

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

### Article 1: Our Name

This community of Christians will be known as Redemption Church Eastside and will function exclusively as a religious, educational and charitable Christian church within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code.)

### Article 2: Our Purpose

Redemption Church is a group of imperfect people who have been redeemed by our perfect God. We exist for the glory of God, by the grace of God, for the good of our city.

### Article 3: Our Beliefs

#### 3a. Creed

##### On Jesus:

*Jesus...*

Is God

Is Man

Is Redeemer

Is Risen

Is Exclusive

Is Returning

*Jesus...*

Reveals God's glory

Fulfills God's will

Loves God's word

Hates religion

Requires humility

Beckons us to be inspirationally uncomfortable

Never promises it will be easy, but always good

##### On Gospel:

*The Gospel Is...*

Jesus the God-Man born of a virgin mom.

Jesus the tempted, who stood perfect and never sinned.

Jesus the preacher, healer, confronter, and lover.

Jesus the slaughtered because of our sins.

Jesus the cursed to suffer our hell.

Jesus the buried in the heart of the earth.

Jesus the risen through the power of God.

Jesus the ascended to the right hand of His Father.

Jesus the victor who conquered Satan, sin and death.

*The Gospel Says...*

That Jesus is good and we are not.  
That Jesus is love and takes us where we are.  
That Jesus is powerful and promises to transform us.  
That Jesus is patient and grows us all differently.  
That Jesus is faithful and never forsakes us.  
That Jesus is certain and vows to complete us.

*The Gospel Must...*

Be Proclaimed for it is a message that results in action.  
Be Protected for it is a message easily obscured by moralism, self-righteousness, or religion.  
Be Purposeful so that it is understood as a message of life transformation and not simply a ticket to an eternal destination.

**On Church:**

*We believe the church:*

Is Jesus' – not man's  
Is People – not structures  
Is Commanded – not optional  
Is Dynamic – not institutional  
Is Unstoppable – not constrained  
Is at its best when people worship hard, live grace, serve others and know truth.

*We believe that a church exists to:*

Worship Jesus Corporately  
Teach Jesus Thoroughly  
Display Jesus Selflessly  
Share Jesus Proudly

**On Believers:**

*We believe that following Jesus means each of us are to be:*

Practical Theologians  
Everyday Missionaries  
Community Investors  
Continuous Worshipers

**On Culture:**

*We seek to:*

Receive the parts of culture that are for the glory of God.  
Redeem the parts of culture that can be used to the glory of God.  
Reject the parts of culture that attempt to divert people from the glory from God.

**3b. Our Doctrine**

**The Bible**

The Bible, being composed of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament, is God's inspired Word to all people and is the primary basis of our belief. The Bible was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It captures the heart

of God for his people in all ages and places. While the Bible does not always offer a clear answer for every question, it does give us the needed guidelines for determining what a Jesus-focused life should look like in the 21st century as the primary source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. We hold that the Bible is trustworthy, possesses unique authority and contains all things necessary to our salvation. There are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, & Revelation 22:18-19

## **The Godhead**

God is a perfect community of oneness. Traditionally called "the Trinity," we believe that there is one true God eternally existing in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus the Christ) and God the Holy Spirit, each of whom equally possess all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of Personality. In the beginning the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the universe and all things in it. Through His power He sustains His creation. By His will He operates in the world to fulfill His restoring purposes.

Genesis 1:1; 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19, John 1:1 & 1 Peter 1:2

## **God the Father**

We believe that the First Person of the Trinity is God the Father. We believe that His Fatherhood is seen in at least three relationships: 1) His Fatherhood over creation, over the angels and over humanity. 2) His Fatherhood over the Lord Jesus Christ; thus, has a Divinely special relationship as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 3) His Fatherhood over all Christians, having a special relationship as the Father of all Christians. Through Jesus, the Christian becomes an adopted child of God by which he can call Him "Abba, Father." This aspect of the Fatherhood of God is not on the same plane as the relationship between the other Persons of the Trinity, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit, but it does indicate a wonderfully close relationship between the Christian and the Godhead. Jesus describes the Father as the only true God. Jesus defines eternal life: "Eternal life is this: that they may know the Father and the one He sent." Knowing the Father changes us and introduces us into a different quality of living.

