30) days' notice).

Article V — Membership

Section 1 — Eligibility

A candidate is eligible for membership who (a) makes a credible profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and has received baptism; (b) affirms the Statement of Faith; (c) agrees to the Statement of Commitment; and (d) agrees to abide by this Constitution.

Section 2 — Statement of Commitment

Members who are eighteen (18) years or older have voting privileges. Each member affirms the following Statement of Commitment:

Having trusted in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and having affirmed the faith of this church, I covenant with God and with this congregation that, relying upon the Holy Spirit:

- 1. I will pursue a life of holiness, repentance, and obedience to Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 7:1).*
- 2. I will seek the unity of the Spirit in all things by avoiding gossip and other sins of the tongue (Ephesians 4:3).*
- 3. I will resolve conflict biblically according to Matthew 18:15–17.*
- 4. I will seek to be thoughtful and courteous to one another, to be slow to take offense, and to be quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).*
- 5. I will encourage and pray with and for one another, sharing my burdens, sorrows, and joys, and bearing others' burdens, sorrows, and joys (Romans 12:15; James 5:16).*
- 6. I will faithfully gather with this church for worship, fellowship, prayer, and the ministry of God's Word (Acts 2:42).*
- 7. I will use my spiritual gifts, abilities, and opportunities to serve, encourage, and edify the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:10–11).*

¹See the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 26.8–26.9 (officers chosen “by the common suffrage of the church itself”); the Cambridge Platform (1648), chs. VIII–X.

8. *I will contribute, as the Lord directs, to the financial support of the church, and give through faithful stewardship of my time, talents, and other resources (2 Corinthians 9:6–15; Luke 16:10–11).*
9. *I will respect and support the biblical leadership established by Christ for His church, and will honor and pray for the church leadership God has established, sharing my praises and concerns with them (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Hebrews 13:17).*
10. *I will engage regularly in personal Bible reading and prayer (1 Peter 2:1–2; Matthew 6:9–15).*
11. *I will bring up my children, as may be entrusted in my care, in the way of the Lord (Ephesians 6:2–4).*
12. *I will not forsake the assembly of myself together with other believers at Chagrin Valley Chapel (Hebrews 10:24–25).*
13. *I will endeavor to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the unsaved (Acts 1:8).*
14. *I will purpose that when I remove myself from this place, I will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where I can carry out the spirit of this Statement of Commitment and the principles of God's Word.*

Section 3 — Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is to restore an erring member (Galatians 6:1), to maintain the purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6), and to deter sin (1 Timothy 5:20). A member who teaches or persists in false doctrine, or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church, shall be subject to discipline. The steps of Matthew 18:15–18 shall be followed progressively until repentance and restoration:

1. A member who knows of the sin shall warn and correct the erring member privately, seeking repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). If the member repents, forgiveness is granted; if not,
2. the warning member shall go again, accompanied by one or two others who confirm the matter (Matthew 18:16). If the member repents, forgiveness is granted; if not,
3. the matter shall be brought to the Elders, who, after prayerful investigation, shall inform the congregation so that the church may call the erring member to repentance (Matthew 18:17). If the member repents, forgiveness is granted; if not,
4. the Elders shall inform the congregation that the member is removed from membership and is to be regarded as outside the fellowship (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11–13).

There shall be no appeal to the civil courts arising from any discipline or any statement made to the congregation in the course of discipline (1 Corinthians 6:1–8). Discipline continues to conclusion even if the member withdraws. A disciplined person who repents and requests reinstatement before the Elders shall be publicly restored (2 Corinthians 2:5–11).

Section 4 — Termination of Membership

Membership terminates: (a) by death; (b) by written request, upon the Elders' written response (not to be used to evade discipline); (c) by inactivity, upon one (1) year of non-attendance (after six (6) months of non-attendance a member may be placed on an inactive, non-voting list and notified); or (d) by dismissal as the final step of discipline.

Section 5 — Sanctioning of Members

In place of recognition by a sending church, the members of the Church shall be sanctioned (formally recognized) by the Commissioning Council at the Service of Commissioning, together with the sanctioning of the Church and its Elders, as provided in Article VII.

