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DAMASCUS COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be the Damascus Community Church as shown in the 1947 Articles of Incorporation as amended October 8th, 1991

Article II. Purpose

We unite as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. We affirm our union in faith, fellowship, and love with all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Redeemer of the world.

We determine to worship and glorify God (Ex 20:2-4; Matt 4:10; John 4:23-24; I Cor 12 - 14), to edify and build each other up in Christ (Ps 78:1-4; Eph. 4:11-16; Col 1:28), and to proclaim the Gospel to our community and the world (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 17:20-21; Act 1:8).

The fulfillment of this purpose may include, but not be limited to the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building and operation of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, media ministries, rescue missions, print shops, daycare centers, and camps; the evangelizing of the unsaved by the proclaiming of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Holy Scriptures, both in Sunday and week day schools of Christian education (e.g. Damascus Christian School); and the maintaining of caring and mission activities in the United States and any foreign country.

Article III. Statement of Faith

1. Scripture –

We believe the original autographs of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written by men moved by the Holy Spirit. Our contemporary manuscripts are reliable. The church uses a variety of translations, but for the sake of consistency we are using the English Standard Version in this constitution. These Scriptures are true being God breathed, given once for all time and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. Their interpretation is found through diligent study and the grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 2:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3; Ps 119:160).

2. Concerning God –

We believe there is one living and true God, Creator and Sustainer of all and Sovereign over all. He is perfect in all His attributes and worthy of our worship. He is one in essence but triune in nature, eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gen 1:1-2:25; Isa. 6:3; Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:3).

- a. We believe God the Father controls all things according to His good pleasure and perfect will and grace and for His glory. As the absolute and highest Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. His Fatherhood involves His relationship

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to the Son and Holy Spirit within the Trinity; to all mankind as Creator and Lord; and to all who believe in Jesus Christ and are born of Him into an intimate and eternal relationship through redemption and adoption as His own (Ps. 145:8,9; I Cor. 8:6; 1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:33; John 1:18; Ephesians 1:3; I Corinthians 11:3; Luke 3:38; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:3-6; John 3:3; I John 3:9; Hebrews 12:5-9).

- b. We believe that Jesus is Lord and Christ, the eternal Son of God. He became man (incarnate) by virgin birth, and yet remained God, therefore fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life and died a substitutionary death for the sin of all mankind. He was bodily resurrected and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He now ministers. He will return at any time now to receive those in Christ, and then establish His Kingdom on earth. He is the One through whom the Father will judge all mankind (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Acts 2:36; John 1:1, 14; Isaiah 53:5-6; I Peter 3:18; Acts 1:3-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 19:11-20; 19:6).
 - c. We believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the world convicting mankind concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and guiding believers in the truth. He ministers to believers in many ways, including baptizing, indwelling and sealing all believers at the moment of salvation and illuminating, empowering, gifting, filling and producing fruit. (John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13; 3:16; 4:4-6; 5:18; I Corinthians 12-14; Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 8:5-27; Rom. 12:4-6; Acts 2:6-8; I Corinthians 1:22; 14:21-22; II Cor 1:21-22).
3. Mankind –
We believe that mankind, first male and then female, was directly and immediately created by God in His image, giving human life unique value. Mankind was created to enjoy fellowship with God, glorify Him and be stewards of His earthly creation. The first man, Adam, sinned with the result that the sin nature is inherited by all, therefore all people stand condemned before God (Gen 1:26-28, 2:7, 20-23; 1Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 10:31, 15:22; Rom 3:23, 5:12, John 3:16-18).
4. Sin –
God is righteous, and has revealed righteousness in terms of human behavior through His Word, including both commandments and principles for living. By inherited nature and personal action, all men fall short of God's righteousness and thus are sinners, and do sin in attitude, action and thought. To deny this is to reject what God has revealed about human nature and behavior. The consequence of sin is eternal condemnation, required by God's just nature. In love God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to satisfy the requirements of his justice, paying the price for our sin by his death. Believers in Jesus are in the process of becoming like Jesus, with the expectation that they will sin less as they grow through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately will be sinless upon entering His eternal presence. (Psalm 51; Psalm 119; Romans 3:21-26; I John 1:8-10; Romans 5:12-19; 6:23; John 3:16; I John 3:2-3; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2: 1-3.)
5. Salvation –
We believe that salvation from the condemnation that results from sin is wholly of God, by grace through faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8, 9). Regarding this

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salvation, our Lord says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "(John 5:24). "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:44). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "(John 10:27-29)." Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18).

