

Redwood Christian Fellowship

REVISED BYLAWS OF REDWOOD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

(A California Religious Non-Profit Corporation)

PURPOSE OF REDWOOD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Proclaiming, embodying and enjoying the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform our community and the world - all to the glory of God.

- Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Neh. 8:8; Matt. 28: 19-20; Mk 1: 14-15; Acts 1:8; Rom 10: 14-17; 2 Cor. 5: 20)
- Embodying the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Deut. 5:33; Matt. 5: 13-16; Mk 12: 29-31; Acts 4:29-30; Rom. 12:1-2, 9-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil 1:27)
- Enjoying the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Neh. 8:10; Psa. 67:4, 100:2; Prov. 19:23; Jer. 32:41; Rom. 14:14; 2 Cor. 1:23-24; Phil. 1:18, 21; 4:4)

I. STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Bible

We believe the Bible is the very word of God being produced by human authors who were inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit in its production (2 Sam. 23:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). As God's recorded word to man, it is free from error in its original writings and absolutely trustworthy, providing all things necessary for life and godliness (Psa. 19; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:3). All sixty-six books are to be interpreted literally, grammatically, in their context and according to their genre (poetic, apocalyptic, historical, etc.) in order to determine the original meaning of the passage. Being totally sufficient, Scripture must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture (Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:18-19).

B. GOD

We believe that there is only one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4), who has eternally existed and is the creator of all things. God is one in essence and eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). Each member fully possesses all the attributes

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ascribed to God, and each member works in harmony with each other to glorify one another through the fulfilling of various roles (1 Cor. 8:6; 11:3). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler of the universe, He is sovereign over creation, providence, and redemption (Psa. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things past, present and future (Psa. 139:16; Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11).

God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (1 Cor. 8:6). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events through the Son (1 Chron. 29:11, Col. 5:17, Heb. 1:1-3). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; Jn. 8:38-47), nor does He diminish the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet. 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

God the Son

We believe that God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His eternal Son—the second Person of the Trinity—by whom all things continue in existence and are held together (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2). God the Son is eternal with, equal to, and of the same essence as the Father (Jn. 10:30; 14:9). We believe that the eternal Son, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, became human in the person of Jesus, being both fully God and fully human - one Person with two natures. (Jn. 1:1-18) We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and inaugurate and rule over the kingdom of God (Psa. 2:7-9; Isa 9:6; Jn. 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; 1Pet.1:18-19, Mk. 1:15).

The man Jesus, a descendant of King David and the promised Messiah of Israel, the last Adam who did what the first Adam failed to do, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He is the pleasure of the Father, lived a sinless life in obedience to his Father, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily

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from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God's sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate (Acts 2:32-33; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Jn. 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24). We believe that on the basis of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he or she is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God vindicated the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Jn. 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23). We believe that by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for believers to be with him and will return to receive them (Acts 2:33; Jn. 14:3).

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternality (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Psa. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (Jn. 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is eternal with, equal to, and of the same essence as the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).

We believe that the Holy Spirit was sovereignly active in the creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (Jn. 3:5-7). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. His work includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord (Jn. 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

We believe that the Holy Spirit was given to the church at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the church (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the

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Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).

C. The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in His historical birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel; His resurrection is the power of the gospel and His ascension is the glory of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Christ's death was a victorious triumph over Satan, sin, and death (Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:55-57). It also demonstrates His steadfast love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). At the heart of all sound doctrine is the person and work of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our lives, churches and ministries to reflect the gospel.