John 17:1-4, Romans 8:14-15, Hebrews 1:1-14; 12:9; & James 1:17

## **God the Son, Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the perfect revealing of God himself. Both fully human and fully God, he represents both humanity and divinity. His death on the cross, followed by his bodily resurrection from the grave, makes forgiveness of sins available to every person. His central message was the in breaking of his Kingdom in this world. Christ-followers are not simply those who have been saved, but also are those whose lives are shaped around the Kingdom principles Jesus taught and exemplified. Jesus is the head of the Church and continually intercedes for believers before God. He shall return to earth again, personally, bodily and visibly as both Lord and Judge.

Matthew 1:1-28, John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:21, & Hebrews 1:1-3.

## **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is God's guide for us as we work out what it means to follow Jesus. He cultivates the unity of the church and prompts our continuing spiritual transformation. The Spirit enlightens the minds of all people estranged from God and awakens in them recognition of their need of a Savior. At the moment of salvation He indwells every believer as the source of assurance, strength and wisdom. He also uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the church. His power and control are appropriated through faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Jesus-like character, to bear fruit to the glory of the Father and to understand and apply Scripture.

John 16:7-13; 14:16-17, 1 Corinthians 2:12; 12-14, 2 Corinthians 3:17 & Ephesians 1:13.

## **Satan & Demons**

The reason God's agenda is labeled "The Mission of God" and not "The Rest of God" is due to conflict. This conflict is rooted deeply in a sinful rebellion that is directed against the glory and supremacy of the Godhead. Before sin came to the heart and actions of the human race, the angelic world experienced the first rebellion. A high-anointed angel, traditionally called Lucifer, chose to leave his sphere of proper authority in the hopes of supplanting the Trinity. In this great revolt a huge multitude of angels followed. Today these beings are known as demons and the fallen anointed angel is called The Devil/Satan. In the human realm these fallen beings engage in deception, manipulation, spiritual blinding, possession, division and general sabotage against the Mission of God. In this we affirm that while dualism is not a proper view of spiritual warfare, there is still a real and grave threat in the spiritual realm for which the Church must be aware. We also affirm that through the work of the cross Jesus has defeated Satan, sin and death and that this reality is at work in an already/not fully realized dynamic.

Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:11-19, John 12:31-33, Romans 16:20, Ephesians 6:12-18, Colossians 2:13-15, Hebrews 2:14-15, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8, & Revelation 12-14; 19-20.

## **Humanity**

Every person is created in the image of God. This means every person has significant worth. No person is exempt from God's love. However, every person has tainted the God-image in his or her life through sin. We believe that humanity was confronted with a moral choice in the Garden. By voluntarily disobeying God's command and yielding to the enticement of Satan, humanity lost its original condition and became physically, morally, intellectually and spiritually separated from and condemned by God. In consequence of this act of disobedience, the entire human race became involved in sin, so that in every heart there is by nature a disposition that leads to acts, affections and attitudes of sin, which incur guilt and bring about the righteous judgment of God. Every person who has ever lived is in need of forgiveness and restoration back to the image God intended for us. This comes only by way of repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus.

Genesis 1:27; 3:1-24, Isaiah 59:1-2, & Romans 3:23; 5:12.

## **Salvation**

Salvation is fully a gift from God to humanity given by His grace to anyone who places their trust in the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. When a person places their life into the hands of Jesus Christ they enter into salvation. This salvation is a process in that it is both instant and ongoing. In one sense, we are "saved" - that is, we have been

forgiven, justified and have a home prepared for us in eternity. In another sense, we are "being saved" - that is, our lives continue to be transformed into the image of God. This transformation will take the rest of our lives and will only be complete at the end of our lives when we meet God face-to-face. We believe that every Christian can have a valid sense of assurance concerning their salvation, relationship with God and their destiny. Through faith in Jesus Christ, confidence in what the Bible explains and the ministry of the Holy Spirit such assurance becomes real and personal.

Romans 5:1, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 10:14, 1 Peter 2:2, & 1 John 5:13

## **Kingdom**

The Kingdom is the current dynamic of Jesus' authority in heaven and on earth. The Kingdom began at the first advent of Jesus and will continue progressively until the final consummation of all things at His return. During this age of the Kingdom both believers and unbelievers populate the Kingdom. The foundational difference is that the believing community realizes both the presence and life of the Kingdom of Jesus, while the unbelieving world is oblivious to its power and glory. At the end of the age Jesus will harvest His Kingdom – the righteous to glory and the unrighteous to judgment. During the age of the Kingdom the Church is the messenger and possessor of the gospel: the keys of the Kingdom.

