



**CHURCH OF THE  
OPEN DOOR**

1260 Fort Washington Avenue

Fort Washington, PA 19034

## **Church Bylaws for Church of the Open Door**

### **ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE**

#### **1.01—NAME**

This congregation of believers shall be known as Church of the Open Door. The church is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

#### **1.02—PURPOSE**

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming and teaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, establishing and maintaining worship of our Lord Jesus Christ, educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

### **ARTICLE 2 THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANT**

#### **2.01—ARTICLES OF FAITH**

Each and every person, in order to become or remain a member of this Church, shall subscribe to the following Articles of Faith:

- A. I believe in one God, Creator of heaven and earth; Spirit, Light, Love, and Truth; eternal, almighty, infallible, and unchangeable, infinitely wise, just, and holy, and that God eternally exists and manifests Himself to us in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- B. I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Word manifested in flesh. I believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true man. I believe in His vicarious, substitutionary and redeeming death, Christ receiving in Himself the penalty of man's sin. I believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension and in His personal, imminent and premillennial return for his redeemed ones, followed by His coming in glory to judge the rebellious and to establish His millennial reign.
- C. I believe in the Holy Spirit, in His personality, that He is God; and I believe that His work is to convict men of sin; to regenerate, indwell and set the believer apart to a holy life; to keep and empower the believer day by day. I believe that He is the teacher of God's Word and the Guide for the daily life.
- D. I believe that the whole Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and is the supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- E. I believe that man, having been created pure and in the image of God, is by his own sin fallen from grace, and I believe that in consequence, all have sinned, are guilty and lost, and absolutely incapable of saving themselves by their own works, being dead in their trespasses and sins.
- F. I believe that we are saved solely by grace, through faith in the blood sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- G. I believe in the eternal security and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal judgment and punishment of all who reject our Lord Jesus Christ: "This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the Lake of Fire." (Rev. 20:14, 15)

- H. I believe that Satan is a fallen angel, the author of the fall, and that he will be eternally punished.
- I. I believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the lost to judgment and everlasting punishment.
- J. I believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death till He come. I believe that Water Baptism is a symbol of the believer's union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection.
- K. I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is composed solely of those who have been redeemed and washed in His blood, and regenerated and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and that they are saved to serve; and that it is the responsibility and privilege of all who are saved to seek to win others to Christ, to the "uttermost part of the earth"; that they must seek to live a holy life, to separate themselves from and forsake all that might dishonor God or cast discredit on His cause, or weaken their testimony.

## **2.02—SUBSCRIBE TO ARTICLES OF FAITH**

In subscribing to these Articles of Faith, we by no means set aside or undervalue any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all of which we believe to be God's own written Word, given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but the knowledge and belief of the truth as stated in our Articles of Faith we deem necessary to sound doctrine, and therefore requisite for Christian fellowship.

## **2.03—COVENANT**

The following Covenant shall be used for the purpose of publicly welcoming new members into the congregation:

Having, as we trust, been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His grace and mercy, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ with the members of Church of the Open Door.

We will walk together in Christian love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3).

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but regularly attend the church's meetings for worship, prayer, study, and fellowship, and will use His spiritual gifts for the edification of the body (Heb. 10:23-25; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

We will purpose to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer, to help one another in sickness and distress, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and to cultivate Christian compassion and courtesy (Rom. 12:9-10; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:22).

We will faithfully participate in the ordinances of the church, and endeavor after unity of mind in doctrine. We will submit both to the leadership of the Elders and to the church's discipline upon ourselves and lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture (Matt. 18:15-18; Phil. 2:1-4; Heb. 13:7, 17).

We will endeavor to bring up such under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends (Rom. 10:14-15; Col. 1:28; 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:15).

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations (Prov. 14:21, 31; Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 4:11-16).

We will strive by God's grace and power to live out a faithful Christian witness in the world; and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, we will seek to fulfill our calling to lead a holy life and to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Cor. 1:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:13-15; 2:1-3, 11).

We will endeavor to faithfully unite with another church body of believers, if, in the providence of God, we leave this church and are not restricted by health or physical limitations. We will strive to carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word within that church (Acts 2:42).