6. Church –

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body – the Church (Matt. 16:18, 1 Cor. 12:12, 13) of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col.1:18). Believers are to assemble in local churches as the body of Christ to fulfill the purposes Christ gave His Church. (Acts 14:23,27, 20:17,28; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 4: 4-6; Phil. 1:1; I Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1, Heb 10:25).

- a. We believe the Church's purpose is to worship and glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42), by praise (Acts 2:47) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2,15, 3:16,17), by fellowship (Acts 2:42; I John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the Gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8, 2:42).
- b. Each member of the body of Christ is given one or more spiritual gifts according to God's will. No one gift is given to all members of the body, nor is any gift the necessary evidence of saving faith or of being filled with the Spirit. All gifts are given to build up the body of Christ and to fulfill God's purposes. This includes any biblical use of tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, miracles, or prophecy. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:4-6; I Corinthians 12-14; Rom. 12:4-6)
- c. We believe that the unity Christ gives us bears witness to His saving and sustaining grace (John 17: 20-26; 1 John 2:9-19; Eph 4: 1-6).
- d. We believe that the one, supreme authority for the Church is Christ (I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18), through Whom order, discipline, and worship are established.
- e. We believe the disciplining of sinning members of the congregation is in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-22; Acts 5: I ff., I Cor. 5:1:13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 1:19, 20; Titus 1:10-16).
- f. We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-28, Matthew 28:18-20).

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7. Christian Conduct –

We believe "... the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." (Titus 2:11-14) Therefore, the believer has responsibilities in relationship to the three institutions God has established: the family, the state, and the church.

- a. The Family - The institution of family has as its foundation the marriage of one man to one woman, as described in Genesis 2:24, "... a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." This union is intended to be life-long, as Jesus counseled in Matthew 19:6, "... therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Love, mutual respect, and care are to guide family members as they fulfill Biblical responsibilities toward one another. Sexual acts and sexual intimacy are reserved for and appropriate only within this marriage relationship. We believe life begins at conception, and that human life is uniquely sacred and that children are a gift from the Lord. God alone has the prerogative to give and take life (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; Exodus 20:14; I Corinthians 6:18; Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 9:6; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; I Timothy 5:3-8, Deut. 32:39, I Sam. 2:6; Psalm 127: 3).
- b. The State - God has established governing authorities for the purpose of maintaining order in society and punishing wrongdoers. Submission to such authorities is commanded, and may be set aside only when the command of such authorities is in violation of other Biblical commands (Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-4; Acts 5:25-32).
- c. The Church - As members of the body of Christ, we are also members of one another, and are called to mutual love, care and service toward one another. Our purpose is that every believer grows in likeness to Christ, and the service of every member works together toward this end. All of our gifts and resources come from God and belong to Him. The work of the church is financed by the regular, proportional giving of God's people. Believers are to live at peace with one another, and resolve disputes between one another within the fellowship of believers. As witnesses who have experienced life in Christ, all believers are involved in sharing the message of salvation by various means. (Romans 12:3-16; Ephesians 4:7-16; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 6:1-8; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Philippians 2:3-4)

8. Angelic Beings –

We believe that angels, beings of a higher order than mankind, were created to serve God and worship Him. We believe the angel Satan exists and is the author of sin. He rebelled against God, involved other angels in his rebellion, and thus incurred God's judgment. Satan's temptation of Eve led to mankind's choice to sin. (Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:6-7; Job 38:4-7; Psalm 103:20; Matthew 25:41; Luke 10:18)