Matthew 12:28; 13:1-52; 16:13-19; 18:15-20, Mark 9:42-48, Luke 17:20-21 & Colossians 1:11-14

## **Church**

God desires for us to work out our salvation in relationship with other followers of Jesus. The church is the gathered community of missional theologians who have surrendered their lives to God's leadership and transformation. There is one global Church, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The church is the display of the mission Jesus lived out. God has sent His church into the world to be the vehicle that receives and shares His Kingdom.

The global church is expressed in smaller venues known as the local church. A local church is a group of people who are chosen in God the Father, regenerate in God the Holy Spirit, and redeemed in God the Son Jesus Christ whom they confess as Lord. In obedience to the Scriptures they organize under qualified leadership, gathering regularly for worship and preaching, observing the biblical sacraments of baptism and Communion, under the unity of the gospel, in the power of grace, for the purpose true godliness, so as scatter into the world with the Commission and Commandment that Jesus left to His missionary Church for His glory and their joy.

Matthew 16:18-19, Ephesians 4:3-16, Hebrews 10:25 & 1 Peter 4:11

## **Consummation**

One day Jesus Christ will return at a time of the Father's choosing. Our task as followers of Jesus is not to try and figure out when that return will be, but rather, to live every day in light of that return. When Jesus does return, His Kingdom will be brought to its perfect fullness.

Mark 13:32-37 & Revelation 19-22

## **Eternity**

We believe that people were created to exist forever. They will either exist eternally separated from God by sin in a conscious eternal torment known as hell or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation in a new creation that spans both heaven and earth.

John 3:16, 5:28, 29 & 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

## **Concluding Remarks**

While we fully affirm and subscribe to the preceding statements as finding their origin in Scripture and essential to Christian faith and practice, we also realize that they are systematic interpretations of an organically given Bible, and as such should be understood as subsidiary to the full Old and New Testament texts.

## **3c. Ordinances**

Baptism and communion are the two sacraments that Jesus instituted for His disciples to observe.

### **Baptism by Immersion**

We believe that every person who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized by full immersion as a one-time act that displays a profession of faith. We believe that baptism should occur at the time of or shortly after an individual professes Jesus as God and Savior. The act of water baptism itself is not the saving mechanism nor does it cleanse the flesh from sin; but is the outward expression of the inward reality that Jesus Christ has cleansed the soul. The immersion into water is representative of the death and burial of Jesus while the coming up out of the water identifies the believer with the resurrection of Jesus.

Matthew 28:19 and Romans 6:3-4

### **Communion For The Converted**

We believe that partaking in communion is an essential action in response to God's word for those that possess a personal faith in the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross. The action of taking communion is a reminder of the death of Jesus on the cross with the bread symbolizing the body and the cup symbolizing the pouring out of Christ's blood and the benefits earned for us by the person and work of Jesus. When we willingly come to the table, with a heart of forgiveness, Christ is spiritually present with us and we find reassurance in His love for us on a personal level as well as showing unity as a body of believers.

Luke 22:17-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:26-27

## **Article 4: Our Structure**

### **4a. Senior Pastor**

The ecclesiastical structure of Redemption Church was founded through and is headed by *Jesus Christ* who is our Senior Pastor. The chief governing document of Redemption Church is the Bible. The secondary and subordinate documents of Redemption Church

are the articles of incorporation and the bylaws. The articles of incorporation and bylaws are to be interpreted in light of the Bible as God's perfect and complete revelation.

#### **4b. Elders**

The *Elders* are the primary leaders of Redemption Church under Jesus. In accordance with the spirit of the New Testament the elders shepherd in a model of plurality and unanimity (100% agreement) with no single individual possessing more authority than another. The elders shall be the civil members of the corporation for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, Chapter 24.03 RCW. 80% of the standing eldership will constitute a legal quorum. All oncoming elders must be affirmed by a 90% approval of the ecclesiastical membership present at the annual celebration in order to be installed to eldership. An elder serves for an indefinite measure of time unless they request a sabbatical, feels led to step away from active eldership or becomes ineligible due to moral or doctrinal indiscretion.