### **ARTICLE 3 ADDITIONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

#### **3.01—MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY**

- A. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage defined and ordained by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union, as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility or space owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their biological genders as determined at birth. Whenever there is a conflict between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; I Cor. 7:1-9)
- B. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined in (a) above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are contradictory to God's natural design and purpose for sexual activity. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
- C. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:26-27)

#### **3.02—FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

- A. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God, but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
- B. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the spiritual leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a wonderful gift and heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle examples and appropriate training and discipline. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

#### **3.03—DIVORCE**

We believe in the sanctity of marriage as defined and ordained by God from the time of creation. However, we recognize that there may be biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage in our fallen world. We believe divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and bring glory to God for Christian service. We also believe that divorce does not automatically prevent a man from being considered for the offices of pastor or Elder Board member. (Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; I Cor. 7:10-16)

#### **3.04—SANCTITY OF LIFE**

- A. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:13-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:36, 44)
- B. We believe that an intentional act or omission that facilitates premature death is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. We do not believe that discontinuing medical procedures

that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome violates God's Sovereignty. (Ex. 20:13; 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

### **3.05—LOVE**

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal graciously, humbly, gently, and patiently with those who oppose us. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:17-18)

### **3.06—LAWSUITS WITHIN THE CHURCH**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits within the church. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company provided the claim is pursued without anger, malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

### **3.07—PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

Protection of Children. We believe that children are from the Lord and must be protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero-tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child. (Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:6, 19:14; Mark 10:14)

## **ARTICLE 4 MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.01—QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Those seeking membership:

- A. Must through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
- B. Must be interviewed by a minimum of two Elder Board members, pastoral staff and/or Elder Board to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the Elder Board.
- C. Membership will be granted by a majority vote of the Elder Board.

### **4.02—PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Only members of at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be eligible to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church may only exercise voting privileges in those areas that are defined and limited by these bylaws (7.03). Members may not vote to initiate any church action; rather, the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the Elder Board.
- B. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel and approval of the Elder Board. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The Elder Board shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The Elder Board shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor.
- C. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the public is invited to all the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The Elder Board has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If, after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or

remains on church property, the person may, at the discretion of the Elder Board or person designated by the Elder Board, be treated as a trespasser.

- D. A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the Elder Board written minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided they shall have made a written request to the church office stating the precise records requesting to be viewed and the reason for the request, and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Requests may be denied if such request is deemed unnecessary by a majority vote of the Elder Board. Elder Board meeting minutes and discipline committee meetings, as well as other information involving privacy interests such as, but not limited to, donor records, lists of names and addresses of church members, individual benevolence, individual salaries, health information, background checks, and social security numbers, are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection or copy without a court order. Members agree that information obtained from any inspection or copying of records will be kept in the strictest confidence. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and materials, for copies of any requested documents before releasing the copies to the member.

#### **4.03— CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

From time to time conflicts will arise within the local body of believers. These disputes range from simple misunderstandings to differences in doctrine. These conflicts can be used to drive division, bitterness, and strife into the local body. The commandment to love one another is clear and primary in all that we do especially to those of the household of Faith. (Galatians 6:10, John 13:34, 1 Peter 1:22) We follow the biblical example that Jesus Christ gave us in Matthew 18 to resolve conflicts between members. All members are to act in love towards one another forgiving one another, and restoring right fellowship and unity.

- A. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).
- B. Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15–18. Before such dismissal, however,
1. It shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then
  2. The warning church member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then
  3. It shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders determines—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15–18 and 1 Timothy 5:19—that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church and the congregation thereof at a regular or specially scheduled congregational meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regular or specially scheduled congregational meeting. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then
  4. He or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regular or specially called congregational meeting. If the erring

individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

- C. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church and the congregation thereof at a regular or specially scheduled congregational meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:
  - 1. Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole church (1 Cor. 5:1-5)1;
  - 2. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the Elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the Elders (Romans 16:17); or
  - 3. Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).
- D. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members of this church who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit, and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by church members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.
- E. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Elders, a church member, non-member regular attender, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

#### **4.04—TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- A. The membership of the church shall be reviewed on a semiannual basis by the Elder Board. A reasonable attempt shall be made to contact those that have not participated in church life. At the discretion of the Elder Board these individuals' membership shall be terminated by a majority vote.
- B. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member unites in membership with another church, unless the individual member is under church discipline.
- C. The Elders shall refuse a member's voluntary resignation if the member is under church discipline, in accordance with Scripture (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10-11).

