



## **Elder and Deacon Revision- The Mission Church of Lexington**

### **Constitution and By-Laws**

#### **Article 1- Name and Affiliations**

This assembly of Baptized believers will be known as The Mission Church of Lexington, a non-profit Kentucky corporation. This Church is an autonomous organization and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. However, recognizing the benefits of cooperation with other churches, we voluntarily affiliate with the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists (Elkhorn Baptist Association), The Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

#### **Article 2- Mission and Identity**

The Mission Church of Lexington is a local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ (Baptism and Communion), governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in us by His Holy Word, and seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We declare our mission is to worship God, to lead people to faith in Christ, and to grow together to be more like Him.

#### **Article 3- Reception of Members**

##### **A- By Salvation and Baptism**

Any person, upon repentance from sin and public profession of faith in Jesus Christ may, after being approved by the Senior Pastor and affirmed by the congregation, and having been scripturally baptized by immersion, **and meeting the requirements of Article 3 Section E**, may be admitted thereby to the membership, fellowship, privileges and responsibilities of the church.

##### **B- By Statement of Faith**

Those desiring membership by statement of faith, after having given evidence of their Christian conversion and their scriptural baptism by immersion, **and meeting the requirements of Article 3 Section E**, may be received as a member after being approved by the Senior Pastor and affirmed by the congregation.



#### C- By Transfer of Letter

Members may be received by Transfer of Letter from another church which shares the same beliefs and practices as The Mission Church of Lexington (this will be determined by considering the transferring churches statement of faith and practice) **and meeting the requirements of Article 3 Section E, may be received as members after being approved by the Senior Pastor and affirmed by the congregation.**

#### D- Dual Membership

**Any person who is currently a member of another church which shares the same beliefs and practices as The Mission Church of Lexington, and meeting the requirements on Article 3 Section E, yet through a temporary relocation (work, school, etc.) has routinely attended The Mission Church of Lexington, shall be encouraged to have dual membership status. This status shall facilitate proper “watchcare” and oversight while the person is under the care of The Mission Church of Lexington. The membership request will be approved by the Senior Pastor and affirmed by the congregation.**

**E- All new member candidates will review and sign a church covenant membership agreement which includes convictional alignment with the church statement of faith (Baptist Faith and Message 2000) and with the established church constitution (this document). The new member candidate will be presented to the church following a Sunday morning worship service for a verbal celebration from the congregation. The new member candidate will be presented by the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders during the next scheduled “Information and Celebration Gathering” for official church affirmation and to be officially recorded in the church roll.**

#### **Article 4- Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and, supreme Treasure of our lives, 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, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the Pastors of the church, seeking to grow toward biblical unity in the truth; to 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.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

#### **Article 5- Termination of Members**

##### **A- Death**

Membership will automatically end upon the death of a member. However, a permanent record will be kept of his/her prior membership.

##### **B- By Transfer of Letter**

A letter releasing membership will be granted for a member in full fellowship, upon request from another church which shares the same beliefs and practices as The Mission Church of Lexington. When such a letter is granted, membership in this church will cease.

##### **C- By Cessation of Membership**

Upon verification of a member joining a church that does not share the same beliefs and practices as The Mission Church of Lexington, their membership will cease. Also, upon request of an individual member to terminate their membership and after such request is granted by the Senior Pastor, the membership will cease.



#### D- By Inactive Involvement

If any covenant member is inactive in attendance during official church gatherings and there is no record of financial contribution over a period of twelve months the Body of Elders will make the recommendation to terminate the membership upon the affirmation of the congregation.

#### E- By Church Discipline

The purpose of Church Discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity and unity within the Church and to promote the spiritual welfare of all members of The Mission Church of Lexington. Church Discipline is to be used to call upon the erring member to repent of their specific sin(s) and return to a Biblical standard of conduct. **The Body of Elders (this process may also include the Body of Deacons and the Body of Trustees as appropriate)** shall guide the Church in matters of Church Discipline. After a reasonable effort to investigate and to intervene, with the goal of restoration, and the erring member refuses to change their immoral or unbiblical conduct the **Body of Elders** will make the recommendation to terminate the membership upon the affirmation of the congregation.

**Terminated and/or inactive members will not retain membership privileges, which include serving in leadership positions and participating in church wide affirmation voting, etc. The pathway to reconciliation and potential membership reinstatement will be contingent on the willingness of that previous church member to demonstrate genuine Biblical repentance, to submit to a restoration process under the oversight of the Body of Elders, and to willingly be held accountable by the congregation.**

#### Article 6- Ordinances

We believe that Christ has commanded His Church to observe two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is by immersion in water, upon a credible confession of faith, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism is to show forth one's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is the first commandment of Christian discipleship and is therefore required for church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper. Baptism is a testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and is not the means of salvation or regeneration.