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9. Future –

We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, visible, premillennial return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We believe in the resurrection of all who have died. Unbelievers will be condemned to the eternal lake of fire, along with Satan and his fallen angels. All who have believed in Jesus Christ will inherit eternal life with God in the new Heaven and new Earth. (Zechariah 14:4-11; Daniel 9:24-27; John 14:1-3; Matthew 24:36, I Corinthians 15:51; Titus 2:11-14; I Thessalonians 4:13-18, II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 12:7-12; 1 John 5: 11-12; Revelation 20, Revelation 21)

Article IV Membership

Section A. Membership Defined

1. Damascus Community Church will welcome into the membership persons of like faith who purpose to live according to the Word of God. Membership would include those who:

- a. Profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Have demonstrated their obedience to Christ through baptism as believers (we practice baptism by immersion, Romans 6:3-4, Romans 10:9-10, Acts 2:41-47.)
- c. Are in agreement with the Statement of Faith (Article III), and support the DCC Mission, Vision, and Core Values.
- d. Fulfill membership responsibilities outlined in Article IV Sec B.2.

2. New candidates for membership shall complete an application for membership, participate in a welcome class to learn about the history, organization, mission, vision, values and beliefs of the church, and share their testimony with the Elder Council or their designated representative(s).

3. Upon Elder Council approval, new members will be introduced and received at a public worship service.

Section B. Member Privileges and Responsibilities

1. All members enjoy the privileges afforded them as members of the body of Christ in a local fellowship according to Scripture in order to carry out the purposes of this church set out in Article II. All have the privilege of participating in the decision-making process as provided for in the constitution as outlined in Article VI, Section A, 4 c and d (Ephesians 4, I Corinthians 12:14).

2. Members will support one another in at least the following ways:

- a. Maintain fellowship with each other (Matthew 5:23-24, I John 1:6-7).
- b. Participate in the assembly of the church (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- c. Demonstrate love for fellow church members and pray for one another (Ephesians 6:18, I John 3:14-16).
- d. Maintain the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).
- e. Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (Ephesians 5:21).
- f. Esteem others better than themselves (Philippians 2:3).

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- g. Serve one another according to giftedness (I Peter 4:10).
 - h. Contribute to the needs of the saints (Romans 12:13).
 - i. Give financial and other support to the ministries of the church (I Corinthians 16:1-2, II Corinthians 9:7-15).
 - j. Be responsive to leadership (Hebrew 13:17).
3. Members will prayerfully seek God's direction, elder and deacon guidance and counsel in identifying how they, as parts of the Body of Christ, can function in this local fellowship (I Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:7-16).
 4. Disagreements between members will be resolved in accordance with I Corinthians 6:1-8 with consideration of Romans 14:19. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (and other believers) and will seek such resolution with the involvement of the Elder Council as needed Article VIII, Section H. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (Ephesians 4:31-32).
 5. Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the corporation, but shall only entitle the member to give input on matters of concern to the elder council. Members can take advantage of this right by contacting the chairman of the elder council to schedule an opportunity for input at an elder meeting.
 6. Current membership list will be available in the office.

Section C. Membership Termination

1. Membership may be terminated:
 - a. when a member requests their membership be withdrawn
 - b. by disciplinary action of the church
 - c. when a member leaves DCC to commit to another local body.

Section D. Discipline of Members

1. The purpose of church discipline is restoration of a sinning brother or sister to fellowship with Christ and the Church. Every member has a responsibility to seek the restoration of a fellow believer involved in sin (Luke 6:42).
2. The discipline process begins when any member of the body becomes aware of a fellow believer in disobedience to Christ. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).
3. Discipline in all cases of sin, shall be dealt with according to Biblical teaching as outlined in Article VIII, Section F. Every effort will be made to win the member or members to renewed Christian living and church fellowship. In the event that no reconciliation can be made, participation in church fellowship may be withdrawn. Upon repentance, the disciplined

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individual will be restored to full fellowship (Matthew 18:1-35, Galatians 6:1, I Corinthians 5:1-13).

Section E. Purity of the Body

The Elders shall be responsible for seeing that the discipline process be carried out when needed.