#### **4.05—TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

We do not issue or accept letters of transfer as written statements of good standing.

### **ARTICLE 5 OFFICERS**

#### **5.01—DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS**

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president/chairman of the corporation and the Elder Board. The vice-chairman of the Elder Board shall serve as vice president of the corporation. The Elder Board shall elect the secretary of the Elder Board, by a majority vote that is reaffirmed annually, who shall serve as secretary of the corporation; The Elder Board shall appoint the church treasurer, by a majority vote that is reaffirmed annually, who shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.

## **5.02—CHURCH OFFICERS**

The church officers are pastor(s), Elder Board members, secretary, treasurer, and any other positions deemed necessary by the Elder Board. The church shall have a minimum of three Elder Board members.

## **5.03—ELIGIBILITY FOR CHURCH OFFICERS**

- A. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the statement of faith set forth in Article 2. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm in writing their agreement with the statement of faith.
- B. All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the Elder Board to commence or continue in their offices.
- C. Only church members are eligible for appointment to any church office or position.

## **5.04—AFFIRMATION OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

The annual affirmation of Elders except for the pastor/president by the church membership shall occur during the month of June at the annual church business meeting. The Elder Board of the church must be affirmed by a majority of the eligible church membership (4.02 A) present at a regular or special church business meeting. The Elder Board, from time to time as deemed appropriate, may appoint other church Elders subject to an affirmation by a majority of the eligible church membership, present and voting at any regular or special church business meeting. Members may submit to the Elder Board nominations for Elder. The Elder Board shall then serve as the nominating committee for all general affirmation of officers. If the Elder Board is not affirmed at the annual business meeting of the church, the current Elder Board will remain in office until a new Elder Board is affirmed by a majority of the eligible church membership (4.02 A) present at a regular or special church business meeting.

## **5.05—TERMS OF SERVICE FOR OFFICERS**

- A. The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special church business meeting by following the procedures outlined in Article 6.01 A majority of the eligible members present shall be required to remove the pastor from office. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership.
- B. Any Elder Board member may be removed from office before his term expires for any reason stated or unstated upon motion by any Elder Board member and an affirmative majority vote of the other Elder Board members at a duly called meeting of the Elder Board. No congregational vote is necessary for Elder Board member removal. This process is intended to protect the personal or private information of any Elder Board member being removed from office.
- C. The term of service for secretary and treasurer of the church/corporation shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be reappointed.
- D. All officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly affirmed or appointed, unless removed for disciplinary reasons.

## **5.06—CALLING A PASTOR**

Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the statement of faith and bylaw provisions of the church and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:

- A. The Elder Board shall select a pulpit committee to consist of all Elder Board members and up to five other members elected by a majority vote of the board. The pulpit committee shall interview

potential candidates and will only consider men who have read these bylaws and fully subscribe to the statement of faith.

- B. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include, at a minimum, the following: watching preaching either on-line or in person, a background check, a credit check, a reference check, and the filling out of a detailed application that explains the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry as well as his positions on issues of doctrinal significance.
- C. Upon a two-thirds majority vote of the pulpit committee, the pulpit committee will formally announce the pastoral candidate to the church, after which the candidate must preach during at least one regularly scheduled church service and be available for a church-wide question/answer time prior to being affirmed by the church membership.
- D. Notification to the church membership must be given 14 days prior to a pastoral candidate's preaching service(s), and notification must be given 14 days prior to the church membership's affirmation of the pastoral candidate.
- E. The candidate must be affirmed as pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and qualified to vote. This vote shall be taken by written, secret ballot at a meeting at which the candidate is not present. The pulpit committee will only present for consideration to the membership one candidate at a time, and an up or down affirmation must be cast prior to consideration of other potential candidates.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS**