The Lord's Supper is to be observed by His Church until Christ returns. It is not a means of salvation or regeneration but is designed to commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper also serves as a renewal of communion with Christ and His Church. The Lord's Supper is open to all scripturally baptized believers in Jesus Christ.



## Article 7- Officers and Leadership

### ELDERS

#### A. Qualifications

Elders shall be men who are Covenant Members in good standing and demonstrate godly character, above reproach in public and private, and committed to shepherding the flock of God and to teaching and guarding sound doctrine. Elders will exemplify the Biblical characteristics of elder-overseers in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4 and will agree with The Mission Church of Lexington's Constitution, Church Covenant, Membership Agreement, and Elder Covenant.

#### B. Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church as godly servant leaders. They must teach the Word and tend the flock of God in this Church.

#### C. Composition

The Body of Elders shall be comprised of both Staff and Non-Staff Elders (as qualified and called candidates are provided by the Lord). Staff Elders are men who receive financial compensation from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock.

Non-Staff Elders are men recommended by the Body of Elders and affirmed by the Church who serve voluntarily without financial support from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock.

#### D. Affirmation by the Church

Potential Elders will be recommended by the Body of Elders to the congregation during an "Information and Celebration Gathering" (business meeting) for a vote of affirmation.

#### E. Organization

The Body of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to best achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall practice shared authority and demonstrate mutual accountability but may be specialized in function. The Senior Pastor will be identified as "first among equals" but will lead the Body of Elders to strive for collaborative decision-making based upon Biblical conviction and wise consensus. The Senior Pastor will function as the "chairman/ team leader" of the Body of Elders. The Senior Pastor or his designee will serve as the "moderator" of all official "Information and Celebration Gatherings" (business meetings).



## F. Term Length

A qualified, affirmed, and installed Elder will remain “active” on the Body of Elders unless he does something to disqualify himself or it is decided by the Elder and/or the Body of Elders that he should move to an “inactive” status. An Elder in good standing does not require an annual affirmation by the congregation but will serve in this capacity until the Lord leads otherwise.

## DEACONS

### A. Qualifications

Deacons shall be men who are Covenant Members in good standing and demonstrate godly character and possess gifts of service. Deacons will exemplify the godly characteristics set forth in I Timothy 3:8-12, and will agree with The Mission Church of Lexington’s Constitution, Church Covenant, Membership Agreement, and Deacon Covenant.

### B. Responsibilities

The Body of Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. The “Deacon Family Ministry Plan” will be a primary function of the Body of Deacons.

### C. Composition

The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry.

### D. Affirmation by the Church

Potential Deacons will be recommended by the Body of Elders to the congregation during an “Information and Celebration Gathering” (business meeting) for a vote of affirmation.

### E. Organization

The Body of Deacons shall organize itself however it determines to best achieve the mission of the Church. There will be a Body of Deacons “chairman/team leader” identified in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders. The Deacon Team Leader will serve as the primary liaison between the Senior Pastor and the Body of Deacons.

### F. Term Length

A qualified, affirmed, and installed Deacon will remain “active” on the Body of Deacons unless he does something to disqualify himself or it is decided by the Body of Deacons and/or the Body of Elders that he should move to an “inactive” status. A qualified, affirmed, and installed Deacon will serve on the Body of Deacons for one year. The Deacon will be



eligible for successive yearly tenures as recommended by the Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation.

## **TRUSTEES**

### **A. Qualifications**

Trustees shall be men or women who are Covenant Members in good standing and demonstrate godly character and possess gifts of service. Trustees will agree with The Mission Church of Lexington's Constitution, Church Covenant, and Membership Agreement.

### **B. Responsibilities**

The Body of Trustees shall advise and be ready to assist the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders in all legal related matters.

### **C. Composition**

The number of Trustees shall be determined by the needs of the ministry.

### **D. Affirmation by the Church**

Potential Trustees will be recommended by the Body of Elders to the congregation during an "Information and Celebration Gathering" (business meeting) for a vote of affirmation.

### **E. Organization**

The Body of Trustees shall organize itself however it determines to best achieve the mission of the Church. There will be a Body of Trustees "chairman/team leader" identified in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders. The Trustee Team Leader will serve as the primary liaison between the Senior Pastor and the Body of Trustees.

### **F. Term Length**

A Trustee candidate will be recommended by the current Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation at an officially called "Information and Celebration Gathering" (Business Meeting). A Trustee will serve on the Body of Trustees for one year. The Trustee will be eligible for successive yearly tenures as recommended by the Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation.



## REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

A. By resignation. An Elder, Deacon or Trustee may resign their office at any time if they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

B. By Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an Elder, Deacon or Trustee due to teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 or actions contrary to The Mission Church of Lexington's Constitution, Church Covenant, Membership Agreement, and Elders Covenant or to actions unfitting an Elder, Deacon or church leader, such grievance may be brought before the Body of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Body of Elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, the Elder, Deacon, or Trustee in question will be recommend for removal to the congregation during a called "Information and Celebration Gathering" (business meeting).

C. By lack of Recommendation- If a Deacon or a Trustee is no longer recommended by the Body of Elders to continue serving on the Body of Deacons or Body of Trustees after they complete the yearly congregationally affirmed tenure. This does not apply to Elders.

D. By lack of Reaffirmation. If a Deacon or Trustee is recommended by the Body of Elders to the congregation but the congregation does not affirm the Deacon or Trustee to serve in this office. This does not apply to Elders.

### Senior Pastor- Lead Elder

The Senior Pastor shall be a man called and gifted by God to serve as the spiritual leader of The Mission Church of Lexington. He shall have general charge over all areas of ministry and leadership in the church. The Senior Pastor shall ensure supervision of all church employees and volunteer staff members. **The Senior Pastor shall seek to servant-lead within a plurality of Elders as summarized in Article 7 Section E (Organization).**

### Ministry Support Staff- Potential Elders if qualified

Ministry Support Staff shall be men **or women** called and gifted by God to assist the Senior Pastor in providing spiritual care and leadership to the members and attendees of The Mission Church of Lexington. The Senior Pastor will have the authority to employ and terminate all ministry support staff in consultation with the **Body of Elders**. The Senior Pastor or his Designee will ensure the supervision of all ministerial staff. **A ministry support staff personnel addition only requires church affirmation if it entails or requires financial compensation (an increase to the church budget) for the position. The termination of a ministry support staff personnel does**





not require church affirmation. However, the Body of Elders will use wisdom and discretion to inform the congregation of the personnel transition/termination.

### **Non-Ministry Support Staff**

Non-ministry support staff members will be employed as the need for their services are deemed necessary and there are adequate Budget resources available. The Senior Pastor will have the authority to employ and terminate all non-ministry staff members in consultation with the **Body of Elders**. The Senior Pastor or his Designee will ensure the supervision of all non-ministry support staff. A non-ministry support staff personnel addition only requires church affirmation if it entails or requires financial compensation (an increase to the church budget) for the position. The termination of a non-ministry support staff personnel does not require church affirmation. However, the Body of Elders will use wisdom and discretion to inform the congregation of the personnel transition/termination.

### **Ministry Team Leaders/ Ministry Directors**

Ministry Team Leaders and/or Ministry Directors are appointed by the **Body of Elders** and affirmed by the congregation, for the purpose of providing leadership to specific ministry areas. All Ministry Team Leaders and/or Ministry Directors serve under the leadership of the Senior Pastor or his Designee.

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer will ensure that all monies received by the church are properly deposited; that all demands consistent with the church budget be paid out of available funds designated for that purpose and to keep the Senior Pastor, the Body of Elders, the Mission Leadership Team and the congregation apprised regularly of the financial standing of the church. The Treasurer is appointed by the Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation.

### **Article 8- Fiscal Year and Spending Plan (budget)**

The Mission Church of Lexington's fiscal year runs from January through December. The Body of Elders prepares the proposed annual Spending Plan (budget) in consultation with the church Treasurer and the Body of Trustees. The Body of Elders will present the proposed annual Spending Plan to the church for affirmation at a scheduled "Information and Celebration Gathering". Adjustments can be made to the annual Spending Plan (budget) by the Body of Elders and the Body of Trustees throughout the fiscal year based on the developing ministry needs and the church's financial condition. Any large purchases that would result in financial debt assumed by the church must be presented for church affirmation. Large purchases would



include, but not be limited to, purchases larger than \$2,000, purchases requiring long-term recurring payments, or purchases that would go beyond the limits of a given budget line item (there are certain budget line items that are funded well over \$2,000, such as Facilities and the Building Unrestricted. These funds are set to incur the costs of more extensive repairs to the building, such as roofing, HVAC, and other structural needs. Purchases in these areas would not need congregation affirmation, but would be reviewed by the Body of Elders and the Body of Trustees). An exception to this fiscal policy would be camps or retreats attended by church members: student camps, winter retreats, staff retreats, etc. These outings are typically planned into the annual ministry schedule and, thus, need no review by the congregation or the Body of Elders should the cost exceed \$2,000. Additionally, purchases between \$500 and \$2000 must be presented to the Body of Elders for consultation and review. The Body of Elders purchase review process ensures prayerful and godly stewardship of the church finances.

