

# **Constitution and Bylaws of Pineywoods Christian Church**

## Article I

### **Name**

The name of this congregation shall be **Pineywoods Christian Church** and is an independent and nondenominational church. For the purpose of this constitution and bylaws, Pineywoods Christian Church shall be referred to as “this congregation” or “the church” and shall be a non-profit entity under the laws of the State of Texas.

Pineywoods Christian Church is not organized, nor shall it operate, for pecuniary gain or profit, and it does not contemplate the distribution of gains, profits, or dividends to its members and is organized solely for non-profit religious purposes. The property, assets, profits and net income of this church are irrevocably dedicated to charitable, educational, and religious purposes and no part of the profits or net income of this church shall ever inure to the benefit of any individual. On the dissolution of this church, its assets remaining after payment, or provision or payment of all debts and liabilities of this church shall be distributed to a non-profit church, fund, foundation, or corporation that is organized and operated for charitable, educational, ecclesiastical, or religious purposes and that has established its tax exempt status.

## Article 2

### **Statement of Purpose**

We are gathered, constituted, and exist to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord and proclaim His name above every name to the exclusive glory of God and to enjoy Him forever by submitting to, obeying, and fulfilling all that the Lord Jesus Christ calls us to throughout His Word as corporately pledged to one another in church covenant.

## Article 3

### **Statement of Faith**

#### **A. Scripture**

We believe that the entire Bible is the Word of God, written perfectly under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is to be strictly and reverently understood according to the author's original intent. Taken as such, we believe the Bible is sufficient to have supreme authority (superseding even this document) in all matters of life and faith.

#### **B. God's Deity**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are equal in every divine perfection and execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

#### **C. God's Sovereignty**

We believe in the perfect sovereignty of God in creation, providence, revelation, redemption, and final judgement.

#### **D. The Person and work of Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is truly God and truly man, God's eternally begotten Son, and that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His atoning work on Calvary, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His glorious ascension into heaven, His sole mediatorial intercession, His endless reign, and His future personal, visible return to the earth.

#### **E. The Person and work of the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit; that He is truly God and manifests the active presence of God in the world and especially the church. He enlightens the minds of sinners and brings about regeneration through the finished work of Christ. He then permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength, and

wisdom, as He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ and produces His fruit to the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

#### **F. Mankind**

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, male and female they were created, for distinct but complementary roles in the church, home, and marriage. We believe that Adam and Eve sinned and thereby incurred not only physical but also spiritual death. Having been separated from God as a result of our fall in Adam (our representative head), all mankind exists in a state of total depravity as guilty sinners in thought, word, and deed.

#### **G. Salvation**

We believe that all sin is ultimately against God alone and that any transgression can only be atoned for by the blood of Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only saving grace, whereby we receive Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the gospel as defined by God's Word. Those who are forgiven in Christ Jesus (in this or those in past generations) therefore can have no proper condemnation from man or God, as he is no longer condemned by God. This new life of salvation from the wrath of God, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life cannot be earned, deserved, inherited, or bought. The fruit of the new life in Christ is not exemplified in the adherence to the law of the Old Covenant but in fruits of the law of the Spirit under the freedom of the New Covenant.

#### **H. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that water baptism is a symbol of the work of Christ on the cross and is an outward picture of the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, is done by immersion for those who are walking in fellowship with Jesus Christ and who have publicly professed faith in Him. We believe that the communion of the Lord's Supper is to be eaten corporately, by those who are walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as a reminder of His sacrificial work on the cross and proclamation of His certain return.

## I. The Church

We believe that the people who make up the members of Christ's body are His Church—designated as both the bride and body of Christ on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and exists to evangelize the lost and to edify the saved to the glory of God alone. The members of Christ's body, who make up Pineywoods Christian Church and those who comprise the Body of Christ outside this congregation are united to Jesus Christ our Head and, by nature, will cooperate with one another as His members and Members in the exaltation of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God alone.

### Article 4

#### **Membership and Covenant**

##### 4.01 Membership Requirements

Individuals desiring to join this church shall first meet with an elder and/or pastor two or more times to discuss and verify agreement to the fundamental beliefs of Pineywoods Christian Church as stated in the constitution. The attendance of a New Member Fellowship meeting can also serve to accomplish this.