#### **6.01—THE PASTOR**

- A. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He shall administer the ordinances of the church; act as moderator, or appoint a moderator, at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters; supervise the teaching ministries of the church; and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of Scripture, the pastor has the responsibility of resolution.
- B. The pastor shall serve as the chairman of the Elder Board and president of the corporation. He shall publicly inform all new officers of the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and shall perform such other duties as generally belong to the position of pastor. He shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry God has given him.
- C. The pastor in unity with the Elder Board shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his absence, he (or the vice-chairman of the Elder Board in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform his duties) shall be responsible to invite speakers to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith.
- D. The pastor in unity with the Elder Board shall be responsible to establish mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs. There will be a zero-tolerance policy regarding abuse of minors. Any credible suspicions of child abuse alleged to be perpetrated by staff, volunteers, members, or non-members will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement and child abuse prevention authorities.

#### **6.02—THE ELDER BOARD**

- A. The Elder Board seeks to shepherd eagerly and gently in a servant-leadership role; by teaching with biblical accuracy, leading by example, protecting from error, ruling with wisdom, and overseeing by understanding the people, functions, policies, ministries, and vision for the glory of Jesus Christ.
- B. The Elder Board shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the church. The Elder Board is responsible for preparing to observe church ordinances and shall consider applications for church

membership. The Elder Board shall evaluate benevolence needs, disburse benevolence funds in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The Elder Board shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable, or the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the board may appoint a pulpit committee.

- C. The Elder Board, on behalf of the church, shall establish committees and appoint the members of the various committees.
- D. The Elder Board shall call for nominations for Elders from all voting members of the congregation. The Elder Board shall appoint one of their own to chair the nomination process. The Elder Board shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The Elder Board will approve or disapprove the candidates and then present qualified candidates to the congregation for affirmation.
- E. The Elder Board will be responsible to appoint a designee to provide child abuse prevention training for all staff and volunteers according to federal, state, and local regulations.
- F. Following the annual church business meeting, the Elder Board shall assemble and elect a vice-chairman, by a majority vote of the Elder Board, a secretary for the Elder Board/corporation, by a majority vote of the Elder Board, and the church/corporation treasurer, by a majority vote by the Elder Board.
- G. The pastor and the Elder Board shall constitute the Board of Directors of the corporation. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the Elder Board under these bylaws, the Elder Board has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called business meeting:
  - 1. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
  - 2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
  - 3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.
  - 4. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.
  - 5. Emergency funding provision. In the event of an emergency, such as a catastrophic failure of systems or equipment that may compromise the building or plant's integrity, normal operations, or to assure safety for its staff, members, or occupants, the Elder Board may, upon majority vote, take whatever actions are needed and appropriate to restore normal operation to the facility. In any case, the Elder Board will provide a detailed description of the problem and resolution to the Congregation with 14 days following said action.
  - 6. To select and remove all the agents, staff, and employees of the Corporation; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- H. All powers of the Elder Board shall be compatible with the laws of the state of Pennsylvania.
- I. The Elder Board shall conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on child abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a church financial investment policy (if applicable).

- J. The Elder Board shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the board that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the bylaws.

#### **6.03—SECRETARY**

The secretary, along with any assistant(s) shall:

- A. Certify and keep at the office of the church: the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church.
- B. Maintain and file minutes of all church business and board meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and according to these bylaws.
- C. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
- D. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In the case of absence or disability of the secretary, or his refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the vice-chairman of the Elder Board.
- E. Serve as the secretary of the Elder Board and the corporation and be a member in good standing.