#### **Article 9- Church Governance**

The Mission Church of Lexington will not have typical church business meetings. There will be at least 2 annual “Information and Celebration Gatherings” to keep the membership aware of the vision and direction of the ministry. Special called “Church Wide Information Gathering” can be announced by the Body of Elders (notice must be provided for two consecutive Sundays prior to the special called meeting) to address any pressing issue that may arise (examples: calling of a new Senior Pastor, change in the Constitution and By-Laws, large purchase that require loans, church discipline, etc.). In the absence of a Senior Pastor the Body of Elders will provide leadership and direction during the interim and in the search process. The next tenured Elder will serve as the team leader for the Body of Elders in the absence of a Senior Pastor. An interim Pastor will be secured by the Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation as soon as reasonably possible.

The search process for a Senior Pastor will be conducted by the Body of Elders in consultation with the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists (Elkhorn Baptist Association), The Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention as needed. The potential Senior Pastor must conduct at least one trial sermon during a special called “Church Wide Information Gathering”. The church affirmation vote must be at least a two thirds supermajority of the membership in agreement.

The Mission Leadership Team will include all Ministry Team Leaders as determined by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Body of Elders and affirmed by the congregation. A Ministry Team Leader will serve a one-year term (from January to December). There is no limit to the number of consecutive one-year terms a Ministry Team Leader may serve. The Body of



Elders will provide oversight to the Mission Leadership Team. The Ministry Team Leaders will be recommended by the Body of Elders and annually affirmed by the congregation.

All proposals and recommendations made to the church for consideration and affirmation will be made through the Body of Elders. The Senior Pastor or his designee (the next tenured Elder will serve in this capacity in the absence of a Senior Pastor), will serve as the moderator for all congregational meetings involving decisions made.

The only items that require an annual congregational affirmation are the operating budget, the Body of Deacons, the Body of Trustees, and the representatives to serve on the Mission Leadership Team.

All church wide affirmations require a majority vote with the exception of the supermajority affirmation required for the calling of a Senior Pastor and/or to amend this Constitution and Bylaws.

#### **Article 10- Statement of Faith**

The Mission Church of Lexington adheres to the essential doctrines as presented in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

#### **Article 11- Marriage and Sexuality**

Our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, expresses our fundamental Biblical conviction that Christian marriage is defined as “the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime” (Section 18 of Baptist Faith and Message 2000).

We believe that Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy should only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other and that a man and woman should not engage in intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. We believe that Scripture also teaches that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, incest, any attempt to change one’s sex, disagreement with one’s biological sex, or pornography is sinful and offensive to God.

However, we believe that Scripture requires that every person should be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

As a local church, we believe that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual acts of worship of the God who created this divine institution. As such, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the Gospel. The church may decline to



make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders subject to the direction of the church. No pastor, elder, minister, or employee of The Mission Church of Lexington shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

#### **A. REGARDING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

The Mission Church of Lexington defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18–24; Matthew 19:4–9; Mark 10:5–9; Ephesians 5:31–33).

#### **B. REGARDING SEXUAL IMMORALITY**

The Mission Church of Lexington believes that sexual acts outside of marriage are prohibited as sinful. Sexual acts outside of marriage include but are not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, or same-sex sexual acts. (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7–23; 20:10–21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27–28; 15:19; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17–19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4).

#### **C. REGARDING SEXUAL IDENTITY**

The Mission Church of Lexington believes that God created humankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. The Mission Church of Lexington supports the dignity of individual persons affirming their biological sex and discouraging any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex—including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or nonbinary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. (Genesis 1:26–28; Romans 1:26–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

#### **D. REGARDING SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

The Mission Church of Lexington affirms the sexual complementarity of man and woman and teaches that any and all same-sex sexual attractions are to be resisted. Consequently, believers are to refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6; Mark 10:5–9; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).



## **E. REGARDING THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL**

The Mission Church of Lexington believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. The Mission Church of Lexington welcomes and treats with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts and are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and transforming their behavior in the light of biblical teachings. (Matthew 11:28–30; Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:1–10; Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16)

### **Article 12- Amendments**

Changes to these Constitution and Bylaws may be presented by the Body of Elders (in consultation with the Body of Trustees) to the church membership in a special called “Church Wide Information Gathering” for affirmation. The affirmation vote must be a two thirds supermajority for the change to be made effective.

### **Article 13- Dissolution**

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of the assets of this corporation. Upon dissolution, any assets of this corporation must be distributed to Central Kentucky Network of Baptists (Elkhorn Baptist Association). This article (Article 13) is not to be amended at any point.