D. Creation

God is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world out of nothing in six literal days (Gen. 1; Ex. 20:11; Jn. 1:1; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3). Through the same word, He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and is the only sovereign (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

Satan and Spiritual Beings

We believe that along with the creation of the material universe, the Triune God created a great host of varied spirit beings. Lucifer (Satan) fell by sinning against God and took with him a large number of angels. Satan is the enemy of God, the accuser of God's people, and is constantly active in opposing the works and people of God. Satan was judged at the cross, and his ultimate destiny is the lake of fire. We also believe that the believer is removed from Satan's authority and dominion and that a true believer, while being an object of severe oppression and attacks, cannot be indwelt bodily by a demon. (Job 38:4-7; Ezek. 28:11-18; Gen. 3:1-6; Jn. 12:31; Col. 2:15; Matt. 25:41; Col. 1:13, 16-17; I Jn. 4:4)

We believe that the power of Satan over the believer's life was broken by the death of Christ on the cross (Col. 1:13-14, 2:15, Rev. 12:11), and therefore does not involve binding and commanding Satan directly, but defeats him through

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repentance from sin, the use of the armor of God, earnest prayer, and a holy life (2 Cor. 10:3-6, Eph. 6: 10-20; Ja. 4:7-11, 1 Pet. 5:6-11).

E. Man and Sin

We believe that mankind was created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; Ja. 3:9).

We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11)

We believe that through Adam's one act of disobedience (sin) to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Jn. 1:8).

We believe that, because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men and women of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psa. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

F. The Church

We believe that those who place their trust in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united, universal church (1 Cor. 12:13), of which Christ is the head and leader (Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:22, Heb. 12:23-24). The church began at Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2), and its purpose is to cooperate with the plan of God by loving Him, worshiping Him, obeying Him, teaching and defending sound doctrine, instructing believers, and evangelizing the lost (Matt. 28:16-20, Eph. 3:10, 1 Tim. 3:15).

We believe the church can be understood as being made up of both the universal and the local church. The universal church is made up of believers everywhere, who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:1-16; Eph. 4:4-6) and the local church exists as an autonomous group of believers who profess Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1). The visible church

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contains a mixture of both believers and unbelievers because there will always be those who profess Christ but do not truly believe (Matt. 7:21-22).

Church Discipline

Church discipline is a process that promotes godliness, good order within the church and true belief which glorifies God. It consists of two processes, one is preventive and the other is corrective. The preventive process includes a Christian "being fed a regular diet of truth from the Scriptures in such a way that they grow by it..." (Jay Adams, Handbook of Church Discipline). When a believer finds himself or herself wandering from the path of righteousness, the corrective process promotes self-discipline by the individual; if the individual is unsuccessful at self-discipline, then other Christians are to come to the individual to point out the sin and encourage corrective action. In the event of continued sin then the matter should be brought to the elders who may bring the issue to the attention of the church body. The hope is to address sin at the earliest and most informal level as possible and that formal church discipline is unnecessary. The overall process seeks to restore a brother or sister to fellowship as well as maintain a good witness for Jesus Christ, as it preserves the attractive distinctiveness of God's people. (Matt. 18:15- 20; Acts 5:1-11; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14 -15; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:13, 3:10-11; Rev. 12:2, chs 14-16, 20-21).

The Church's Head and Leaders

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head, King, and Lord of the Church (Acts 2:36; Eph. 4:15-16, 5:23; Col. 1:18) and believers are members of His spiritual body (1 Cor. 12:12-13). God gives the church under-shepherds who are the elders, pastors, or overseers who submit to the Bible and must possess specific spiritual qualifications (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). These men in the local church have the responsibility to lead, teach, train, and encourage every believer to understand and rightly exercise their gifts in accordance with Scripture. (Eph. 4:10-12) These men are given the responsibility of overseeing the ministries of the church, and the Bible instructs the believers under their care to joyfully submit to them, while instructing the leaders to lead by example and patient instruction. Leaders will give an account to God of their actions in Christ's ministry (2 Tim. 2:24; Heb. 13:17).

The church appoints deacons who submit to the Bible and possess specific spiritual qualifications to help meet the physical needs of the church and to assist the elders so the elders can focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13, Acts 6:4; 1 Tim. 4:6; 10-13, 15-16; 1 Pet. 4:11).