#### **6.04—TREASURER**

The treasurer, along with any assistant(s) shall:

- A. Count, or cause to be counted, along with up to two other persons so appointed, and record in a permanent record all monies received as church offerings. The counting and recording of all monies received will be completed within 1 week of the service(s).
- B. Convey in a timely manner all funds received to the person designated by the Elder Board for verification and deposit in the bank, including monies received from outside sources.
- C. Maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions, and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue a receipt to each contributor at the end of the calendar year.
- D. Keep in the church office an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds, make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by the Elder Board, and for annual, quarterly, or otherwise special or regular business meetings.
- E. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

#### **6.05—DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS**

- A. All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
- B. Any officer who neglects their duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from office at the discretion of the Elder Board, and another may be appointed by the Elder Board to serve the unexpired term.

### **ARTICLE 7**

## **CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE ELDER BOARD**

#### **7.01—ANNUAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING**

- A. The annual church business meeting, for the affirmation of Elders and the transaction of other business, shall be held in June. A quorum shall consist of the eligible members present. Notice of the meeting shall be given 14 days preceding the meeting.
- B. The pastor or his designee shall serve as moderator of church business meetings. In the temporary absence of the pastor, or if the office of pastor is vacant, the Elder Board vice-chairman or his designee shall serve as moderator. In the event of a conflict of interest, the board may substitute a moderator.
- C. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the authority on questions of procedure.
- D. For any meeting under this article, the moderator in unity with the Elders, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. If the moderator in unity with the Elder Board determine that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, he may revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises and treat the person as a trespasser.
- E. Notice of business meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the board to be most likely to reach church members at least 14 days before the meeting. Attendance at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
- F. The fiscal year of the church shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

## **7.02—SPECIAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The pastor, or the Elder Board, if the office of pastor is vacant or if the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action may call a special church business meeting by giving notice to the church of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least 14 days prior to the meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or for the discipline or removal of the pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of sections 4.05 and 4.06.

## **7.03—VOTING AT CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Voting at any church business meeting is limited to eligible members in good standing with the church and who are physically present at the meeting. Absentee voting is not permitted. Any member who is undergoing church discipline at the time of a vote is not permitted to vote. A majority vote will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of amendments and motions, whether by the Elder Board voting at an Elder Board meeting or by the members voting in a church business meeting.

## **7.04—MOTIONS AT CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Members who desire that a certain motion be made, or subject matter be discussed during an annual, regular, or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the Elder Board 10 days prior to the set meeting. The Elder Board will then consider the proposal and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church. All approved motions will be presented by the moderator. No motions will be made from the floor.

## **7.05—MEETINGS OF THE ELDER BOARD**

- A. Regular meetings of the Elder Board shall be held at such time and place as the Elder Board determines.
- B. The pastor or any two Elder Board members may call a special meeting of the Elder Board at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the Elder Board may be held.
- C. Notice of Meetings

1. Requirement of Notice: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the Elder Board unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the Elder Board.
  2. Method of Notice: Notice shall be sent to each Elder Board member for special meetings by means of the Elder Board secretary's chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, or email at each Elder Board member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the Elder Board member to the Elder Board secretary for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the vice-chairman or the pastor. In the event the pastor or vice-chairman refuses to give notice, any Elder Board member may give notice of any meeting. The Elder Board secretary is responsible to verify that notice is duly provided.
  3. Content of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
  4. Time of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall be delivered by the person charged with giving notice, not less than two days before the date of the meeting.
  5. Waiver of Notice: An Elder Board member may waive notice of a meeting of the Elder Board by written statement, and attendance by the Elder Board member at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
- D. A quorum for meetings shall consist of a majority of the Elder Board. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date certain duly noticed to all Elder Board members for not more than ten days thereafter, at that later noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those Elder Board members then present.
- E. At every meeting of the Elder Board, the chairman, or vice-chairman (in the absence of the chairman) or the person designated by the chairman, shall act as chairman and/or moderator, and shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner as determined by the chairman. The secretary of the Elder Board shall act as secretary of all meetings and shall take accurate minutes of Elder Board meetings and promptly deliver such minutes to the church secretary. In the absence of the Elder Board secretary, the chairman may appoint another person to act as Elder Board secretary of the meeting.
- F. Any one or more Elder Board member may participate in a meeting of the Elder Board by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for purposes of determining if a quorum is present.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES**

#### **8.01—PURPOSE**

The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Gospel with its Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program for the purposes of connecting individuals to Jesus, ministry, and one another while winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.