Section 6 — Admission of Members During the Transition Period

During the Transition Period (Article X), and notwithstanding the ordinary procedure below, members shall be admitted as follows: a candidate is examined by a Staff Pastor and one or more other qualified pastors or elders selected by the Founding Trustees; upon a favorable examination the candidate is admitted to membership; no congregational affirmation vote is required. During the Transition Period the publication step of the ordinary procedure does not apply, and no further approval by the Founding Trustees is required. Not fewer than twenty (20) voting members shall be admitted as a condition of the Transition (Article X).

After the Transition, candidates are examined by at least two (2) Elders and the candidacy is published to the congregation for not less than two (2) weeks for congregational input, after which the Elders admit the candidate to membership. The admission of members is not decided by a congregational vote.

Article VI — Elders

Section 1 — The Office of Elder

The government of the Church is vested in a plurality of Elders. The New Testament uses “elder,” “overseer,” and “pastor” for one office; all Elders are pastors and all pastors who govern are Elders (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1–2).²

No person holds the title “pastor” or exercises an Elder’s vote until he has been examined, affirmed by the congregation, and ordained as an Elder under this Article and Article VII. Employment as pastoral staff does not by itself confer the office of Elder or the right to vote.

The Church may employ qualified pastoral staff (“Staff Pastors”). A “Staff Pastor” is any pastor employed by the Church, whether designated as interim, senior, associate, assistant, or otherwise; the current interim pastor is a Staff Pastor. A Staff Pastor may be a non-Elder or an Elder; the Senior Pastor must be an Elder (Section 6). A Staff Pastor who is not an Elder serves under the oversight of the Elders, does not vote as an Elder, and does not exercise the governing authority of an Elder. Titles for staff who are not Elders should be chosen carefully (for example, “Ministry Director” or “Associate Staff”) so as not to

²See the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 26.8–9.

imply the office of Elder. No Elder — including any Elder who chairs or otherwise serves as an officer of the Board of Elders — has a casting or tie-breaking vote; the Elders are equal in authority.

Section 2 — Qualifications

Elders shall be men who meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:5–9, and 1 Peter 5:1–4; who affirm the Statement of Faith; and whose fitness has been examined and affirmed as provided in this Article and Article VII.

Section 3 — Duties of the Elders

The Elders shall:

1. teach and guard sound doctrine and refute error (Acts 20:28–31; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9);
2. devote themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4);
3. lead by Christ-like example (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3);
4. shepherd, oversee, and care for the congregation (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1–3);
5. promptly adopt, and thereafter maintain, a practically-oriented and biblically sound Elder Guidebook to govern the Elders’ internal decision-making, operations, qualifications, onboarding, and accountability; and
6. for the first Board of Elders, promptly initiate and complete a search for a permanent Senior Pastor as provided in Section 6.

The Elder Guidebook shall address, at a minimum: God’s design for spiritual leadership; the biblical qualifications of an Elder; the function of Elders (to lead, feed, protect, and care for the flock); the protection and accountability of Elders; the onboarding of an Elder (recognize, examine, affirm, ordain, and empower); making decisions by consensus; the ongoing Elder Intern Program; and striving for doctrinal unity.³

Section 4 — Number, Nominations, Affirmation, and Terms of Service

4.1 Number

The Board of Elders shall consist of as many qualified men as the Lord provides; there is no maximum. Following the constitution of the initial Board, the Church shall maintain not fewer than five (5) active Elders, which guards against both one-man rule and stalemate (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). If the number of active Elders falls below five, the Elders shall continue to govern and shall promptly act to restore the minimum.

To avoid deadlock, the Elders should ordinarily maintain an odd number of active Elders. No Elder has a casting or tie-breaking vote. If the Elders are evenly divided on a matter, they shall give themselves to prayer and renewed deliberation and, where the matter is weighty and remains unresolved, seek the counsel of qualified outside overseers (such as Elders of sister churches); if the Elders remain evenly

³See New Testament pattern of Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11–16; and 1 Peter 5:1–4.

divided after such counsel, the matter does not carry and the existing state of affairs continues, without resort to a congregational vote (Acts 15:6; Proverbs 11:14).