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The Ordinances of the Church

The church was given two divine ordinances by Jesus: water baptism (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:38) and communion (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:20-26). Both water baptism and communion should be observed today in the local church by believers.

a. Water Baptism: This ordinance is for believers who have placed their faith in Christ. It is not a means of salvation but is an act of obedience whereby a believer makes a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, 41). Baptism symbolizes the inward reality of being united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6).

b. Lord's Supper: This ordinance is an act of obedience whereby the church remembers the sacrifice of Christ, proclaims the death of Christ, and anticipates the glories of Christ's kingdom to come (Lk. 22:19-20; Mk. 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Communion is intended only for believers who are not living in deliberate unrepentant sin (1 Cor. 11: 27-34).

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe the New Testament teaches that every believer is graciously equipped by the Holy Spirit for some aspect of ministry, and that the local church functions best when all believers are exercising their spiritual gifts with an attitude of love and humility. The New Testament provides several lists of gifts that the believer may have, and while these lists may not be exhaustive of every possible gift, it is clear that spiritual gifts are to be earnestly desired, are given for the edification of other believers, and the spread of the gospel. God has designed the church in such a way that all members have to be dependent on one another, and therefore all uses of spiritual gifts must be in a manner that is not defiant or disruptive but is orderly and edifying. In our eagerness to "maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" any disagreements within the congregation and leadership on spiritual gifts are to be held in love--the greatest commandment and spiritual fruit. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12-14, Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 4: 10-11)

G. Last Things and Kingdom of God

We believe that the Kingdom of God came in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to expand by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible, and triumphant appearing of Christ when he returns to the earth as King. We believe that after Christ returns, he will bring about the ultimate defeat of Satan, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the eternal blessing of the righteous. At that

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time, the Kingdom of God will be completely fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness dwells and in which he will be worshipped forever (1 Cor. 15:20-28,50-58; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11; 2 Thess. 1:3-12; Rev. 19:1-21).

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IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Importance of Becoming a Member

The New Testament teaches that all believers are to place themselves under the authority of local church leadership. Whenever the New Testament speaks of believers it addresses them as part of and in the context of the local church. Membership is important because it is a commitment of both the individual believer to the local church and the local church to the individual believer.

B. How to Become a Member of Redwood Christian Fellowship

1. A member of Redwood Christian Fellowship is a professing believer in Jesus Christ, has been baptized and has met with one of the elders to discuss membership. Anyone desiring membership should first schedule a meeting with an elder. A prospective member will be provided a copy of the church's Statement of Faith and Bylaws. Once an elder has confirmed the requirements of membership have been met and the individual has been provided opportunity to discuss membership and the Statement of Faith and Bylaws, he or she can be presented to the congregation at any Sunday Morning Service for acceptance as a member.

2. Agreement to Submit to the Statement of Faith and Bylaws of Redwood Christian Fellowship

A member may not agree with every point of the statement of faith, but he/she must agree to submit to the Purpose, the Statement of Faith, and Bylaws by not teaching contrary to them and behave in a manner consistent therewith.

3. Approving Members

Those who have gone through the membership process and recommended by an elder for membership will be asked to participate in a service where they will be introduced by the elders to the congregation.

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D. Benefits and Responsibilities of Members of Redwood Christian Fellowship

We believe that church membership is a thoroughly biblical concept. The New Testament in particular teaches, supports and encourages believers to be an active member of a local church. Therefore we understand that Scriptures teach that a believer who joins a local church will benefit by:

They will receive God's blessing for being willing to place themselves under the authority and accountability of the local church in accordance with the Word of God.

They will be able to participate in congregational meetings and in the confirmation process of church elders.

They will be able to participate in discussions involving any agreement of indebtedness.

They will be given priority status with church resources such as counseling, visitation, and discipleship.

They will be able to use the facilities of Redwood Christian Fellowship for their wedding ceremony if they have met the criteria for being married at Redwood Christian Fellowship.

They will be able and encouraged to hold teaching and leadership positions at Redwood Christian Fellowship.

They will have the benefit of participating in and being held accountable to the process of church discipline

The responsibilities listed below are expected of all members. They are not comprehensive but representative.