Article V. Government

Section A. Purpose of this Constitution

This constitution is an attempt to provide God's people at Damascus Community Church with guidelines that will enable them to fulfill the purpose of the local church. It is recognized that this constitution does not guarantee the success of the church. It is not intended to provide specific details that allow the people of God to function mechanically apart from the Spirit of God (Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 16:18).

1. This constitution shall be reviewed each January of an even year to evaluate conformity to practice and current law.
2. This constitution may be replaced or amended when leadership and the members of the church body recognize the need for such change. The elders will appoint a committee to review and recommend change(s). Response from the church body shall be solicited by appropriate means. The elders shall examine the proposed constitution modification(s) in the light of Scripture and the congregational response. A final draft will be submitted to the congregation for review and comment 30 days prior to adoption.
3. The By-Laws and Appendices to this constitution may be changed by unanimous agreement of the elder council after provision for input from the congregation.

Section B. Biblical Precedent

This church shall be governed in accordance with the New Testament pattern. Essentially a 'Theocracy', this church is under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. His leadership will be carried out by means of plurality of elders (overseers), deacons (servants), and body members (believer priests, saints) serving under the authority of His Word. The purpose of the church will be met by the faithful teaching of the Word, by diligent oversight by elders, service of deacons, by organized commissions and by every member exercising his gift(s) in submission to the Holy Spirit. (Col. 1:18, Philippians 1:1, Acts 6:1-6, I Peter 2:5-9, I Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:15-16, I Corinthians 3:16)

Article VI. Offices

Section A. Elders

1. Definition

This church shall be led by a plurality of elders functioning under the Headship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Col. 1:18). The elders, appointed with the consent and support of the church body, are to shepherd the church and its members. Elders may have

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different roles according to their gifting and are expected to assume leadership as appropriate. (Acts 15: 13-29; I Tim. 3:4-5; I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 4: 11-12).

2. Qualifications

Elders shall be men who are able and desire to serve God in this role. Each member of the Elder Council must be an active member of this church, characterized by and developing in the qualifications described in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- a. Above reproach; I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6,7
- b. Husband of one wife; I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6
- c. Sober-minded; I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8
- d. Self-controlled; I Tim. 3:2
- e. Respectable; I Tim. 3:2
- f. Hospitable; I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8
- g. Able to teach; I Tim. 3:2
- h. Not a drunkard; I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7
- i. Not violent; I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7
- j. ... but gentle; I Tim. 3:3
- k. Not quarrelsome; I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7
- l. Not a lover of money; I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7
- m. Manages his own household well; I Tim. 3:4, Titus 1:6
- n. ... with all dignity keeping his children submissive; I Tim 3:4
- o. Not a recent convert; I Tim. 3:6
- p. Well thought of by outsiders (those outside the church); I Tim. 3:7
- q. Not arrogant; Titus 1:7
- r. Not quick-tempered; Titus 1:7
- s. Not greedy for gain; Titus 1:7
- t. Lover of good; Titus 1:8
- u. Upright; Titus 1:8
- v. Holy; Titus 1:8
- w. Disciplined; Titus 1:8
- x. Hold firm to the trustworthy Word; Titus 1:9

3. Appointment

- a. We believe that God calls men to elder ministry in accordance with the needs of the church body. The congregation affirms their qualification, acknowledges God's call, and they are then appointed to office (ordained) by the Elder Council. It is desirable that there shall be at least as many unpaid elders as paid elders.
- b. Elders will retain office consistent with their continued desire, qualification, and ability to serve in this capacity. Removal of elders from office shall be effected by personal resignation, by disciplinary action in accordance with I Timothy 5:19-20, Matt 18:15-16 and Galatians 6:1, or when there is an inability or unwillingness to work in accord with the Elder Council as provided for in this constitution. The Elders shall be responsible for determining leaves of absence upon request from a fellow Elder or staff. Elders

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who resign but remain spiritually qualified may be reinstated upon their request and approval of the Elder council. Elders may be placed on administrative leave¹ during the investigation of a charge brought by two or three witnesses (Article VIII, Section F, #5; I Tim 5:19) or based on a complaint involving civil or criminal law.