#### **8.02—CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the Elder Board, on behalf of the church, may permit

non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interests of the church.

### **8.03—AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT OF FAITH**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or who expresses disagreement with the statement of faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

## **ARTICLE 9 DEACONS AND COMMITTEES**

### **9.01—DEACONS**

**Deacons Mission Statement** — The Deaconry exists to assist the Elders in ministering to the saints through serving, supporting, and committing to meet appropriate needs of the congregation.

**Objectives**—According to 1 Tim. 3:8–13, Phil. 1:1, Luke 10:40, and Acts 11:29, the ministry of the deacon (diakonos) and deaconess (diakonia) is distinct from the office of elder. They are to serve in a role of service, sacrifice, relief, support, and commitment to others' needs.

The nature is one of service (1 Cor. 16:15, 1 Tim. 3:10), administration (2 Cor. 8:19–20), ministering (Eph. 6:21), and to serve meals (Acts 6:2). The deacon/deaconess is to be equally qualified with the elders in their character and spiritual life (1 Tim. 3:8–10, 12–13). Their task is to reflect the mind of Christ, "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:26).

### **9.02—COMMITTEES**

The Elder Board, on behalf of the church, may establish and form any committees and may appoint members and/or chairpersons of said committees as considered by the Elder Board to be in the best interests of the church. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees.

### **9.03—ACTIONS OF COMMITTEES**

Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Their primary function is to research and recommend. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the Elder Board, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. Each committee shall have a secretary who keeps and timely submits minutes of each meeting to the Elder Board and church secretary to be filed with church records. If deemed appropriate by the Elder Board, the committee secretary, in conjunction with the chairman, will submit an annual report to the church of the recommendations and plans of the committee.

## **ARTICLE 10 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. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Elder Board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in section 1.02.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

#### **11.01—PURPOSE**

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

#### **11.02—DEFINITIONS**

- A. Interested Person: Any director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Elder Board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- B. Financial interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - 1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement.
  - 2. A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement.
  - 3. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
  - 4. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Compensation: Direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- D. Board: The Board of Directors of the church. The Elder Board will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

#### **11.03—PROCEDURES**

- A. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Elder Board and, if applicable, members of committees with governing Elder Board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- B. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Elder Board or committee members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
  - 1. The chairman of the Elder Board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - 2. After exercising due diligence, the Elder Board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - 3. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Elder Board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

D. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

1. If the Elder Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
2. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Elder Board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

**11.04—RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS**

- A. The minutes of the Elder Board shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Elder Board or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- B. The minutes of the Elder Board also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

**11.05—COMPENSATION**

- A. A voting member of the Elder Board or any committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- B. A voting member of the Elder Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, are not prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

**11.06—ANNUAL STATEMENTS**

Each director, officer, and member of a committee with governing Elder Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

**11.07—PERIODIC REVIEWS**

To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- A. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- B. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.

**11.08—USE OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in 11.07, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Elder Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

## **ARTICLE 12 BINDING ARBITRATION**

### **12.01—SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION**

Members of the church must agree to submit to binding arbitration any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring 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.

### **12.02—ARBITRATION PROCEDURES**

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Elder Board. If the Elder Board has not adopted procedures, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

## **ARTICLE 13 TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS**

### **13.01—PRIVATE INUREMENT**

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in section 1.02 hereof.

### **13.02—POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT**

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in, including the publishing or distribution of statements, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

### **13.03—DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the church, the Elder Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.

### **13.04—NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The church shall not discriminate against members, applicants for membership, students, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. Furthermore, this policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local anti-discrimination laws or regulations.

### **13.05—LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES**

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in section 1.02.

#### **ARTICLE 14 AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the eligible members present at any regular church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen days before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving same.

These bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present. The voting members present at any congregation Meeting, called in accordance with the requirements of the bylaws, shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

These bylaws supersede any previous bylaws of Church of the Open Door of Fort Washington Pennsylvania.

6/28/2026  
Date

Duane E Adler  
Secretary