##### 4.02 Conditions for Removal of Membership

Members may be removed from the roll of this church by the action of the Elders when the following conditions apply:

- a. The member has not attended services for one year (Active Military personnel are exempt). Any member who has not been worshipping regularly will be contacted by a member of the Body to see if any help is needed.
- b. The member is in violation of the Membership Covenant, has been interviewed by the Elders following the principles of Matthew 18:15-20, there is no positive response, and therefore the decision to remove the member from the rolls has been made. The procedure in Matthew 18 is as follows:

1. The pastor or one other member of the Elder Board will speak personally with that person regarding the violation to the Covenant.
2. If the behavior continues, the person will be brought before the entire Board of Elders. Should the person refuse the meeting or fail to show for the meeting, they will be officially removed from the church rolls. The person will then be notified in person, if possible, and in writing of the decision of the Elder Board.
3. If the person has met with the Board of Elders and the violation continues to occur, the person will be removed from church roles and the church body will be informed that said person has been removed from the church roles. Only the person's name will be mentioned. The person will then be notified in person, if possible, and in writing of the decision of the Elder Board.

## **Article 5**

### **Church Government**

The Lord Jesus Christ is recognized as the Head of the Church. The oversight and authority of the church is vested first in the Pastor and then in Elders who will comprise the ruling body of the church and as a body have the power and authority to act on behalf of the church. Pineywoods Christian Church comprises both a spiritual body and a legal body. Because of this, the Elders act as the spiritual leaders of the congregation and also serve as the Board of Directors of the Corporation. As such, they also function as the Trustees in all major financial and business matters of Pineywoods Christian Church.

Pineywoods Christian Church seeks to be led by the Holy Spirit in all its decisions. The Pastor, the Elders/Board of Directors, and the Congregation all have a role in leadership.

The Pastor is responsible for developing and communicating the vision, overseeing the day-to-day ministry of the church, and general care for the congregation.

The Elders are to protect the church through counsel, prayer, and if required, the discipline of the Pastor, as described in Article 6. The Elders/Board of Directors are to serve the church as described in Articles 7 & 8.

The leadership influences the spiritual tone, strength and direction of the church. The Pastor, in consultation with the Elders/Board of Directors, may authorize any officer or officers, agents or agents of the corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or to execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances as the Elders see fit.

## Article 6

### **The Pastor**

6.01 Authority to call a pastor shall be by unanimous vote of Board of Elders at a meeting legally called for that purpose.

6.02 Consistent with the faith and practice of the church, every pastor shall:

- a. Lead this church in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b. Preach and teach the Word.
- c. Administer baptism and communion.
- d. Conduct public worship
- e. Provide pastoral care: visit the sick and distressed, counsel those in need or refer them to a qualified counselor.
- f. Perform marriages and funerals for members of this church.
- g. With the Elder Board, administer discipline as the Lead Elder

h. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

i. Equip and encourage people for leadership roles within the church.

6.03 The call of this church, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated for the following reasons:

a. mutual agreement to terminate the call.

b. resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted.

c. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor

d. disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty

e. the dissolution of the church

6.04 At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the Elders.

6.05 When an associate pastor is called to serve, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the elders. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

6.06 Pastors shall ensure accurate parochial records are kept. The pastor shall be responsible to assign the task or to keep accurate parochial records of all baptism, marriages, burials, members received, dismissed or excluded from this church.

6.07 The pastor shall be a member of this church.

## Article 7

### **Elders**

7.01 Any male member of this church may be appointed to be an Elder, subject only to the quality of their character (1 Timothy 3:8-13). A person's place on the Elder Board shall be declared vacant if the person (a) ceases to be a member of this church, or (b) is terminated as an Elder due to reasons noted in [7.11].

7.02 Elder candidates shall be nominated by the current Elder Board and voted on by the Board.

7.03 The Elder Board shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this church, and in particular its ministry life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God. The duties of this board shall include the following:

- a. To assist and give direction to this church in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its missions and goals.
- b. To seek to involve all members of this church in worship, learning, witness, service and support.
- c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this church to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d. To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling, appointment, or employment.
- e. To be examples individually and corporately of the life and ministry expected of all baptized followers of Jesus Christ.
- f. To promote a church climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
- g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
- h. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

7.04 The Elders shall see that the provisions of this constitution/bylaws are carried out.

7.05 The Elders shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

7.06 The Elders shall be responsible for the appointment and supervision of the salaried staff and lay workers of the church.