- c. The Elder Council will assign Elder selection responsibilities to the appropriate commission. The commission will be responsible to develop the selection and review process that ensures the qualifications (Article VI, Section A, 2) are thoroughly examined. Evaluating an elder candidate's fitness for office should be done prayerfully, thoughtfully, patiently, and biblically. The process should include, but not be limited to, completion of an application, outside reference checks, background checks for working with children, membership status, fulfillment of membership responsibilities, a home visit with the candidate and family, an examination process by the commission members, an examination process by the Elder Council, and a four week examination process by the church body.
 - d. An Elder candidate who will have a preaching role (I Timothy 5:17) must teach for at least two consecutive Sundays and have wide exposure to the body during the week. The candidate's visit will be announced during Sunday worship services at least two weeks prior to his visit.
 - e. Objections to a candidate during the examining process must be dealt with personally in accordance with the spirit of Matthew 18. If the objection remains, the elders shall resolve the issue in light of Scripture and a thorough examination to determine whether or not the candidate's name is withdrawn. If not, his candidacy is continued.
 - f. Upon Elder Council approval, recognition of a new Elder shall be done during a formal service of appointment.
 - g. All elders shall be subject to an on-going evaluation by the church body (elders & congregation) in light of the spiritual qualifications declared in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. If any church member has a question about the qualifications of an elder with reference to the above passages, he is to initiate the Matthew 18:15-16 process to resolve the matter.
4. Duties
- a. The primary duty of elders is to lead with a spirit of servanthood, shepherding in accordance with I Peter 5:1-3. "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly; not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

¹ Administrative Leave - Administrative leave is an authorized absence from duty without loss of pay and without charge to leave (staff elders).

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- b. The elders function as a Council and speak with one voice not as individual members. The elders shall create policy, and oversee the general program, the administration of the ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), the ministries of the whole Church through the administration of appropriate commissions (Article VI), and the calling of paid staff.
- c. The elders will make decisions by seeking the mind of Christ. The process may include the study of Scripture, prayer, carefully assembled facts, and the counsel of DCC members. Decisions are reached by agreement among elders. If agreement among elders is not readily manifest, they will continue to seek the mind of Christ. Other alternatives may be explored or the decision may be tabled for a period of time.
- d. The elders will seek to maintain unity in the body consistent with the mind of Christ. To this end, the elder council will endeavor to faithfully communicate with the body on matters under consideration. (John 17:20-22, Ephesians 4:3)
- e. The elders shall choose from among them a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary for facilitating business in accordance with applicable civil law. These three officers shall function as such in Elder Council meetings and as legal officers of the corporation according to state requirements.
- f. The elders shall meet at least monthly, with regular, consistent attendance required.
- g. The elders shall provide an annual financial report according to applicable civil laws.

Section B. Deacons

1. Definition

In the New Testament the word deacon generally describes those who serve (minister) in the context of the church body. In addition, deacons were individuals specifically qualified and identified by specific responsibilities (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1-2). At DCC, we identify those who have leadership positions in commissions as Deacons who are qualified according to I Timothy 3:8-12.

2. Qualifications

Deacons shall be men and women who are able and desire to be servants of the local church body, who have conscientiously accepted the statement of faith and the constitution of the church. A Deacon must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-12;

The male Deacon:

- a. Men of dignity v. 8
- b. Not double tongued v. 8
- c. Not addicted to much wine v. 8
- d. Not fond of sordid gain v. 8
- e. Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience v. 9
- f. Above reproach v. 10

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- g. Husband of only one wife v. 12
- h. Good managers of their children and their own households v. 12

The female Deacon:

- i. Dignified v. 11
- j. Not malicious gossips v. 11
- k. Temperate v. 11
- l. Faithful in all things v. 11