#### **4c. Members**

The *Ecclesiastical Members* are those who choose to make an intentional investment into Redemption Church. Their investment is through agreement with the mission and theology of Redemption Church as well as through spiritual, relational, and financial support. In the spirit of unity and oneness the members affirm all potential elders who have qualified for eldership service as well as all changes to the articles and bylaws of Redemption Church.

### **Article 5: Our Organization**

#### **5a. Annual Celebration**

The purpose of the annual celebration is to hear about what Jesus has done in His church over the previous year and what the plans are for the following year. At this time the members affirm new elders and decide on any amendments to our by-laws or other issues that affect the direction of Redemption Church. For the purpose of affirming the strategic direction of Redemption Church a minimum of 70% of the active members shall constitute a body of affirmation. All affirmational sessions will be conducted through a single ballot. The ballot requires that the name of the member be placed on the ballot and that all membership requirements be met in order for the ballot to be active. Each prospective elder will be listed individually and each requires a 90% positive affirmation. The additional matters require an 80% affirmation. This affirmation takes place during the standard worship service(s) on the first Sunday of December. An informational gathering will be held on the Sunday four weeks prior to this in order to address any questions. <sup>1</sup>

#### **5b. Budgets and Salaries**

The work of Redemption Church is dependent upon the prayer, personal service and financial support of God's people. Because of this Redemption Church has actively made the decision to only spend what Jesus provides through actual donations and giving. Before the annual celebration, the board of elders shall set and publically report an estimate of the needs of the various ministries of Redemption Church for the coming year as well as report on the expenses from the previous year. The elder board may

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<sup>1</sup> Spans 2 Sundays or advanced notice.

redirect funds to various ministries of the church as is deemed necessary for effective ministry and operation of Redemption Church.

All salaries and employment status will be determined by the non-compensated elder board and will be determined based on demographic income, experience and scope of responsibility.

No part of the net earnings of Redemption Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, elders, deacons or other private persons, except that Redemption Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of section 501(c)(3) purposes. No substantial part of the activities of Redemption Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and Redemption Church shall not participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, Redemption Church shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a church exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or (b) or by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code.)

#### **5c. Financial Accountability**

Financial reports will be prepared after the end of the year and publically posted within 3 months of the close of the budget year for the present budget to remain active. In addition, the financial reports as well as the financial policies, procedures, internal controls and chart of accounts will be evaluated to determine that they are sufficient to adequately safeguard the assets and properly record and report the transactions. The elders will determine whether an independent external accounting firm or an internal committee made up of six members in good standing, who are not related to the elders, will perform the above annual checkup.

#### **5d. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of Redemption Church shall be January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **5e. Profit Earning**

Redemption Church is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of engaging in Christ-centered mission, promoting the spiritual development of individuals and advancing the Kingdom of God through multiplying churches. It is to be operated in a way that does not result in the accruing of distributable profits, realization of private gain resulting from payment of compensation in excess of a reasonable allowance for salary or other compensation for services rendered, or realization of any other form of private gain.

#### **5f. Use of Church Assets/Dissolution**

Redemption Church pledges its assets for engaging in Christ-centered ministry. All assets exist for this purpose and will be distributed exclusively for missional and theological



endeavors in the conservative evangelical tradition. In the event that Redemption Church ceases to continue (i.e. dissolution) by closure or other unforeseen events all assets are to be distributed to an evangelical organization for exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the internal Revenue Code. The evangelical organization that will receive all distributed assets will be recommended by the board of elders and affirmed by the ecclesiastical membership. Upon affirmation from the ecclesiastical membership all assets will be frozen immediately and the president and vice-president of Redemption Church will sign all assets over to the selected 501(c)(3) evangelical organization within 30 days.

#### **5g. Civil Law**

Redemption Church conducts itself first and foremost under the law of Jesus Christ as contained in the Old and New Testament. Under this law we believe we are called to obey the civil authorities sovereignly placed over us by God in accordance with Romans 13:1-7. The only exception to this rule would be in the event that any civil authority would require actions that run contrary to the clear and unambiguous law of Christ per Acts 4:16-21. Matters of a criminal nature that bring harm to another individual will be immediately reported to the civil authorities and will not be protected by clergy confidentiality.