7.07 The Elders shall submit a comprehensive report to this church at the Annual Meeting.

7.08 The Elders shall set the date and time of the Annual Meeting.

7.09 The Elders shall normally meet at least once a month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor. Notice to each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

7.10 A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the elders, including the pastor, except when such person requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to an agenda or routine matter which shall be the only business of the meeting. Meetings may be held in person and/or electronically.

7.11 An elder's position may be terminated for the following reasons:

- a. the physical or mental incapacity of the elder
- b. disqualification of the elder through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality or continued neglect of duty
- c. the dissolution of the church

7.12 An elder must be a member of this church.

## Article 8

### **Ministry Teams**

8.01 Ministry Teams shall be formed as needed to assist the pastor and elders in carrying out the ministries of this church, directed at both the needs of people within the church and those in the larger community, according to the commands of God's Word and the mission and purposes of this church.

8.02 The Elder Board shall appoint a leader to facilitate the actions and responsibilities of each ministry. Leaders shall be appointed only after they have proven themselves to be faithful and mature church members. Leaders are responsible for communicating the actions of their teams to the Elder Board at annual meetings or as needed. Leaders shall also provide a report of their team's activities from the previous year to the Elder Board prior to the Annual Meeting.

8.03 Each ministry team shall meet together on an as-needed basis, or no less than once per quarter.

8.04 Ministry team leaders shall meet together with the Elder Board as needed, or no less than once per year.

8.05 Each ministry team Leader may make their own decisions regarding the use of the funds appropriated to them in the church budget as approved by the Elder Board.

8.06 Ministry teams are open to all members of the church who regularly attend Pineywoods Christian Church.

8.07 The Finance Ministry Team shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this church.

Members of this team must be a member of the Elder Board or appointed by the Elder Board. This team:

- a. shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting the church's property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to a Board of Trustees under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
- b. shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the Elder Board.
- c. may not enter into contracts without Elder Board approval.

d. shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by the Elder Board, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance with the budget following its adoption, and may only incur obligations after approval by a meeting of the Elder Board.

e. shall ascertain that the financial affairs of the church are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.

f. shall be responsible for the church's investments and its total insurance program if one exists at the time.

## Article 9

### **Church Meetings**

9.01 The Annual Meeting of this church shall be held typically during the month of January each year at a date and time to be determined by the Elders, subject to proper notice requirements of this constitution. Its purpose is to celebrate the work the church has accomplished to advance the Kingdom of God, to share our vision, and communicate plans for the future.

9.02 A special church meeting may be called by the pastor, or the elders of this church. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted at the special meeting.

9.04 Notice of the Annual meeting of this church shall be given, at a minimum, at the worship service on the preceding Sunday.

## Article 10

### **Officers of the Church**

10.01 The Elder Board officers shall be chosen, by mutual agreement, by the Pastor and the existing elders.

10.02 Secretary of the Corporation. The Secretary of the Corporation shall be an Elder appointed by the Elders as its representative. The term of office shall be three years and shall automatically renew for successive three-year terms until terminated as provided in this document. The Secretary of the Corporation is responsible:

1. To attend all meetings of the Elders
2. To maintain the minutes of Elders' meetings and congregational members' meetings.

10.03 Treasurer of the Corporation. The Pastor and Elders shall appoint the Treasurer of the Corporation. The term of office shall be three years and shall automatically renew for successive three-year terms until terminated as provided in this document. The Treasurer of the Corporation is accountable to the Pastor and Elders to assure that the following duties are properly discharged.

1. To oversee all funds of the congregation and deposit those funds in a reliable banking institution approved by the Elders and Finance Team
2. To see that bills are paid by properly authorized means at the request of the Finance Team or Pastor
3. To see that accurate records are kept of all receipts and disbursements
4. To prepare a monthly financial report and an annual report

## Article 11

### **Amendments**

12.01 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any of the Elders. Proposals must be filed in writing 60 days before formal consideration by Elders at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

12.02 A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

a. be approved at a properly called Elder Board meeting according to this constitution by a unanimous vote.;

b. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

12.03 The amendment shall become effective at the completion of the meeting at which there was a vote.

## Article 12

### **Continuing Resolutions**

13.01 The Elders may enact continuing resolutions which describe the function of the various ministries of this church.

13.02 Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a unanimous vote of the Elder Board.