3. Appointment

- a. All members who qualify (Article VI, Section B, 2) are potential candidates for the office of deacon. Deacons serve as officers of commissions as defined by the commission's ministry description.
- b. The Elder Council will assign deacon selection responsibilities to each commission. The Leadership Commission will be responsible to develop the selection and review process that ensures the qualifications (Article VI, Section B, 2) are thoroughly examined. Evaluating a deacon candidate's fitness for office should be done prayerfully, thoughtfully, patiently, and biblically. After the selection process has been completed, deacon candidates will be appointed by the Elder Council.
- c. Deacons shall serve terms according to the commission's term and function.
- d. All Deacons shall be subject to an on-going evaluation by the church body (elders & congregation) in light of the spiritual qualifications declared in I Timothy 3:8-12. If any church member has a question about the qualifications of a Deacon with reference to the above passages, he is to initiate the Matthew 18:15-16 process to resolve the matter.
- e. Removal of Deacons from office shall be by tenure completion, personal resignation or by disciplinary action in accordance with Matthew 18:16-17 and Galatians 6:1.

4. Duties

The deacons shall report directly to the elders. Deacons will serve as officers of specific commissions, relieving elders of tasks that hinder shepherding responsibilities.

Section C. Personnel

1. Non-Pastoral Staff

The Elder Council will assign development of staff ministry descriptions and personnel selections to the appropriate commission as needs are identified. All staff positions and appointments require Elder Council consent.

2. Pastoral Staff

a. Definition

Elders, designated as Pastors, are members of the body who are provided financial support by the church to free them for their shepherding ministry.

b. Qualification

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They shall be measured according to elder qualifications as defined in Article VI, A, 2. Spiritual qualifications and gifting shall be consistent with the ministry involved.

c. Appointment

- i. The Elder Council will assign development of pastoral ministry descriptions to the appropriate commission. All staff positions and appointments require Elder Council consent.
- ii. The Elder Council will assign selection responsibilities to the appropriate commission. The commission will be responsible to develop the selection and review process that ensures the qualifications (Article VI, Section B, 2) are thoroughly examined. Evaluating a candidate's fitness for office should be done prayerfully, thoughtfully, patiently, and Biblically. The process should include, but not be limited to, completion of an application, background checks for working with children, a home visit with the candidate and family, an examination process by the commission members, an examination process by the Elder council and the church body.
- iii. The examination process by the church body shall include a demonstration of the candidate's abilities to fulfill the ministry description (ex. Article 6. A. 3. d).
- iv. If the elders, in consultation with body members, approve the candidate, they shall invite him to serve as pastor. He shall be appointed and continue to serve based on his desire and ability to function effectively according to the applicable ministry description.

d. Duties

- i. Duties will be those specified in the applicable ministry description.

3. Ministry descriptions shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Position or Title
- b. Purpose
- c. Working relationships, reporting responsibilities and relationships (other personnel, commissions, elder council, etc.)
- d. Responsibilities / Duties:
- e. Qualifications and Credentials (Personal, Spiritual, Professional, etc.)
- f. Work Schedule Expectations (Weekly Schedule, Services and special events, Meetings, etc.)
- g. Working Conditions and Requirements
- h. Salary, Benefits, Vacation, Sick Leave, Agreement for Term of Service (Paid Staff)

4. Ordaining

The elders, in consultation with the Church Body, may nominate for ordination to a specific ministry a person who possesses the appropriate scriptural qualifications and gifting for that ministry as determined by the Elder Council. The elders shall establish the process for the examination of a candidate. Upon receiving a favorable report from this examination, the elders shall set a time and place for the ordination service. Ordaining shall be done according to the principle of I Tim. 5:22.

Article VII. Organizational Structure

Section A. Elder Council

The Elder council (Article VI, Section A) is the governing body of Damascus Community Church.