4.2 Nominations

An Elder nominee must be nominated in writing by not fewer than three (3) members who are unrelated to the nominee and to one another by blood, marriage, or household. A nominee recommended by a Staff Pastor must also be nominated by at least two (2) other unrelated members. Each nomination shall certify that the nominators have no disqualifying conflict of interest and that no nominator is related to the nominee.

Nominations and votes in all church processes shall be handled only by the officers during the Transition Period and thereafter by the Elders. Any nominee, and any person who is the subject of a vote or other matter, shall recuse himself from participation in and voting upon any matter in which he has a conflict of interest.

4.3 Affirmation

The final slate of nominees for service on the Board of Elders — recommended by the Commissioning Council for the first class of Elders (Article VII), and by the Board of Elders for Elders added thereafter — is submitted to the congregation for affirmation, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting (Article XI, Section 2). Prior to the Transition, the Founding Trustees forward the Commissioning Council's slate to the congregation as a ministerial step that does not replace the congregation's affirmation. Affirmation expresses the congregation's calling of its Elders; Sanctioning and Ordination follow under Article VII.

4.4 Continuing Duties

The following continuing duties apply:

1. **Raising up new Elders.** On an ongoing basis, the Board of Elders shall diligently seek to present new qualified men for eldership, provided the Lord raises up qualified and tested men. This is a duty of diligent search and readiness only; no man shall be ordained who is not first qualified and tested (1 Timothy 3:10; 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:2).
2. **Sabbatical defined.** A sabbatical is a season of rest from active service of not less than one (1) year. An Elder on sabbatical remains an Elder; the office is not vacated. During the sabbatical he does not attend Elder meetings and has no vote, and he is not counted toward a quorum or toward the minimum of five (5) active Elders. He resumes active service automatically at its conclusion (Mark 6:31; Exodus 23:12).
3. **Discretionary sabbatical.** The Elders may, by mutual agreement, grant a sabbatical to one or more Elders as they discern rest is needed.
4. **Active-Elder floor.** No sabbatical shall reduce the active Elders below five (5); any sabbatical that would do so is deferred until the number of active Elders permits.

4.5 Term of Service

Elders serve indefinitely (for life, or until resignation or removal), so long as they remain qualified and willing. There is no periodic congregational reaffirmation of Elders and no mandatory sabbatical; the

eldership is a continuing office (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–4). An Elder is removed only as provided in Section 7.⁴

Section 5 — Elder Intern Program

Because the Church has no previously constituted eldership, the recognition and onboarding of Elders proceeds deliberately and over time, in obedience to the caution not to be hasty in the laying on of hands (1 Timothy 5:22; 3:10). A nominee whom the Commissioning Council has found Qualified upon its Primary Examination (Article VII, Section 2) is admitted to the Program as an “Elder Intern.” During the Elder Intern Program the Elder Intern is observed, tested, trained, and proven; his final fitness for the office and his own final consent to serve are determined over time; and his final fitness and consent are confirmed at Ordination (Article VII, Sections 3 and 6).

Not fewer than five (5) Elders shall be ordained to constitute the initial Board. A qualified core is examined, affirmed, and ordained together; thereafter additional Elders are added, singly or in subsequent cohorts, as they are proven, affirmed, and ordained (Acts 6:3; 14:23; 2 Timothy 2:2). If fewer than five qualified men are ready, the Elder Intern Program continues until the minimum is reached.

The initial Elder Intern Program described above constitutes the first Board. The ongoing Elder Intern Program — by which additional Elders are observed, tested, trained, proven, and added after the initial Board — shall be outlined and maintained in the Elder Guidebook (Section 3). Elders added after the first class are examined and proven by the Board of Elders and, upon congregational affirmation under Section 4.3, are ordained by the Board by prayer and the laying on of hands of the eldership (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 2:2); the Commissioning Council is convened only for the first class of Elders (Article VII).