#### **5h. Amendments**

The Bible is the inerrant constant given to us by Jesus to organize and advance His Church; Articles and By-Laws are a human attempt to communicate those ideas in a concise fashion. Because of this at no time are the Articles and Bylaws to be used as a supplement with the Bible, an addendum to the Bible, or a justification above the Bible. They are merely utilities that are as imperfect as the authors themselves. Because of this the elders and members of Redemption Church may make improvements to these as deemed necessary. Such improvements can be suggested by any member, but must be drafted by the elders and unanimously approved by the elders before being submitted to the ecclesiastical members for affirmation. Any modifications must be available to the ecclesiastical membership in written form at least four weeks prior to the meeting when the modifications are to be affirmed. Modifications can be adopted by an 80% affirmation of membership present. Both the Articles and By-Laws are to be annually reviewed by the board of elders so as to remain consistent with the ever-developing mission of Redemption Church.

#### **5i. Intellectual Property**

All intellectual property will be the property of the individual creator(s) unless such rights are transferred to Redemption Church in writing by the original creator(s).

## **5j. Indemnification**

- a. The Board of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
- b. Subject to the provisions of paragraph c. of this section, the church shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:
  - (1) The conduct of the elder or deacon was in good faith;
  - (2) The elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and
  - (3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.
- c. The church may not indemnify an elder or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the elder or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

## **BYLAWS**

### **Bylaw 1: Leadership**

#### **1a. Jesus Is The Senior Pastor**

Jesus is the Head of the Church, the Great Shepherd, and the leader of all local churches. He is the Senior Pastor of Redemption Church. Through Spirit, Prayer, Word and Unity we seek the ongoing guidance of Jesus for His Church.

Ephesians 1:22; 5:23, Colossians 1:18, 1 Peter 5:4 & Revelation 2-3

#### **1b. The Board of Elders**

First and foremost the elder board serves Jesus by serving His Church. In this sense elders are not so much representatives who answer to the congregation, but shepherds under Jesus who will give account directly to Him for their actions and doctrine. Each individual elder is accountable to the elder board and the elder board is accountable to Jesus and His Scriptures.

The New Testament speaks often to the model of church leadership and identifies eldership as the oversight pattern of the early local church. Holding to this tradition, Redemption Church recognizes that elders are biblically led, gifted, and qualified

people who identify their calling in that office of oversight and from this calling bring leadership, teaching, protection, encouragement and direction to the church.

At Redemption Church we recognize two categories of elders; paid elders and lay elders. Traditionally the title "pastor" and "elder" have been segregated into two separate categories, yet the New Testament recognizes these as two descriptions of the same office. Peter writes, "To the *elders* among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be *shepherds* of God's flock that is under your care, serving as *overseers*—not because you must, but because you are willing" (1 Peter 5:1-2). In this verse three characteristics emerge that describe a single office: elders, shepherds and overseers. The word *elder* is also used in 1 Timothy 5:17 to describe all leaders in the church, while noting that some are paid for their service. The word *shepherd* here is derived from the word typically translated as "pastor" elsewhere in the New Testament. Finally the word *overseer* is derived from the same word used in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 to describe the qualities of a pastor. From this we recognize that all elders are pastors and all pastors are elders simply partitioned into two parts; financially supported and unsupported. And yet even this distinction is based solely on unique gifting in the realm of leading, preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17-18). The final component of our eldership model recognizes that even a plurality needs point people. Here the paid elders (i.e. pastors) function as the "firsts among equals" so as to bring vision, mobility, and expression to the overall eldership.

In addition to their spiritual and theological requirements, there is also the need on occasion for legal officers. These officers shall be selected from among the elder board. Officers shall be identified as the President, Vice-President and Treasurer. The officer positions exist for legal matters only and are subject to the principles of plurality and unanimity. 80% of the elder board is necessary for general decision-making and all decisions that are made are to be unanimous on the part of those present to honor the spirit of oneness that Jesus seeks for His church.

Hebrews 13:17, Acts 15:1-2; 4; 6; 23; 16:4, Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, Philippians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17, Acts 20:17; 20-28, 1 Peter 5:3, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:27; 2:2, & 4:2-3.

### **1c. Qualities of an Elder**

Elders and elder candidates must reflect the qualities of such as explained in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5.