Section B. Commissions

1. A Commission is a group of people brought together to help administer related ministries. A commission would include Deacons (Article VI, Section B) who serve as its officers and may include other DCC members (numbers to be determined in commission's ministry description), and an Elder representative where needed. The Elders provide oversight for commissions.
2. The functions of each commission shall be specified by a written ministry description provided by the Elders and reviewed and updated as needed.
3. Commissions shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Caring
 - b. Facilities
 - c. Financial Stewardship
 - d. Leadership/Personnel
 - e. Outreach
 - f. School
 - g. Spiritual Growth
 - h. Worship

Section C. Ministries

A ministry is an area of service, identified by a carefully defined purpose and role related to the DCC body as a whole. A commission provides oversight and support of a ministry, as indicated in the church organizational chart.

Section D. Committees

A committee is a group of people brought together to deal with a specific task or need. Membership of a committee is made up of individuals gifted to assist in meeting specific ministry needs. The Elders or Deacons can appoint committees.

Article VIII. By-Laws and Appendices

Section A. Conflict or Duality of Interest in Decisions

In decisions where an individual may have dual interests, those interests must be fully disclosed and appropriate measures taken to avoid conflict. i.e. competing bids, abstention from processes, etc.

Section B. Accurate Recording

An accurate record of all meetings of the elders, commissions, committees, and congregational meetings shall be maintained in the church office. Unless deemed

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inappropriate by the elders or staff involved or unlawful due to matters of confidentiality, these records are available for review to the congregation.

Section C. Quorum

Elders, Commissions, and Committees shall have a quorum present to conduct official business. A quorum is defined as 2/3 of the group's total membership.

Section D. Meetings of the Congregation

An annual meeting of the membership will take place to provide information on the activities and status of ministries and to communicate the budget for the next fiscal year. The Elder Council may call additional meetings as needed.

Section E. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for this church shall begin July 1st and end June 30th.

Section F. Discipline Process

1. A member who becomes aware of the apparent sin of a fellow member shall humbly and privately approach that member to seek clarification and if necessary, repentance and restoration. If the member repents or no sin occurred, there is no further action to be taken.
2. If the member does not hear by responding appropriately, resolving the issue, then a second approach is made with one or two others, again to seek clarification, and if necessary repentance and restoration. This is to provide witnesses to the interaction. If the member repents or no sin occurred, there is no further action to be taken.
3. If the member still does not hear and respond, the member who first approached him, with said witnesses, will report the situation to the Elder Council as shepherds of the church. They will investigate the allegation against the member to seek clarification and if necessary, repentance and restoration. If the member repents or no sin occurred, there is no further action to be taken.
4. If the Elder Council determines that sin has occurred and the erring member will not repent after correction by the Elders, membership will be withdrawn. If the ex-member repents, then they may be restored to membership and the fellowship of the church.
5. In a situation involving an elder, the grievance must be from two or more witnesses. If they are unrepentant based on the previous steps, they must be corrected in front of the whole church, as a warning to the rest of the church body.
(Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-17, I Timothy 5:19-20)

Section G. Designated Contributions

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Elder Council. The Elder Council may assign oversight of designated contributions to the appropriate commission. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other

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than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

Section H. Binding Arbitration

- 1) Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.
- 2) Notice of Arbitration
 - a. In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in section H, 1, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section H, 4a below.
- 3) Limitations on Arbitration Decisions
 - a. Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Section H, 4a were followed.
 - b. Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section H, 4a were followed.
- 4) Arbitration Procedures

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the Elder Council.

Section I. Indemnification

- 1) Actions Subject to Indemnification
 - a. The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct

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was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

2) Expenses Subject to Indemnification

To the extent that a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

3) Limitations of Indemnification

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made

- i. by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of elders who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding;
- ii. Or if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested elders so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

4) Timing of Indemnification

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the board of deacons in the specific case; on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

5) Extent of Indemnification

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

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6) Insurance

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

Article IX. Adoption

This constitution was officially adopted by decision of the Elder Council on _____. This constitution supersedes any other constitution and/or by-laws of Damascus Community Church.

Elder Council Members –

Chairman – Roger Reeves

Vice Chairman – Steve Hardy

Secretary – Bob Watt

John Chirgwin, Mitch Teixeira, Jerry Johnson, Phil Rankin, Andrew McClellan, Tim Oakley

Table of Organization