Section 6 — Staff Pastors, the Senior Pastor, and Pastoral Search

The Elders may recognize among themselves a Senior Pastor, who serves as the primary preaching and teaching pastor and provides day-to-day pastoral leadership, remaining accountable to the Elders. The Senior Pastor must be an Elder. The Senior Pastor is a vocational (salaried) Staff Pastor who is also an Elder; accordingly, every rule applicable to Staff Pastors applies to him, including the exclusion of Staff Pastors from a pastoral search committee (this Section). Ordination as an Elder does not confer the office or title of Senior Pastor; a Staff Pastor who is ordained as an Elder remains a Staff Pastor unless and until he is separately called to the office of Senior Pastor under this Section, and no person becomes Senior Pastor except by that call. The call of a person to the office of Senior Pastor by the congregation constitutes his simultaneous affirmation as an Elder; if he is not already ordained, he shall be ordained as an Elder. Staff Pastors who are not Elders may be employed under Section 1; they do not govern or vote as Elders.

Senior Pastor vacancy; search process. Whenever the office of Senior Pastor is vacant, the Elders shall promptly initiate a search to fill it, to be completed within twenty-four (24) months. A search committee shall be formed and shall report on its progress to the Elders and to the congregation not less frequently than quarterly. The search committee is composed of Elders (excluding Staff Pastors); in conducting the search the Elders may engage and consult advisors — including deacons, members, and outside

⁴See the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 26.8.

consultants — but the search committee itself consists of Elders. Not every man considered need preach before the congregation; however, any candidate whom the committee will recommend to the congregation for the office of Senior Pastor must have preached before the congregation before being recommended. The search committee nominates a candidate, not fewer than three-fourths (3/4) of the Elders approve the nomination, and the nomination is then submitted to the congregation, which affirms the call by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting (Article XI, Section 2).

If a search is not completed by the deadline, the Elders shall give the congregation a full public accounting of the search (Hebrews 13:17) and shall seek the counsel and assistance of the Commissioning Council, or another body of mature pastors and elders from sister churches, to help complete the search (Acts 15:1–2,6).

First search. The first Board of Elders shall, promptly following their Ordination, initiate the search described above, to be completed within twenty-four (24) months following their Ordination, with quarterly reporting and a first report not later than ninety (90) days after their Ordination.

Section 7 — Removal of Elders

An Elder may be removed only for biblical cause: (a) resignation; (b) disqualifying sin or persistent false doctrine; or (c) inability to fulfill the office. Removal for sin or false doctrine follows the discipline process of Article V and the protections of 1 Timothy 5:19–22, under which a charge against an Elder is received only on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Removal is determined by the remaining Elders.⁵

If a member believes an Elder should be removed. A member who believes an Elder is disqualified or should be removed shall bring the matter to the Elders. Consistent with Scripture, a charge against an Elder is received only on the testimony of two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19); the Elders examine the matter and, where a charge is established, act under this Section, rebuking sin as Scripture directs (1 Timothy 5:19–20). The removal of an Elder is not decided by a congregational vote.

Article VII — The Commissioning Council; Examination, Sanctioning, Ordination, and the Service of Commissioning

Because the Church has no sending church or sending elders, it provides for the recognition, examination, sanctioning, and ordination of its first Elders by a Commissioning Council of qualified outside overseers, after the apostolic pattern of setting apart and sending by the laying on of hands (Acts 13:1–3; 14:23). After the first class of Elders is constituted, the Board of Elders examines and ordains additional Elders as provided in Article VI.⁶

Section 1 — The Commissioning Council

⁵See 1 Timothy 5:19–22.

⁶Where a church has no prior eldership, the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 26.9, and the Cambridge Platform (1648), ch. IX, provide for setting apart officers with the assistance of those orderly chosen for that purpose; sister-church assistance follows Acts 15.

The Commissioning Council is convened, for the first class of Elders, by the Founding Trustees, and thereafter, if necessary, by the Board of Elders. The Commissioning Council shall consist of not fewer than three (3) Qualified Overseers.