God is very particular when it comes to choosing just who is to oversee a local community of faith. No one just decides to be an elder. Every elder in the church must be uniquely called to such a purpose by God's Spirit (Acts 20:28 and 1 Timothy 3:1) so as to be spiritually equipped for the task. Without this Spirit-developed equipping, no amount of preparation or schooling will do any good toward individuals being Jesus-centered overseers. In fact, it does a great deal of harm when churches commission leaders who are not called and equipped by God's Spirit. The list of elder qualities is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

#### **Moral Qualities**

An elder is to be blameless. 1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:6

An elder must be self controlled. 1 Timothy 3:3 & Titus 1:8

An elder is to be temperate. 1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:8

An elder must be gentle. I Timothy 3:3  
An elder is not to be given to drunkenness. I Timothy 3:3  
An elder must not be violent. I Timothy 3:3 & Titus 1:7  
An elder is not to be a lover of money. I Timothy 3:3 & Titus 1:7  
An elder is not to be quarrelsome. I Timothy 3:3  
An elder is not to pursue dishonest gain. Titus 1:7  
An elder is not to be overbearing. Titus 1:7  
An elder is to be one who loves what is good. Titus 1:8

### ***Domestic Qualities***

An elder is to be faithful in their marriage. I Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:6  
An elder is to be hospitable. I Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:3  
An elder must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. I Timothy 3:4 & Titus 1:6

### ***Spiritual Qualities***

An elder must be able to teach. I Timothy 3:2  
An elder must not be a recent convert. I Timothy 3:6  
An elder must be of good reputation with those who do not follow Jesus. I Timothy 3:7  
An elder is to be upright. Titus 1:8  
An elder is to be holy. Titus 1:8  
An elder must be disciplined. Titus 1:8  
An elder must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught. Titus 1:9  
An elder must be able to encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9  
An elder is to lead by example and gentle persuasion. 1 Peter 5:3  
An elder is to lead because they care, not because they must. 1 Peter 5:2  
An elder is to care for people. 1 Peter 5:2

In addition to these New Testament characteristics, each elder is to display a disposition that strives to preserve basic Christian unity. Therefore, each elder shall agree to support the missional and stated beliefs of Redemption Church to the extent that they will not use their position to divide the Redemption Church community.

## **1d. Conditions of the Elder Board**

There shall be no fewer than three elders affirmed by the membership (unless three qualified individuals are not available). The members of Redemption Church shall affirm all potential elders. At no time shall the sitting eldership install an elder outside of the discovery track requirement and membership affirmation. The exception to this is only with reception of a pastor/elder in which case the discovery track requirement can be waived, but membership affirmation remains.

## **1e. Selection of Elders**

Elders are a gift given, not simply an office held. Ultimately the criterion of an elder is rooted in calling, gifting and qualification. To properly vet a potential elder Redemption Church has established a missional leadership discovery track. Any member who may feel led to the office of elder is invited to apply to this program. At its core, this discovery track is a year long exploration, evaluation, and equipping process. During this time a

potential elder will attend modules that will cover mission, doctrine, biblical interpretation, shepherding, apologetics, vision and counseling. As a part of this track they will also undergo formal evaluation interviews designed to look at personal, family and community dynamics and reputation.

For one to be an official candidate for eldership they must successfully complete the missional leadership discovery track and receive 100% affirmation of the sitting elders. In the congregational affirmation, the individual must receive a 90% affirmation of the membership present. An elder serves for an indefinite measure of time unless they request a sabbatical, feels led to step away from active eldership or is disqualified for moral or doctrinal indiscretion.

## **1f. Deacons**

Deacons are critical to the health and unity of the church. Because of this, the role of the New Testament deacon should never be perceived as a lesser office within the church. Nor is it to be established as a rung to the office of an elder, but rather, the diaconate is a complementarian office that works in congruity with the elders to enact the biblical directives of teaching, leading and protecting. Deacons do this by absorbing the servant-oriented needs of the church. Therefore, the qualities and qualifications of a deacon are as important as those of the overseeing elders. These qualities are displayed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Many of the service activities of Redemption Church shall be delegated to core influencers known as Deacons. These leaders are to demonstrate the highest degree of integrity, ability and teamwork as displayed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. These leaders are to be members, must complete the missional leadership discovery track, and are appointed and replaced by the board of elders.