To strive to obey the Word of God in all areas regarding personal sanctification, including active involvement in the church.

To participate in corporate worship through singing, giving, prayer, fellowship, communion and being instructed by the preaching of the Word of God.

To faithfully attend so as to be ministered to by the church.

To faithfully serve by ministering to others with their spiritual gifts.

To submit to the leadership of Redwood Christian Fellowship.

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To hold themselves accountable to members of Redwood Christian Fellowship.

To witness to others the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To participate in baptism, communion, and the process of church discipline.

To agree not to teach contrary to the Statement of Faith and Bylaws.

E. Church Discipline in the Body of Redwood Christian Fellowship

1. Definition of Church Discipline

Church discipline is the process of trying to restore a professing believer found to be in a state of continuous unrepentant sin to a state of obedience to God.

2. Purpose of Church Discipline

There are five reasons God commands the church to discipline professing believers who are in unrepentant sin.

- 1) To restore the sinning member. The primary goal of Church discipline is to restore a person found to be in unrepentant sin to obedience to God.
- 2) To maintain the church's witness. The church is called to be holy and to separate themselves from the world with respect to sin and wickedness. When a professing believer is living in unrepentant sin, they mar the witness of the church in the sight of the world and bring reproach upon the name of Christ. Church discipline helps maintain a strong witness to the world.
- 3) To maintain purity in the body. The church is to be characterized by holiness. Believers are called saints which means "holy ones." Salvation is deliverance from the power of sin and the enablement to walk in holiness before God. An unrepentant professing believer lives in a state of "unholiness." The Scriptures teach that those living in wickedness should be removed from the body so that the church will not be infected by their bad example.

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- 4) To reveal to others the severity of sin, so they will be encouraged to live a God-pleasing life. The Bible teaches that one of the reasons for church discipline is to create fear in other believers so as to deter them from falling into unrepentant sin. When the body of believers sees those who are in unrepentant sin dealt with according to the Scriptures, it will produce a holy fear in them of sin and be a deterrent to keep them from sinning.
- 5) To obey the commands of God. Church discipline is to be performed because we must obey and practice the whole counsel of the Word of God.

3. Procedure of Church Discipline

a. Members

In accordance with the Word of God (Matt 18:15-20), a member found to be in any trespass (Gal. 6:1) is to be approached by the person who first discovered their sin and, in a spirit of love, call him to repentance and holiness. If the member chooses not to repent, the person who knows about the sin is to seek one or two others and go as a group to confront the sinning person and call him back to repentance again. If he is still unwilling to repent, the elders will be contacted. By the decision of the Elders, the member's name and sin will be announced from the pulpit by the elders to the congregation. The congregation will be asked to pray for and encourage the errant member to repent. If there is still no repentance, the person will be removed from membership and the fellowship of the local body of Redwood Christian Fellowship Church. If the disciplined person repents and asks to be restored, he must contact the leadership of the church for a personal meeting. If the elders determine he has demonstrated true repentance, he will be restored to full fellowship.

b. Regular attending non-members

If any regular attender, who professes to be a believer, becomes entangled in any sin, he will be encouraged to repent according to the Word of God. If he refuses to repent,

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he will be asked by the elders to leave the fellowship. If he repents and wishes to attend Redwood Christian Fellowship once more, he must meet with the elders and receive approval.

F. Removal of a Member from Membership

1. Member Initiated Removal

Any member in good standing can freely remove themselves from membership by contacting an elder and asking to be removed.

2. Elder Initiated Removal of a Member from Membership

a. Inactive members will be reviewed by the elders who will determine if they should be removed from membership or put on an inactive membership list. Those who are on the inactive membership list will not enjoy the rights and privileges of being a member. If an inactive member wishes to be reinstated as an active member, he must contact and get approval from the elders.

b. Unrepentant members who have been disciplined by the church and put outside of the body will be removed from membership at the recommendation of the elders.