A “Qualified Overseer” is a man who is, or has been, an ordained or duly recognized pastor, Elder, or overseer in good standing in a church holding the Trinitarian, evangelical Christian faith consistent with the Statement of Faith (Schedule I); who meets the biblical qualifications of an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4); and who is not a Founding Trustee or a member of Chagrin Valley Chapel and holds no office, employment, or governance role in the Corporation.

No Founding Trustee, member, or employee of the Church shall examine or narrow Elder nominees; that work belongs to the Commissioning Council alone, so that the recognition of the Church’s Elders is independent of its founders and staff. This Section applies in full to the recognition, examination, sanctioning, and ordination of the first class of Elders; no person is recognized, seated, or ordained with the first class of Elders except through the Commissioning Council as provided in this Article. After the first class is constituted, the examination, ordination, and recognition of additional Elders are conducted by the Board of Elders as provided in Article VI, and the Commissioning Council is not required.

Section 2 — Primary Examination of Nominees

The Commissioning Council shall conduct a Primary Examination of each nominee, before the nominee enters the Elder Intern Program, including:

1. a background check and child-protection screening;
2. personal interviews of the nominee (and, as appropriate, his wife);
3. examination of the nominee’s doctrine and character against the Statement of Faith and the biblical qualifications;
4. inquiry of references inside and outside the Church regarding the nominee’s reputation and manner of life (1 Timothy 3:4–5,7);
5. a structured opportunity for congregational feedback, which the Council shall weigh (Acts 6:3); and
6. a written determination, as to each nominee, that he is “Qualified” or “Not Yet Qualified” for the Elder Intern Program, with a brief, confidential statement of reasons retained in the records of the Church.

The Primary Examination is the principal examination of a nominee’s fitness for the office. A nominee found Qualified upon the Primary Examination is admitted to the Elder Intern Program as an Elder Intern (Article VI, Section 5); a nominee found Not Yet Qualified is not admitted.

Section 3 — Recommendation of the Final Slate

After a nominee has completed the Primary Examination (Section 2) and been proven through the Elder Intern Program (Article VI, Section 5), the Commissioning Council recommends — i.e., places on the final slate — each Elder Intern whose final fitness for the office and whose consent to serve the Council has confirmed, applying no artificial numerical cap. The final slate is then presented to the congregation for

affirmation under Article VI, Section 4.3, and the final fitness and consent of each Elder Intern so affirmed are confirmed at Ordination (Section 6). This follows “let them also be tested first; then let them serve” (1 Timothy 3:10) and the instruction to choose “men of good repute” for office (Acts 6:3).

Section 4 — Transparency to the Congregation

The Church shall publish to the congregation the Commissioning Council’s ecclesiastical role, the required qualifications of its members, the process it follows, and a summary of the results of its work, in advance of the congregational affirmation. The names, titles, and church affiliations of the members of the Commissioning Council shall be disclosed to the congregation as part of that publication.

Section 5 — Sanctioning

In place of a sending church, the Commissioning Council shall sanction — that is, formally recognize — (a) the Church as a true and ordered congregation of Christ’s church; (b) the members of the Church; and (c) the Elders of the Church. Sanctioning is the Council’s public attestation, before God and the congregation, of what Christ has constituted.

Section 6 — Ordination

The Commissioning Council shall ordain the affirmed Elders by prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). Ordination recognizes the calling and qualification of the man and sets him apart to the office of Elder. At Ordination the Council confirms the Elder Intern’s final fitness for the office and his consent to serve, proven through the Elder Intern Program (Article VI, Section 5). No examination or Ordination of any Elder — whether of the first class by the Commissioning Council under this Article or of Elders added thereafter by the Board of Elders under Article VI — shall be deferred, waived, or made conditional upon the senior-pastor search, upon any staff position or employment, or upon any other contingency; and no person holds the office of Elder, the title of pastor as an Elder, or an Elder’s vote until he has been examined, affirmed, and ordained as an Elder.

Section 7 — The Service of Commissioning

The sanctioning of the Church and its members and Elders, and the ordination of the Elders, shall take place together at a single Service of Commissioning at which the Commissioning Council, the Elders to be ordained, and the congregation are present (Acts 13:1–3). Upon ordination, the initial Board of Elders (not fewer than five) is constituted.

Article VIII — Deacons

Deacons are servants of Christ who assist the Elders, caring for practical and benevolent needs so that the Elders may give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1–6).⁷

Section 1 — Qualifications

⁷See Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 26.8, and Acts 6:1–6; Philippians 1:1; and 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

Deacons shall be men who are members in good standing, meeting the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8–12 (including being “the husband of one wife,” 1 Timothy 3:12), and who affirm the Statement of Faith.

Section 2 — Duties

The duties of the deacons are those assigned by the Elders, which may include care for the widowed, sick, elderly, and needy; administration of benevolence; care of the church’s property; and such other service as the Elders direct (Acts 6:1–6).

Section 3 — Selection and Terms

The first Board of Elders shall promptly select deacons, and the Elders shall thereafter maintain not fewer than three (3) active deacons sufficient to perform the functions set forth in this Article. Deacons are selected by the Elders and affirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting (Article XI, Section 2). The ongoing governance, terms, and administration of the deacons shall be maintained by the Elders in the Elder Guidebook (Article VI, Section 3), consistent with this Article and Scripture.

Section 4 — Removal

A deacon may be removed by the Elders for resignation, disqualifying sin, or inability to fulfill the office, subject to the discipline process of Article V.

Section 5 — Chair of the Deacons

The deacons shall select one of their number, annually and from among themselves, as chair of the deacons (or coordinating deacon), to convene and coordinate their work and to serve as their point of contact with the Elders. The chair holds no authority above the other deacons and serves under the oversight of the Elders. All actions reserved to the deacons — including convening a Commissioning Council under Article VI, Section 7 — are taken by the deacons as a body, by majority, and not by the chair alone (1 Corinthians 14:40; Acts 6:3).

Article IX — Officers, Stewardship, and Corporate Administration

Section 1 — Officers

The Church shall have a Moderator, a Corporate Clerk, a Finance Officer, and an Operations Officer, with the duties customary to those offices and as the governing body assigns. The Moderator and the Corporate Clerk shall be Elders; the Finance Officer and the Operations Officer shall be members in good standing and may, but need not, be Elders or deacons. Every officer shall affirm the Statement of Faith and be of good repute (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8–12). During the Transition Period the officers are those elected by the Founding Trustees and need not be Elders (there being no Elders before the Transition); thereafter the Elders elect the officers. Congregational Meetings (Article XI, Section 2) are chaired by the Moderator; during the Transition Period, the meeting is chaired by an officer designated by the Founding Trustees.

Section 2 — Bank Accounts and Financial Controls

The Church shall maintain its operating and other accounts at one or more reputable financial institutions. Disbursements above a threshold set by the governing body require dual authorization. The Church shall keep a finance log of receipts and disbursements and shall reconcile its accounts monthly. These controls exist to ensure honesty and good stewardship before God and men (2 Corinthians 8:21).

Section 3 — Records and Inspection

The Church shall keep accurate corporate and financial records. The financial records shall be available to all Elders. Financial reports shall be made available to the members not less than annually (at or before the annual Congregational Meeting), and upon the reasonable request of five (5) or more members who contribute to the Church from time to time. Such reports may be the Church's regular internal financial statements; nothing in this Section requires an external or independent audit.

Article X — The Founding Trustees and the Transition of Governance

Section 1 — Governance Before the Transition

Until the Transition, the Founding Trustees are the initial voting members and governing body of the Church and govern in a transitional capacity. During the Transition Period, nominations and votes in all church processes are handled by the officers; thereafter they are handled by the Elders. Any person with a conflict of interest in a matter shall recuse himself from participation and voting on that matter.

Section 2 — Adoption Deadline and Conditions of the Transition

Consistent with the Bylaws, the Founding Trustees shall adopt this Constitution and the Statement of Faith (Schedule I) on or before December 31, 2026. The Transition occurs upon satisfaction of all of the following conditions: (a) adoption of this Constitution by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Founding Trustees; (b) adoption of the Statement of Faith; (c) admission of not fewer than twenty (20) voting members; and (d) the examination, affirmation, Sanctioning, and Ordination of an initial Board of not fewer than five (5) Elders under Articles VI and VII. Upon satisfaction of all conditions, the governance and oversight of the Church vest in the Board of Elders.

Section 3 — Resignation of the Founding Trustees; No Reversion

Within sixty (60) days after the Transition conditions are met, each Founding Trustee and each officer elected under the Bylaws shall resign. During that period they serve solely in a transitional capacity, transferring records, accounts, and knowledge to the Elders. Upon the effectiveness of their resignations they retain no governing authority, and governance does not revert to the Founding Trustees thereafter.

Article XI — Congregational and Business Meetings

Section 1 — Powers Reserved to the Congregation

Under Christ, and consistent with congregational order, the gathered membership reserves to itself principally the power to affirm. The powers reserved to the congregation are:

1. to affirm the Elders of the Church (Article VI);

2. to affirm the call of a Senior Pastor (Article VI, Section 6);
3. to affirm the deacons of the Church (Article VIII);
4. to vote upon amendments to this Constitution and the Statement of Faith proposed by the Elders (Article XII); and
5. to approve the dissolution of the Church (Article XV).

The ordinary leadership, oversight, discipline, and administration of the Church belong to the Elders. The removal of an Elder is determined by the Elders for biblical cause (Article VI, Section 7), and is not decided by a congregational vote; a member who believes an Elder should be removed brings the matter to the Elders (Article VI, Section 7).⁸

Section 2 — Congregational (Business) Meetings

A “Congregational Meeting” (also called a “business meeting”) is a meeting of the voting membership called for the conduct of the business of the Church. The annual Congregational Meeting, and any Congregational Meeting called by the Elders, requires not less than thirty (30) days’ written notice stating the purpose of the meeting; provided, that a meeting called to amend this Constitution or the Statement of Faith requires not less than sixty (60) days’ written notice (Article XII). A meeting requested in writing by ten percent (10%) of the membership, but in no event fewer than twenty-five (25) members, may be called on not less than two (2) weeks’ written notice stating the purpose of the meeting, and the Elders shall attend. A quorum is a majority of the Elders together with fifty percent (50%) of the voting membership. Wherever this Constitution provides for action by “the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting” (or words of similar effect), it means the affirmative vote, by the stated threshold, of the voting members present and voting at a duly called Congregational Meeting at which a quorum is present.

Article XII — Amendments

This Constitution, except the Statement of Faith, may be amended upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting (Article XI, Section 2) called by the Elders for that purpose on not less than sixty (60) days’ written notice, the proposed amendment having been set forth in the notice. The Statement of Faith (Schedule I) may be amended only upon an eighty percent (80%) vote of the membership, on like notice and in like manner. Before the Transition, this Constitution and the Bylaws may be amended only as provided in the Bylaws (by at least two-thirds of the Founding Trustees), and no pre-Transition amendment may extend the December 31, 2026 adoption deadline or materially delay the transition of governance to the Elders except by the unanimous written consent of all Founding Trustees.

Article XIII — Settlement of Disputes

Disputes concerning spiritual teaching, the shepherding of the Church, or its government shall be resolved within the Church, by the Elders or by an independent panel of mature, biblically qualified

⁸See Ephesians 4:3.

persons selected for that purpose, after prayerful and humble consideration, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:1–8; Ephesians 4:1–3). In the event of division, the property and assets of the Church belong to those who abide by this Constitution.

Article XIV — Miscellaneous; Ratification of Prior Actions; Indemnification

All matters not addressed by this Constitution are the responsibility of the Elders.

The Church ratifies and confirms the lawful acts of the Founding Trustees and officers taken in furtherance of the Church’s formation, including the engagement of pastoral and other staff, the opening and maintenance of bank and financial accounts, the procurement of insurance, the entry into real-property leases, and the licensing of software and services.

The Church shall indemnify its trustees, Elders, officers, and agents to the fullest extent permitted by Ohio law for actions taken in good faith on behalf of the Church.

Article XV — Dissolution

The Church may be dissolved only upon the approval of eighty percent (80%) of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting (Article XI, Section 2) called for that purpose. Upon dissolution, after payment of the Church’s obligations, the remaining assets shall be distributed to one or more organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as the membership shall determine.

Article XVI — Schedules; Adoption and Effective Date

The following is attached to and incorporated in this Constitution: **Schedule I** — the Statement of Faith.

This Constitution was adopted by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Founding Trustees and is effective upon adoption. Adoption of this Constitution and of the Statement of Faith shall occur on or before December 31, 2026. Upon adoption, this Constitution supersedes and replaces the First Amended & Restated Bylaws of the Church.

SCHEDULE I

Statement of Faith

Incorporated into the Constitution by Article IV

Chagrin Valley Chapel affirms the doctrinal foundations set forth below, which are derived from the Holy Scriptures.

Section 1: Authority of Scripture

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, inerrant and infallible in their original writings, recorded by divinely inspired men, and that these scriptures are of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Section 2: The Trinity

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three co-equal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons possess the same divine attributes, power, and glory, yet there is but one God (Matthew 28:19; 1 John 5:6-8; Deuteronomy 6:4).

Section 3: Creation

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein in six days, and rested on the seventh day. God created mankind, both male and female, in His own image and likeness. All creation is sustained by God's power and exists for His glory (Genesis 1-2; Colossians 1:16-17).

Section 4: Sin

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse. (Genesis 3, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 3:23)

Section 5: The Nature and Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who became incarnate through conception by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man in one person, without confusion or division. In accordance with scripture, He lived a sinless life, died on the cross as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all who would believe in Him, rose bodily from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God as our High Priest and Advocate (John 1:1-14; Romans 5:8-21; Hebrews 4:14-16).

Section 6: Salvation

We believe salvation comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit repent of sin; they are justified by Christ's substitutionary atonement; they become sanctified as children of God and heirs of eternal life. We affirm the biblical doctrines of election

and predestination as taught in Scripture, and that salvation is secure in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:3-7; 1 John 5:1; Romans 8:28-39, 10:9-10).

Section 7: The Church

We believe the Church is the body of Christ, consisting of all believers in Jesus Christ of all ages. The local church is composed of baptized believers who have covenanted together for worship, instruction, and service. The Church's mission is to preach the Gospel to all nations, to nurture believers in spiritual maturity, and to demonstrate the love of Christ in word and deed (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 28:19-20).

Section 8: Church Structure

We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called overseers and pastors), who must meet biblical qualifications. The elders of a local congregation consist of spiritually qualified men who lead, teach and shepherd as servants of Christ and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership. (1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

Section 9: Marriage

We believe that marriage is a covenant ordained by God between one man and one woman for life. Marriage reflects the union between Christ and the Church and is established as the foundation for family life and human relationship (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:21-33; Matthew 19:4-6).

Section 10: Ordinances (The Sacraments)

We believe that the sacred ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord Jesus Christ, are Baptism and the Lord's Table (Communion). These signify the believer's covenant relationship with Christ. Baptism, administered to believers, represents the believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ. Communion commemorates Christ's sacrificial death, and reaffirms the believer's unity with Christ, and His Church (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Section 11: The Return of Christ and Eternal Hope

We believe that Jesus Christ will return bodily and visibly in glory. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the everlasting joy of the redeemed in the presence of God (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4).

Section 12: Biblical Sexuality and Human Identity

We believe that God created mankind in His image as male and female, and that these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the goodness of God's created design. Marriage, as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman for life (Section 9), is the only proper context for sexual intimacy. We believe that all people are created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity, compassion, and love, and that God calls all people to repentance, holiness, and obedience to His Word.

Therefore any sexual practice outside of biblical marriage — including adultery, fornication, homosexual practice, and all forms of sexual immorality — is contrary to God’s design and purpose. We believe that identity is ultimately found in Jesus Christ and not in sinful desires, attractions, or cultural definitions of self, and that the Gospel offers forgiveness, transformation, and hope to all who repent and trust in Christ (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20).