### ***Moral Qualities***

A Deacon is to be esteemed by others. 1 Timothy 3:8 & 3:11

A Deacon is to be consistent. 1 Timothy 3:8

A Deacon is not to be given to drunkenness. 1 Timothy 3:8

A Deacon is not to be a lover of money. 1 Timothy 3:8

A Deacon is to be blameless. 1 Timothy 3:9

A Deacon is to be objective. 1 Timothy 3:11

A Deacon is to be able to keep confidences. 1 Timothy 3:11

### ***Domestic Qualities***

A Deacon is to be faithful in their marriage. 1 Timothy 3:12

A Deacon is to manage their children and household well. 1 Timothy 3:12

### ***Spiritual Qualities***

A Deacon is to know Truth and obey it. 1 Timothy 3:9

A Deacon is to be proven in acts of service. 1 Timothy 3:10

A Deacon is to be faithful in all situations. 1 Timothy 3:11

A Deacon is to serve well. 1 Timothy 3:12

## **1g. Removing An Elder or Deacon**

A painful reality is that leaders are just as human as every other person in the Body of Christ. Because of this, and in light of the unique expectations placed upon those tasked

with the responsibility of shepherding the church, there may be times where an elder or deacon must be removed from their leadership position. The process for removing an elder is to be administered in accordance with the pattern set out in 1 Timothy 5:19-21. Elders or deacons can be removed from their position for one of four reasons: 1) moral disqualification, 2) public divisiveness, 3) unorthodox doctrine, or 4) uncompromising refusal to submit to the unanimous will of the eldership on a matter, even after reasonable debate and discussion, resulting in division.

All allegations against an elder must come from two or more direct eyewitnesses to the issue in question and the elder board must investigate the matter. In the event of a legitimate offense that rises to the level of ineligibility it is the responsibility of the elder board to come alongside the sinning elder and either bring removal and public healing (due to repentance) or removal and public excommunication (due to unrepentance).

Removal of an elder requires a unanimous decision of the eldership (excluding the elder in question). Additionally, all matters that render an elder as ineligible will be made public so as to honor the high standard of eldership, fulfill the command of 1 Timothy 5:20 to share it publicly, and to clearly share the real story so that other stories are not created from hearsay or speculation. The entire process should be executed as swiftly as wisdom allows.

## **Bylaw 2: Membership**

Being a member of Redemption Church is more than coming to church on the weekend. It is a commitment to being a missional theologian that shares Jesus and helps others grow. Based on this, we seek to strive for God's best for our lives. That "best" is summed up in the following:

To love the Lord our God and our neighbor as ourselves.  
Mark 12:30-31

To pursue a life fully pleasing to Jesus as led by the Spirit in faith, hope and love.  
1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:16; 22-23, & Colossians 1:10

To use our time, talents and treasures to point to Jesus, advance His Kingdom and encourage others.  
Romans 13:11; 12:3-8, & 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Those who desire to pursue this missional heart will be recognized as members in the missional endeavor of Redemption Church.

It should be noted that while the membership model is a helpful tool for organizing the local body of Christ for effectiveness, membership in a local church is not a biblical requirement, and one's status as a member or non-member of Redemption Church has no bearing whatsoever on one's status in Christ. While the missional ideals and expectations set forth for membership in Redemption Church do align with biblical directives for all Christ-followers, and in fact one must be genuinely pursuing Christ in order to in good conscience fulfill these membership requirements, it is important that this distinction be kept clear.

### **2a. Pursuing Membership**

Anyone desiring to become a member of Redemption Church is expected to take the following steps for membership.

1. Attend Redemption Church for three months to get a rounded feel for who we are.
2. Attend our Membership Classes.
3. Meet with a designated Membership Class leader to share one's conversion to Christ, their spiritual journey, and discuss any agreements or disagreements with the mission, philosophy or beliefs of Redemption Church.
4. Commit to regular attendance, financial giving, personal ministry involvement, and missional living.

## **2b. The Welcoming of a Member**

After proceeding through the above steps all prospective members will be officially welcomed into membership at the end of their final Membership Class.