3. Death of a member will constitute removal from membership.

V. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A. Elders of Redwood Christian Fellowship

1. Duties and Responsibilities of an Elder

The term elder is used interchangeably with overseer, and shepherd or pastor. This means all appointed elders will be considered pastors, shepherds, overseers or elders. While there may be a difference between elders in the areas of giftedness, spiritual maturity, training, and Bible knowledge, all elders are to function as coequals. Scripture teaches that elders are responsible to God for the souls of those in the church and are called to oversee, shepherd, teach, exhort in sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict sound doctrine. They are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry through teaching and preaching the Word of God,

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modeling godly piety in every area of their life. Each elder is also a director of the corporation for the purposes of meeting the requirements under the laws of the State of California pertaining to the incorporation of a religious nonprofit corporation.

2. Qualification of Elders

Elders must be men who meet the character qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1, have the appropriate spiritual gifts, desire the work, and be able and willing to commit the time necessary to function as an elder.

3. Authority of Elders

The elders are the highest governing entity within the church. All elders will have co-equal authority. The authority of the elders is only that authority given to them by the Word of God. Elders have no authority to do anything or ask anyone to do anything contrary to the Scriptures. They can create, modify, or dissolve any ministry within the local church. God requires the church, including individual elders, to submit to and obey the eldership.

4. Appointment and Confirmation of Elders

Elders of the local body have an important responsibility to Christ. As such, it is required that only men who aspire to the position of eldership, meet the moral and spiritual qualifications laid out in the New Testament (i.e. 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Pet. 5; etc.) and are presently active in ministry should be considered. The potential candidate will be asked by the elders to complete and submit an Elder Application Packet to be reviewed by the elders. The congregation will be asked to provide any information they might have regarding the qualifications of the candidate to the elders. His name will be printed in the church bulletin for at least two weeks as a candidate. Upon conclusion of the examination process, the elders may formally state their approval or rejection concerning the prospective elder to the congregation. Following the examination process and the elder's approval, the candidate will be publicly installed into office.

Every elder shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and Bylaws and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

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5. Term of Office of Elders

Elders may serve as long as they:

1) desire to serve as an elder, 2) continue to meet the qualifications of an elder, and 3) continue to function as an elder according to the Word of God. Elders will be encouraged to take sabbaticals from serving as they feel the need or at the recommendation of the other elders. The length of the sabbatical will be determined by the majority decision of the elders.

6. Elder Decision Making

a. Unanimity in decisions

The elders will practice unanimity in decision making. If unanimity is not achieved, decisions will be dropped, postponed, reevaluated or modified.

Unanimity will be defined as, "total agreement by the elders to support a decision." This means that at times there may not be total agreement on a decision but willingness on the part of all the elders who disagree to submit to and support the decision of the other elders. When all elders are willing to support a decision it will be considered unanimous. A newly installed elder may abstain from voting for six months.

b. Compensation of Paid Staff

Compensation of paid staff will be decided unanimously by the lay elders.

7. Elder Removal from Office and Sabbaticals

a. Self-initiated

An elder may remove himself from serving as an elder at his discretion for a period of time or permanently after notifying the elders.

b. Eldership initiated

The elders will reserve the right to remove any elder from office or request that an elder take a temporary leave of absence. If at any time a majority of the elders believe a fellow elder is disqualified, that elder will be asked to step

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down until the issue is resolved and the congregation will be notified.

B. Deacons of Redwood Christian Fellowship

1. Definition and Qualification of Deacon

A deacon is any qualified godly man appointed and recognized by the elders as a deacon who meets the qualifications of a deacon in 1 Timothy 3. Deacons must be men of integrity and self-control who live consistent Christian lives in full view of their fellow believers. Deacons are servants in the local church who are appointed to specific tasks and governed by the elders.

2. Appointment of Deacons

A deacon candidate will complete and submit a Deacon Application Packet to the elders. Deacons will be recognized and appointed by the elders to serve the church in various capacities.

Every deacon shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and bylaws and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

3. Term of Office for Deacons

Deacons will continue to serve as long as they desire to serve, meet the Biblical qualifications, and are directed to do so by the elders.

4. Duties of Deacons

Deacons are the church's official ministers of mercy. Deacons, under the direction of the elders, are to assist the needy of the Christian community, which is not limited to Redwood Christian Fellowship.

5. Removal of a Deacon from Office

a. Self-initiated

Any deacon can choose to step down from serving as a deacon in the church at his discretion by contacting the elders.

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b. Eldership initiated

The elders reserve the right to remove a deacon from office by unanimous decision of the elders.

C. Women Who Serve

Both men and women are called to serve the local body with their spiritual gifts. At times the elders may appoint godly women who meet the moral qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2: 3-5 to serve in specific areas of ministry (1 Tim. 2:12).

D. Committees

At times the elders may choose to appoint committees to serve the church in specific areas. Committees will function as the elders direct and will be dissolved after they complete their specific task or at the recommendation of the elders.

E. Teachers

Teachers at Redwood Christian Fellowship will be required to be members in good standing and subject to the approval of the elders.

F. Worship Leaders

Those involved in leading the congregation in worship must be members in good standing and subject to approval by the elders. At times the elders may allow non-members to lead the congregation in worship e.g., visiting choirs, musicians, and preachers.

VI. **CHURCH EMPLOYEES**

A. Pastor-teacher

1. Definition of pastor-teacher

The pastor-teacher will be the elder in the church who is assigned by the elders to fill the pulpit on a regular basis.

2. Finding a new pastor-teacher

In the event the church is in need of a pastor-teacher, the elders will be responsible to find another pastor-teacher who meets the Biblical qualifications and spiritual giftedness.

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3. Qualifications of pastor-teacher

The pastor-teacher must meet the same qualifications as an elder described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and must excel in the areas of preaching and teaching.

4. Confirmation of pastor-teacher

Prior to final confirmation, a candidate for pastor-teacher will be invited to Redwood Christian Fellowship to visit, fill the pulpit, and fellowship with the congregation. The elders will ask for input concerning the candidate and after considering that input will make a final decision on whether to extend a call to the candidate. The call of the pastor-teacher must be made by unanimous decision of the elders and shall result in the pastor-teacher's immediate appointment to eldership. The pastor-teacher shall affirm his agreement with the Statement of Faith and Bylaws and shall conduct himself in a manner consistent therewith.

5. Length of Service of pastor-teacher

The pastor-teacher will serve as long as he meets the qualifications of elder, desires to serve and has the unanimous support of the remainder of the elders.

6. Duties of pastor-teacher

The primary duty of the pastor-teacher will be to equip the saints for the work of the ministry through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The pastor-teacher will also be required to perform all functions required of an elder in the Scriptures and any tasks assigned to him by the elders.

7. Compensation of pastor-teacher

Compensation of the pastor-teacher will be decided unanimously by the lay elders. The lay elders may ask the paid elders to be present during these discussions.

8. Resignation or Removal of pastor-teacher

a. Self-initiated

The pastor-teacher may remove himself from his position after consulting with the elders. If the pastor-teacher feels God is leading him to another ministry, he must first seek the

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counsel of the elders before resigning. A thirty-day notification of resignation will be given. Exceptions for special circumstances may be granted with elder approval. If at any time he feels he is disqualified and can't continue to serve for conscience sake, he will be allowed to step down as directed by the elders.

b. Elder initiated

If all other elders, except the pastor-teacher, determine the pastor teacher should step down, he must step down and submit to the decision of his fellow elders. The pastor-teacher must be given specific reasons in writing for why he is being dismissed.

B. Other Compensated Elders

As the need arises, the elders may choose to hire additional pastoral staff who are gifted and called to do the work of the ministry. (Hereafter referred to as "Pastoral Staff" to distinguish them from the Pastor teacher and lay elders).

1. Finding New Pastoral Staff

It will be the responsibility of the elders to find new pastoral staff. They may choose to delegate this responsibility to a subgroup of elders or the Pastor teacher.

2. Qualifications of Pastoral Staff

Any man hired for pastoral staff will be appointed an elder and therefore must meet the qualifications of elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. He must be gifted to perform whatever ministry the elders seek to have filled.

3. Confirmation of Pastoral Staff

Potential pastoral staff will be confirmed by the unanimous decision of the elders. Each potential pastoral staff member will be required to fill out an elder application. Anyone being considered for a pastoral staff position shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and Church Bylaws and shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent therewith.

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4. Length of Service of Pastoral Staff

The pastoral staff will have no set term of service. They will continue to serve as the elders direct.

5. Duties of Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff shall fulfill those duties for which they were hired by the elders. After being hired, the elders may ask a member of the pastoral staff to change ministry emphasis.

6. Personnel Matters and Compensation of Pastoral Staff

Personnel matters and compensation of the pastoral staff will be discussed and decided unanimously by the lay elders. The lay elders may ask the paid elders to be present during these discussions.

7. Resignation or Removal of Pastoral Staff

a. Self-initiated

A pastoral staff member may remove himself from his position at his discretion after consulting with the elders. He must first seek counsel of the elders before resigning and give a thirty-day notice of his resignation. If at any time he feels he is disqualified and cannot continue serving for conscience sake, he will be allowed to step down after consultation with the elders.

b. Elder initiated

If at any time all the other elders determine a pastoral staff member should step down, the pastoral staff member must step down and submit to the elder board's decision. The pastoral staff member must be given specific reasons in writing for why he is being dismissed from his position.

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C. Pastoral Interns

1. Definition of a Pastoral Intern

Any male who is asked by the elders to be an intern who ministers to the body of Redwood Christian Fellowship with the goal of entering into full time vocational Christian ministry. Interns work under the immediate supervision of the pastoral staff in order to grow in maturity, be discipled, and gain practical hands-on ministry experience.

2. Qualification of a Pastoral Intern

Any male who a) is approved by the elders of Redwood Christian Fellowship, b) is actively involved in ministry, c) has the desire to pursue full-time Christian ministry as a vocation, and d) shall affirm his agreement with the Statement of Faith and Church Bylaws and shall conduct himself in a manner consistent therewith.

3. Duties of Pastoral Interns

Interns will be exposed to ministries as directed by the elder overseeing them.

4. Support of Pastoral Interns

All interns will receive a variety of support such as personal discipleship and instruction, constructive criticism, ability to participate in certain elder and pastoral staff functions and aid in preparing for ministry.

Interns may receive some financial support from the church for living expenses or to further their education as recommended by a unanimous decision of the elders.

5. Resignation or Removal of an Pastoral Intern

An intern may resign at his discretion after discussing his resignation with the elder overseeing him. An intern may also be removed from intern status at any time by the elders.

D. Support Staff

1. Definition of Support Staff

Anyone hired by the church or volunteering in an uncompensated position to support the ministries of the church.

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2. Qualifications of Support Staff

Support staff will be required to become members of the church and remain in good standing (exceptions may be granted by the elders). They must be able to fulfill their area of ministry as directed by the elders. Every employee or volunteer shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and Church Bylaws and shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent therewith.

3. Finding New Support Staff

The elders will be required to find new support staff when the need for such staff is determined to be necessary. They may choose to delegate this responsibility to a subgroup of elders or the pastor-teacher. Final confirmation will be by unanimous decision of the elders.

4. Length of Service of Support Staff

The support staff will have no set term of service. They will continue to serve as the elders direct.

5. Duties of Support Staff

The support staff shall fulfill those duties for which they were hired by the elders. The elders may reassign support staff to new duties as needs change.

6. Compensation of Support Staff

Personnel matters and compensation of the support staff will be decided unanimously by the lay elders. The lay elders may ask the paid elders to be present during these discussions. Any support staff position can be a compensated or an uncompensated volunteer position at the discretion of the elders.

7. Removal of Support Staff

a. Self-initiated

Support staff will be allowed to terminate their employment with Redwood Christian Fellowship at their discretion after discussing their resignation with the elders.

b. Elder initiated

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Support staff may have their employment terminated at the discretion of the elders in accordance with applicable law. The elders will furnish the support staff person with written reasons for termination of employment if requested.

VII. **Statements on Sanctity of Life, Human Sexuality and Marriage**

A. Sanctity of Life

God created all people in His image, giving dignity and value to every single human life despite its stage of development (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; Psa. 139). God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning to its end.

B. Human Sexuality

Sexual relations are to be exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as “porneia”) including, but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are prohibited by the teachings of the Bible. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation, distribution or the viewing of pornography are also contrary with the biblical witness. (Matt. 5:32; Rom. 1:18-32; 13: 12-14; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11; Gal. 5: 19-23; Eph. 5:1-3; Col 3:5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:1-4)

C. Marriage and Headship

God has created marriage to be a covenant for life between one man and one woman, entered into for companionship, sexual unity, procreation and to display the love Christ has for his church (Eph. 5:22-23). The relationship between husband and wife, this covenant of companionship, is at the heart of what God intends marriage to be. The friendship and fellowship which are part of this companionship are to be enjoyed through sexual companionship as well (Song of Solomon).

We believe that Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25). In God’s wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ,

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and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Savior. (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Cor. 11: 1-3; 1 Tim. 2: 11-12)

VII. **VARIOUS FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH**

A. Marriage Policy for Redwood Fellowship

Marriage is a union ordained by God. It was first instituted by God in the early chapters of Genesis and codified in the Levitical law. The Old Testament prophets compared it to a relationship between God and His people. Examples of it are in the historical narratives and the wisdom literature discusses the unique unity of this relationship. Jesus explained the original intention and core elements of marriage, and several New Testament Epistles give explicit instructions on this union. Since marriage is a typology of Christ and the Church, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution established by God. Due to the importance of marriage in the biblical witness, this church adopts the following policy:

1. Pastor-teacher or elder:
 - a. Only duly ordained elders shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
 - b. Elders employed by the church shall be subject to dismissal for officiating a same-gender marriage ceremony.
2. Applicants:
 - a. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by an elder employed by the church, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
 - b. Applicants shall receive premarital counseling by an elder of Redwood Christian Fellowship or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the elders, have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling.
3. Premises:

An elder assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage Policy may, at his sole

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discretion, decline to make church facilities available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in his judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

VIII. **AMENDING THE STATEMENT OF FAITH AND BYLAWS**

Amendments to the Statement of Faith and Bylaws will be announced to the congregation. The congregation will be given thirty days to give feedback to the elders concerning the proposed amendments. After thirty days the elders will discuss the feedback from the congregation. Then, any amendments to the Statement of Faith and Bylaws shall be made by the unanimous decision of the elders.

IX. **DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY**

A. Disposal of property

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, the assets of the corporation are to be disposed of under the following conditions:

1. All debts and liabilities of the corporation are to be paid.
2. All remaining assets shall be distributed to a religious non-profit fund(s), foundation(s) or corporation(s), which is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501(C)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Every effort should be made to find an organization that reflects Redwood Christian Fellowship's Statement of Faith.
- 3) Under no conditions shall any part of the assets of this organization accrue to the benefit of any private person.

B. Method of Disposal

At the time of dissolution, the current elders of the church, after obtaining feedback from the congregation, shall approve the recipient(s) of the assets of this corporation.

The elders of Redwood Christian Fellowship would like to acknowledge and thank several churches or organizations that were a great resource while we wrote this document. We referred to, adopted portions or thoughts from and gained insight and guidance from these churches or organizations that were an enormous assistance in this final product. These organizations included but were not limited to The Gospel Coalition, the California Southern Baptist Convention, Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA, Community Bible Church in Vallejo, Village Church Dallas, TX, Jay Adams, Desiring God Ministries and John Piper.