## **2c. Maintaining Membership**

As much as the elders and deacons are held to a high standard, so too are the members. This means that far more is expected of a member than a non-member. This is especially the case since members are entrusted with important affirmational duties that can affect the direction of the church at large. Because of this membership is not about having a vote, but rather an investment as active members who affirm direction because they are personally involved. It will be this very investment that will better inform how a member affirms the direction of the church.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 & Ephesians 4:1-16

With this in mind the minimum expectations for a member to maintain their membership annually will be:

1. Consistent Sunday attendance.
2. Regular giving to kingdom, gospel and church-advancing purposes that is proportionate to one's income.<sup>2</sup>
3. Ongoing personal/physical involvement in a defined ministry of Redemption Church outside of the worship service.
4. Proactive commitment to being a missional theologian.

At the Annual Celebration each member will personally affirm their previous year's commitment to the expectations of membership. This will be done using the same card designed to approve potential elders or bylaw changes. The affirmation questions will require a check mark be placed next to each statement and a signature at the bottom so as to make the card active for affirmation. The statements are as follows:

- ☐ I have consistently attended on Sundays throughout this year.
- ☐ I have regularly given financially in ways proportionate to my income throughout this year.
- ☐ I have been involved personally/physically in a defined ministry of Redemption Church throughout this year.
- ☐ I have sought to live as a missional theologian throughout this year.

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<sup>2</sup> We realize that there are select circumstances in which an unbelieving husband refuses to allow a believing wife to give to the local church. In such a case special exception will be made for a member so as to honor the higher biblical value of 1 Peter 3:1-6 & Ephesians 5:22-24. Additionally, it is not the intent of anyone within the leadership to decide what is "proportionate" giving. This is a question of personal conscience before you and Jesus.

## **2d. The Departure of a Member**

We deeply appreciate all who decide to become a member at Redemption Church. We do however recognize that life, people and circumstances change. Thus a change in one's membership status can come in one of four ways:

1. A member in active participation requests a transfer/removal of their membership.
2. A prolonged disengagement of 3 consecutive months from any of the expectations listed in "Maintaining Membership."
3. The elders remove one's membership due to unrepentant disunity or non-Christian beliefs and practices that result in church discipline. (Bylaw 4)
4. Any member who takes legal action against Redemption Church will immediately forfeit their membership status and whatever additional responsibilities they may have held.

## **2e. The Reinstatement of a Member**

The board of elders can reinstate a member to the regular membership of the church once that person reengages the expectations for membership.

## **Bylaw 3: Staff**

### **3a. Procedure for selecting pastor/elders**

The search team shall be comprised of the board of elders. Prospective pastoral candidates shall be considered based on leading, gifting, qualification, experience, like-mindedness, and must agree to the beliefs and philosophy of Redemption Church. Upon being approved by a unanimous affirmation of the board of elders, the prospective pastor/elder shall be presented to the church. As soon thereafter as is practical, the board of elders shall call a church wide meeting at which time the members shall decide to extend, or not to extend, the opportunity for that individual to be a pastor/elder. A 90% affirmation of the membership present shall be required to call a pastor/elder.

### **3b. Procedure for selecting support staff**

Creating new staff positions may be proposed by any elder but requires the full affirmation from the board of elders to move forward. The authority to hire support staff is at the discretion of the pastor/elders unless any elder raises concerns over a pastor's selection. In such a circumstance the pastor(s) must present supporting evidence to show the reasoning for such a selection and a re-affirmation from the elders must be sought.

### **3c. Procedure for release of pastor/elders**

If, at any time, a pastor/elder makes application to be released from his position a 90-day written notice will be requested. If the relations between that pastor and/or the church become detrimental to the welfare of Redemption Church, that relationship may be terminated by the unanimous decision of the board of elders, excluding the pastor in question with a timetable set by the elders.



### **3d. Procedure for release of support staff**

All additional staff termination is at the discretion of the pastor/elder who oversees that individual directly, but only after the elder board has been notified. That relationship may be terminated effective immediately. In the event of professional staff resignation, two weeks written notice will be requested of all non pastoral staff.

## **Bylaw 4: Church Discipline/Spiritual Restoration**

The concept of church discipline/spiritual restoration is taught throughout the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 and Titus 3:10-11). Its purpose is the loving yet firm restoration of a professing Christ follower who refuses to alter their destructive patterns or who brings disunity to Redemption Church. The reason for this is not to be mean or unloving, but to honor what God has instructed, to protect the unity of Redemption Church, and to hope that the individual will change their course of action. The board of elders shall carry out this process. Individuals of Redemption Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists, as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger.