

**Real Life Community Church
Constitution and Bylaws
November 2, 2008**

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Preamble

Under the authority and direction of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this Constitution and Bylaws are established to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Ensure our freedom of action and independence from any outside religious governing body or organization.
3. Provide for the scriptural governance and mutually beneficial operation of this body.
4. Help this body remain focused on its God-given vision, mission and values.

Article I - Name, Affiliation, and Vision

Section 1: Name

The name of this duly incorporated religious entity is Real Life Community Church (Hereinafter referenced as RLCC)

Section 2: Affiliation

RLCC is autonomous and maintains its right to self-governance, and the right to govern its own affairs. Recognizing the Kingdom benefits of collaboration with other churches and religious organizations, this church may voluntarily affiliate with other evangelical organizations as this church deems useful.

Section 3: Vision, Mission and Value Statements

The **vision** of RLCC is to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ as we celebrate diversity in a community of oneness. (2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

The **mission** of RLCC: "Real Life Community Church exists to help *real people* experience *real life* together and find *real hope* in Jesus Christ".

The **values** of RLCC: "Real Life Community Church is a church that is Relevant, Encouraging, Authentic, Loving, Lively, Inclusive, Faithful and Empowering.

Article II - Statement of Faith and Church Covenant

The Real Life Statement of Faith dated August 12, 2008 attached as Appendix A shall serve as the statement of faith for the church. It shall be the responsibility of the Elder Team to preside over all doctrinal discussions of the church. In all matters of faith and practice, it shall be the goal of this church to seek the whole counsel of the Old and New Testament Scriptures for guidance and the Holy Spirit for interpretation and application.

The Real Life Church Covenant which is attached as Appendix B serves as the Church Covenant as referenced in this document.

Article III – Membership

(Membership is hereinafter referenced as partnership)

(Member is hereinafter referenced as ministry partner)

Section 1: General

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to Christ, identified themselves with, and joined themselves to a local body of believers (Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Acts 11:26). At RLCC, Partnership implies something you participate in and contribute to rather than just belonging to. RLCC is not just an organization to join, but a living organism whose members or ministry partners choose to come together in support of one-another as they live out the calling of Christ in their lives. All those signing the Partner's Covenant agreeing to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and Bylaws of the new church corporation become active ministry partners of this Church. No ministry partner of this Church, nor any officer, shall by virtue of such partnership, office or position incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts or omissions of this Corporation.

Section 2: Qualifications for Partnership Consideration

Personal faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation

Section 3: Requirements for Partnership

1. Acceptance of Believers' Baptism as a public testimony of personal faith.
2. Commitment to strive towards fulfilling RLCC's Statement of Faith and Partnership Expectations.
3. Participate in a RLCC Partnership class or equivalent training provided by RLCC leadership.
4. Covenant with the body as a ministry partner, reaffirming commitment each year to the RLCC Vision and to one another.
5. Any active ministry partner unable to attend due to work assignment (including military deployments), medical condition, or educational pursuits shall be considered an active partner while the above-mentioned exceptions exist.

Section 4: Recognition and Affirmation of Ministry Partners

Partnership candidates may be presented by a member of the Pastoral Staff and affirmed by the partnership at the close of any regularly scheduled worship.

Section 5: Partnership Expectations

With God's help, protect the unity of the body by acting in love toward one another, avoiding gossip, resolving conflict quickly, praying for the health and growth of the body and supporting the leadership of the church. Ministry partners in RLCC should strive to exhibit the following: personal purity, relational integrity, organizational loyalty, interpersonal maturity, and an evangelistic lifestyle. Ministry partners should regularly give of their time, talents and treasures in support of the work of God's Church locally and throughout the world.

Section 6: Privileges and Responsibilities of Partnership

Privileges of Partnering with RLCC include:

1. A spiritual family support and encouragement network.
2. Leadership and service opportunities in accordance with spiritual maturity and spiritual gifts.
3. Spiritual guidance and accountability.
4. Public identification with the marks of Biblical maturity present in a genuine believer.
5. The right, after prayerful consideration under guidance of the Holy Spirit, to influence key decisions of the church.

Responsibilities of Partnering with RLCC

Ministry partners of RLCC are responsible to participate in important church decisions. Key decisions would include:

1. By approval, commit to support the church budget.
2. Addition or deletion of Ministerial Staff positions.
3. Affirm calling or revoking of a call of a member of the Pastoral Staff.
4. Approve amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, and the Partnership Covenant.
5. By approval, commit to support the acquisition of land and related indebtedness.
6. The merger or dissolution of the church should such action be necessary.
7. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the church in the event of dissolution of the church.
8. Other key issues as determined by the Elder Team.
9. Each ministry partner is allowed one vote. Voting by proxy is not allowed. Whenever possible, consensus of the RLCC partnership is to be sought. All motions require the support of 75% of the church ministry partners present in order to pass.

Note: A church ministry partner is one who strives to fulfill the partnership expectations defined in Article III, Section 5, as expressed in the signed Partnership Covenant, and covenants with the body each year as a ministry partner, reaffirming commitment to the RLCC Mission and Vision and to one another.

Section 7: Removal from Partnership

RLCC is a "covenant church" with ministry partners having the opportunity to renew their covenant with the body each year. This renewal of partnership allows all ministry partners to examine and affirm their commitment to the body. Any person choosing not to renew his/her covenant partnership would no longer be eligible to influence key decisions of the church, or serve in a leadership capacity, but would be shown all the love, spiritual support and encouragement due any brother or sister in Christ.

A ministry partner will be removed from the church partnership roll and lose all partnership privileges for any of the following reasons:

1. At the request of the ministry partner.
2. A decision by the ministry partner is made not to annually reaffirm their covenant with the body.
3. Transfer to another church.
4. Scriptural church discipline, in accordance with Article III, Section 8.
5. Death.

Note: For the Biblical basis of "covenant partnership" see Deuteronomy 7:9, Joshua 24:24-25, 2 Chronicles 6:14, Isaiah 42:6, Jeremiah 11:1-5, Jeremiah 31:33, Matthew 26:26-28, Hebrews 9:15.

Section 8: Mutual Accountability and Church Discipline

The goal of church discipline is always restoration. Scripture teaches believers to be concerned for one another's spiritual well-being and to speak the truth in love where there is evidence of habitual sin, essential moral failure or essential Biblical failure and/or an unrepentant spirit. Because these situations hinder the unrepentant believer's fellowship with God, threaten the unity of the body, and weaken the witness of the church in the community, the church and its ministry partners are to act in accordance with the following Biblical procedures when dealing with these situations. (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 11:29; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 1:7).

1. If an individual has knowledge of habitual sin/unrepentant spirit in the life of a fellow believer, he/she is to go promptly and privately to the unrepentant believer in a spirit of prayer, love, and humility for the purpose of restoring them in the Lord (Matthew 18:15).
2. If there is no evidence of repentance, the individual is then to approach the unrepentant believer with two or three other believers in the same spirit and purpose as previously stated. (Matthew 18:16).

3. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the church (Matthew 18:17). The church shall be represented in such matters by the Pastoral Staff and Elders.

If there is still no evidence of genuine repentance or resolution the Pastoral Staff and Elders shall take such action as necessary to protect the unity, safety, and spiritual health of the body, up to and including the exclusion of the unrepentant believer from the fellowship until genuine repentance is evident. Any disciplinary action shall be handled as discretely as possible. All ministry partners and the Elder Team are bound by any disciplinary decisions. (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 3:10-11).

*“While not an exhaustive list, examples of **essential moral failure**: adultery, embezzlement, inappropriate sexual contact, pornography, lying deceiving etc. Accusations of this nature require hard evidence, not suspicion or opinion. Things that do not qualify as moral failures are things such as: misunderstandings, mistakes, poor judgment, overstatements, miscommunications, showing emotions, verbal missteps and forgetfulness.”*

*While not an exhaustive list, examples of **essential Biblical failure**: this must be reserved for doctrinal issues that would directly contradict the Bible or the theological beliefs outlined in our Statement of Faith, or the Constitution and Bylaws. Areas that do not qualify as an essential Biblical failure are things such as philosophy of ministry, areas of Scripture that are open to interpretation and personal convictions.*

The Elder Team will not discuss or consider a personal conflict situation between parties that has not first been addressed according to the steps laid out here.

Section 9: Restoration of Fellowship

Christ's grace and forgiveness are to be extended by the church to those repentant believers seeking restoration to the fellowship in accordance with the Scriptures (Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:31-35; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32). The same Biblical principles for restoration apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. (Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 4:26-27).

Those seeking restoration of church fellowship and partnership are to present evidence of their repentance to the Pastoral Staff and Elders of the church, in accordance with the Scriptures (2 Corinthians 2:7-8). Upon their consent, the Pastoral Staff and Elders shall restore the repentant believer to church fellowship and partnership, at which time all lost privileges and responsibilities are to be resumed by the restored believer.

Article IV - Meetings

Section 1: Annual Business Meetings

An annual meeting of church ministry partners is to be held in January of each year with the specific date being publicized as specified in Article IV, Section 4. The purpose of this meeting is to adopt an annual budget for the following year and conduct any other proper church business subject to Article III, Section 6.

All business meetings will begin with a time of prayer. Ministry partners should seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit before considering issues brought before the church. Church business should be conducted with an attitude that fosters consensus among the partnership as they seek to fulfill God's vision, mission and uphold the values of the church. All business meetings will be moderated by the Chairperson or another member of the Elder Team designated by the Chairperson.

Section 2: Coordination Team Meetings

The Coordination Team meeting will be convened by the Elders at least quarterly for gathering all Ministry Team leaders, Staff, and other interested ministry partners for the purpose of:

- Training of Ministry Team leaders
- Planning the church calendar
- Ministry event planning within the church or community
- Celebrating ministry successes and discussing individual ministry team needs
- Encouraging and affirming the Ministry Teams of RLCC
- Meetings would also allow the Elder Team to communicate with and receive comments from key Ministry Team leaders, thus building consensus
- Ministry Team reports collected by the Clerk will be kept in the church office

Section 3: Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Elder Team or via written request by a minimum of 25% of the active church ministry partners for the purposes listed in Article III, Section 6. Proper notice requirements apply. Only business items specified in the proper notice shall be open for discussion at special business meetings.

Section 4: Notice Requirements for Business Meetings

Information concerning business meetings is to be supplied by the church to its ministry partners no less than 2 weeks prior to the meeting. Notification will be made by distribution of written material and an oral announcement at a worship service. Notification will also be made by mail via letter and/or Church newsletter if the special business meeting is to incur a debt greater than \$10,000 or for the calling/removal of a Pastor.

Section 5: Quorum

A quorum of ministry partners is required to conduct church business at any duly noticed and called annual or special business meeting. A quorum must comprise at least 20 percent of the active church ministry partners in addition to the Elders and Pastoral Staff. If after the first duly noticed meeting a quorum is not met, then any ministry partners in attendance at a duly called or regular meeting of the Church on the same subject(s) shall be deemed to constitute a legal quorum.

A motion to incur debt greater than \$10,000 or the calling/removal of a Pastor shall require the presence of a super-quorum equal to or greater than half of the active church ministry partners.

Section 6: Minutes of Meetings

The official minutes of each church business meeting will be recorded and filed in the church office by the church clerk. A copy of this file is to be kept safe in another location to be determined by the clerk. Copies of the minutes are to be made available upon request to all ministry partners.

Article V - Church Leadership

Section 1: General

The servant leadership structure of the church is based upon the example of the New Testament church and includes all the necessary legal requirements of a duly organized religious entity operating in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The servant leadership structure of the church is intentionally designed to demonstrate diversity and to foster unanimity, inclusiveness, and consensus among the ministry partners of the body. This body, of which Christ is the Head, is to be led by a team of differently gifted diverse but equally important Pastoral Staff, Elders, and Ministry Leaders, to the glory of God. (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Philippians 2:2-8).

The Pastoral Staff, Ministerial Staff, Elders and Ministry Team Leaders of the church are to lead in harmonious and fruitful partnership. The goal of this partnership is to see that constant progress is being made toward the fulfilling of God's vision and mission and to uphold the values of the church. All participants of the church are admonished in Scripture to pray for and support church leaders and to submit to their authority (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Section 2: Staff

Pastoral Staff: The Pastoral Staff shall consist of the Lead Pastor and other Ministerial and Pastoral Staff positions as deemed necessary by mutual agreement of the Lead Pastor and the Elders and recommended to the partnership by the Elder Team. By virtue of his/her calling and office, the Lead Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. The Pastoral Staff is charged with responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the church and the shepherding of its participants (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-32).

Most day-to-day decisions and responsibilities regarding the life and direction of the church are entrusted to the Pastoral Staff (Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 5:17).

Pastoral Staff is to come under the authority and supervision of the Elder Team, thus the eligibility requirements are determined by the Elders.

The Pastoral Staff members, once called and installed, are ministry partners of the church.

The Pastoral Staff is to continue serving the church until a call is properly revoked by the partnership or until the Pastoral Staff member voluntarily resigns with one-month's notice. In either case, a paid Pastoral Staff member may be given a severance package equal to 3-months' salary/allowance, if possible. If the Pastoral Staff member's call is revoked by the partnership, (see Leadership Accountability in Section 5) the Pastoral Staff member is to leave his/her office immediately and have no further ministerial contact or involvement with the partnership.

When a Pastoral Staff vacancy occurs, the Elders may temporarily assume the responsibilities for a period of no longer than 1 year, or they may choose to hire Interim/Supply Pastors as they deem necessary for the good of the church. A Pastor Search Team of no less than 5 people from a cross-section of the church and the Elder Team will seek a suitable Pastoral candidate to present to the partnership for confirmation of his/her call. This committee is to be selected by the Elder Team.

Ministerial and Support Staff: Ministerial and Support Staff positions (program, administrative, secretarial, custodial, etc.) are to be recommended by the Elder Team to the partnership. Once staff positions are identified and approved, the Elder Team is to seek the best person(s) available to fill the position(s). Partnership affirmation is required for Ministerial Staff only. Partnership affirmation is not required for the specific individuals filling support positions.

Ministerial and Support Staff come under the supervision of the Elder Team and may be dismissed from their positions for performance or ethical reasons by the Elder Team without partnership affirmation. Ministerial and Support Staff are required to give a minimum of two-weeks' notice upon voluntary resignation.

Salaries/Allowances: Salaries/Allowances are to be included in the annual church budget proposal and must be affirmed by a vote of the partnership according to Article IV, Section 1.

Section 3: Elders

Elders: Elders, by definition are a body of spiritual leaders and decision-makers. The Elder Team will consist of no fewer than five spiritually mature ministry partners of the church plus the Lead Pastor; other Pastoral Staff would serve as non-voting members of the Elder Team.

Elders are responsible to be purveyors of the “culture” of the church, ensuring that the actions of the church body and Pastoral and Ministerial Staff are in accordance with Scripture and the RLCC Vision, Mission, and Value statements from Section 3 and the Elders will also guard the church against any harmful influences.

Elders are ultimately responsible to ensure that the teaching and activities of the church remain Biblically focused and doctrinally pure, and that the ministry partners and attendees are being well cared for, spiritually fed and challenged to become spiritually devoted followers of Christ.

Elders (non-paid) are responsible for yearly evaluations of the Pastoral, Ministerial and Support Staff, providing feedback to staff members based upon job descriptions, performance and ethical behavior. Any recommendation for action based upon an evaluation will be presented to the voting church ministry partners. RLCC Staff may be recommended for dismissal from their position by the Elder Team for performance or ethical reasons (see Leadership Accountability in Section 5).

The Elder Team will also exercise church discipline whenever necessary—confronting those who are contradicting Biblical truth or who are continuing in a pattern of sinful or unethical behavior based upon the guidelines for church discipline found in Article III Section 8.

Elders should ensure that the church is well-managed with the help of other gifted leaders. This includes presenting to the voting church ministry partners a yearly budget, recommendations for Pastoral Staff positions and Ministerial Staff positions, and recommendations about purchases of church property and major building issues. Once Support Staff positions are identified and approved by the voting church ministry partners, the Elder Team is to seek the best person(s) available to fill the position(s).

Elders must carry out their responsibilities under the Lordship and leadership of Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

Elders are to be selected from and confirmed by the voting ministry partners. The ministry focus of Elders is to be the spiritual health and well-being of the church body and its surrounding community. Elders do not determine worship programming. This responsibility is entrusted to the Pastoral and Ministerial Staff. However, the Elders are responsible for giving appropriate feedback to the Pastoral and Ministerial Staff and to Ministry Team leaders based on the overall vision, mission and values of the church. Elders should meet the qualifications below.

Number and Term of Office: The number of Elders shall be at least five, a majority of which shall be lay Elders. Any resignation that reduces the elders below this level will be filled in a timely manner. An elder must be added for every 100 additional ministry partners in excess of 200. Each Elder will hold office for a three-year term. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms that an Elder may hold, subject to the required sabbatical years. Elders will be entrusted to personally monitor their need for a sabbatical and remove themselves from the Elder Team at least one year every six years. A member of the Elder Team may be asked to resign from the team if the consensus of the remaining team members determines the removal is necessary based upon a lack of attention to responsibilities as outlined above or for ethical reasons.

Qualifications: An Elder must be an active ministry partner of the church for a period of at least one year, known for spiritual and servant leadership and the ability to teach and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Members of the pastoral or ministerial staff can be selected as Elder candidates if they meet the qualifications above. An Elder must possess specific qualifications described in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 20:28, and 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Limits of Authority: The Elder Team may appoint or remove Pastoral or Ministerial Staff, buy, sell, lease or construct real property on behalf of the church, approve debt for the church or change the Constitution and Bylaws with the consent of the voting ministry partners of the church.

Selection Process for Calling Elders. Any time there is a vacancy in the Elder Team, or it has been determined that additional elders are needed due to growth, the church will enter into the elder selection process defined below.

1. Use Biblical criteria to identify candidates. Suggested texts: Acts 14:22-23, 20:28, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4.
2. Enter a 40-day church-wide season of prayer specifically for God's guidance throughout this process.
3. After the initial 40 days of prayer, accept recommendations from church ministry partners, pastoral and ministerial staff for a period of 2 weeks.
4. Members of the current Elder Team (Elders and Pastoral Staff) will review recommendations.
 - a. In the event a current member of the Elder Team whose term is about to expire is being considered to serve a concurrent term, that member will participate in the selection process as a candidate only if they choose to withdraw their name from consideration.
5. Once all recommendations have been prayerfully reviewed by the Elder Team the names of those recommended by the unanimous approval of the Elder Team, would be published.
 - a. Published candidates should then enter their own 40-day period of prayerful self-examination allowing them the opportunity to withdraw their name from consideration or confirm their willingness to continue in the selection process.
 - b. Also during this same 40 days, allow the ministry partners to share any reason why a person(s) should not be considered—first with that person one-to-one and then with a member of the Elder Team.
6. The Elder Team will begin interviews with candidates who wish to continue the process on a face-to-face basis. Topics to be discussed would include but not be limited to:
 - a. Affirming the overall character of the individual.
 - b. The evidence in the candidate's life of all Biblical criteria outlined for an elder.
 - c. The candidate's faith history, spiritual growth and Biblical beliefs.
 - d. Support of the church's Mission, Vision, and Values, and RLCC Statement of Faith.
 - e. Overall willingness to serve and make the time commitment required.
7. At the end of the interview process. The names of the elder candidates who have successfully met the Biblical criteria, have received the unanimous endorsement of the Elder Team, and have made the commitment of time, would be affirmed by vote of a 75% majority of the church ministry partners present at a specially called business meeting.
8. Each year, prior to the annual business meeting, elders should carefully review their commitment to serve and the Biblical criteria necessary for continued service. This review of commitment and Biblical criteria should be carried out individually and with the Elder Team examining one another. If an elder is found not willing to continue in service or not currently meeting Biblical standards, they should immediately withdraw from the Elder Team.
9. At the annual business meeting each year, all elders currently serving should be presented to the partnership for affirmation of their continued leadership—not a vote.
10. Elders removing themselves from service or having been removed by decision of the Elder Team can resume service in the future subject to once again going through the elder selection process defined above.

Training: Since there is no specific training method mentioned in the Scriptures for Elders, training shall be determined by the Elder Team.

Section 4: Ministry Teams

General It shall be the objective of the church to hold the number of Ministry Teams to a minimum in favor of empowering and resourcing individuals and teams of people within the partnership to carry out the work of the church to the best of their ability.

Responsibility and Oversight All Ministry Teams are to come under the authority and oversight of the Elders. The Ministry Team Leader will recruit ministry team members; regularly communicate with other Ministry Leaders by attending Coordination Team meetings (Article IV Section 2), provide ministry reports,

submit vision-based budget requests to the Budget Committee for inclusion in the annual church budget if they expect reimbursement of ministry expenses. Ministry Team leaders may serve for an indefinite term at the discretion of the Elder Team.

The church requires a state police background check, at the expense of the church for all those working with children and youth, or those serving in a church financial ministry.

Establishment of New Ministry Teams New ministry teams may be established by the Elder Team to meet a particular ministry need, or by a ministry partner who senses a call from God to begin a ministry. There must be an appropriate gifted leader, a team, and a need that fits within the Vision, Mission, and Values of RLCC. All ministry team leaders must be willing to be mentored and trained as recommended by the Elder Team. Ministry partners are preferred as ministry team leaders as God gifts and enables; non-ministry partners may serve the Lord on established Ministry Teams. All non-ministry partners participating in prayer, direct teaching and verbal evangelism must be in agreement with the RLCC Statement of Faith.

Section 5: Leadership Accountability

Grievances: If at any time a ministry partner feels that a pastor, staff member, ministry team leader or elder is no longer capable or qualified to serve or if there are unresolved grievances between ministry partners, Pastoral Staff, Support Staff, and Elders, parties must follow the steps of confrontation and reconciliation outlined in Article III Section 8.

If reconciliation has not occurred, the Elder Team will then consider the matter in prayer and make their decision (see *Revoking of A Call* below). In extreme cases, the Elder Team may elect to seek advice and/or binding arbitration from an outside entity such as the Fredericksburg Area Baptist Network.

Revoking of a Call: Cause for review of the call of a pastor, elder, ministry team, or other leader will include:

- Disagreement with the church's Statement of Faith or Partnership Expectations.
- Spiritual or moral misconduct (e.g., lying, cheating, stealing, sexual immorality, etc).
- Organizational misconduct (e.g., uncooperative spirit, unwillingness to fulfill their assigned duties, etc).
- The inability or unwillingness to participate in the responsibilities as defined.

The call of an elder, ministry team, or other leader may be revoked by unanimous agreement of the Elder Team (Elders and Pastoral Staff). The person under review shall cast no vote in such deliberations.

A pastor's call may be revoked upon the recommendation to the partnership by the Elders and a 75% majority vote of the partnership at a specially called business meeting (see Quorum Article IV, Section 5).

Article VI – Elder Team/Board of Directors

Section 1: General Powers

The corporate powers of the church shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Elder Team, a/k/a, Board of Directors, also referred to in these Constitution and Bylaws as the "Directors", or "Elders". The powers, business and property of the Church shall be exercised, conducted and controlled by the Elders for the purposes of overseeing the legal, business, financial and administrative affairs of the Church with consensus agreement. If, in the course of the decision-making processes, unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Elders cannot unanimously agree, then the decisions will be made by 80 percent of the Elders present and voting at that meeting. In the case where the Elders will, by reason of deadlock (whether because an even number of Members is seated on the Elder Team, or because certain Members are absent even though a quorum is present, or because of abstention, or for any other reason) be unable to reach a consensus or conclusion on any issue before the Team, then, in such instance, the

issue will be tabled and prayerfully considered until such time as a consensus or conclusion can be reached.

Section 2: Elder Team Terms

Because the Elders are the corporate Board of Directors, each lay Elder may serve two consecutive three (3) year terms. The authorized number of Board Members shall be such number as may from time to time be authorized by the Elders and confirmed by the partnership, provided that such number shall not be less than five (5). There shall be three rotations of lay Elders so that approximately one third (1/3) are up for election every year to maintain continuity and make for smooth transitions within the Directors. As noted herein before, no lay Elders shall serve as a corporate director for more than two three (3) year terms without taking a sabbatical year off before thereafter being reelected by the ministry partnership.

Section 3: Specific Powers/Functions of Elders/ Board of Directors

The Elders shall annually elect a Chairperson of the Elders to facilitate the Elders' meetings and a Secretary to record the minutes. The Team Leaders of other church Ministries/Teams and organizations may be non-voting invitees to the Elders meetings whenever projects or programs in which their team/committee may be involved are to be considered, for example, preparation of annual church calendar. Other than the general powers outlined above and those enumerated above, the primary functions of the Elders shall be:

1. To define for the partnership suggested objectives and church goals.
2. To establish governing principles, policies and determining practices for the Church, including the creation and maintenance of policies and procedure manuals, which shall contain all controlling policies and procedures governing any and all aspects of the Church's affairs, including, but not limited to, Ministries/Teams task descriptions and policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, and employment policies and practices.
3. To review plans recommended by the Coordination Team.
4. To define for the partnership the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to priorities to avoid conflicts in the use of church facilities.
5. To evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
6. To oversee legal, business, financial and administrative affairs of the church.
7. To execute the appointment and termination of all staff, other than Pastoral, provide annual performance feedback for church staff, and determine compensation of lay and ministerial staff.
8. Other powers and duties assigned by the Church ministry partners and needed for the orderly administration of the church such as but not limited to the following.
 - a. Lead the way in modeling evangelism to the partnership.
 - b. Guide the church forward in priorities, vision, and philosophy of ministry. This shall include policies for the church.
 - c. When requested to assist with the observance of the Lord's Ordinances.
 - d. Assist the Lead Pastor and Pastoral Staff in their duties to give spiritual leadership to the church.

Section 4: Interim Vacancies on the Elders

A vacancy on the Elder because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause shall be filled by the Elders as defined in Article V, Section 3.

Section 5: Transactions with Interested Parties

A contract or other transaction between the church and one or more of its Elders, Pastors, Officers, Staff, or family members thereof (hereinafter "Interested Party"), or between the church and any other entity, of which one or more of the church ministry partners or its Elders, Pastors, or Officers are also Interested Parties, or in which an Interested Party has a financial interest – shall be voidable at the sole election of the church unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

1. The church entered into the transaction for its own benefit.
2. The transaction was fair and reasonable as to the church, or was in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the church entered into the transaction.
3. Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the Elders authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the Directors then in office, without counting the vote of the interested Director or Directors, and with knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties' interest in the transaction.
4. Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the Elders, in good faith, determined after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the church could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the church's tax-exempt purposes.

Common or interested Elders may not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Elders (or a committee thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction. Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the church to any of its Elders, Officers, Pastors, or Ministry Partners. The Elders shall adopt a Conflicts of Interest Policy that will provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by Elders, Officers, staff, or employees to facilitate the above policy. This Policy shall permit the Elders to determine whether the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair and reasonable to the church.

Section 6: No Compensation for Directors

No salary or compensation shall be paid to any of the Elders in their capacity as Member of the Elders, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any Elders from serving the church in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation. Moreover, the Elders may receive reasonable reimbursement for travel and other approved expenses upon request and with written documentation.

Section 7: Quorum of Elders

Two third (2/3) of voting Elders present at the beginning of a meeting shall constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting business at a meeting. Every action taken or decision made by the Elders shall be deemed to be the act of the Elders.

Section 8: Action without Meeting

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Elders may be taken without a meeting, if all of the Elders, individually or collectively, consent in writing or by electronic mail to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the Elders. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Elders.

Section 9: Manner of Acting

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the act of the majority of the Directors/Elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Directors/Elders.

Section 10: Participation by Conference Telephone

Members of the Elders or Directors or of any committee thereof may participate in a meeting of such Elders or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, a written record shall be made of the action taken at such meeting, noting participation of those who were present by means of such communications equipment.

Section 11: Special Elders Teams

The Elders, by majority vote of all Directors in office, may appoint two or more persons from among its number and/or ministry partners to serve on a special Elder team, such number as the Elders may determine are necessary, which shall have such powers and duties as shall from time to time be prescribed by the Elders. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and Bylaws, or by a Resolution of the Elders, each Elder team may not exercise the authority of the Elders.

Section 12: Elder Team Meetings

The Elder Team will conduct meetings and report on their ministry progress on a regular basis to the Ministry Team Leaders at the regular Coordination Team Meetings. Elder Team Meetings will be conducted according to Scriptural principles as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8 and are to be conducted in good order. Meetings are to be opened and closed in prayer. Minutes of meetings should be kept for reference. The Elder Team shall abstain from sharing sensitive or privileged information with persons outside the Elder Team.

Section 13: Minutes

Minutes of the meetings of the Elders/Directors shall be recorded and taken by a secretary who shall have custody thereof and be responsible for circulating copies to the members of the Elder Team in a timely manner.

Article VII - Church Officers

Section 1: Officers

The officers of the Church shall be the Lead Pastor/President, Chairperson of the Elders/Directors, Secretary, Alternate Secretary, Treasurer, Alternate Treasurer, and such other officers as the Elders of Directors may appoint and the partnership confirms. No person may hold more than one of these offices as a second office.

Section 2: Election

The Lead Pastor occupies the position of President/CEO by virtue of his/her position. The interim Lead Pastor or the Chairperson of the Elders/Directors may serve as the President/CEO if necessary. The Elders shall elect by simple majority The Chairperson of the Elders/Directors for a two (2) year term without limitation for reelection or until their successors are elected and qualified. The offices of Clerk, Alternate Clerk, Treasurer, and Alternate Treasurer are nominated and affirmed as described in Sections 5 and 6 below.

Section 3: Vacancies

A vacancy of any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, shall be filled by the Elders/Directors based on Article V – Church Leadership for Lead Pastor and Elders, Section 5 below for Clerk and Alternate Clerk and Section 6 below for Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer.

Section 4: Salaries

The Elders/Directors shall determine the salaries, if any, of all officers and agents of the Church. Those officers whose salaries are being voted upon shall recuse themselves from the vote and that portion of the meeting. Salaries are subject to inclusion in, and approval of the budget.

Section 5: Clerk and Alternate Clerk

The Elders shall nominate one ministry partner to serve as the official record keeper of the church, and one ministry partner from a different family to serve as the alternate Clerk. Both are to be affirmed by the voting partnership. The Clerk is to serve for a two-year term and is to be replaced by the Alternate Clerk, at which time a new Alternate Clerk shall be nominated by the Elders and confirmed by the partnership. The Clerk will serve as the Secretary for corporate purposes. The Clerk may call upon the church Support Staff for help in carrying out the Clerk's responsibilities described in Article VII.

Section 6: Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer

The Elders shall nominate one ministry partner to serve as the Treasurer of the church, and one ministry partner from a different family to serve as the Alternate Treasurer. Both are to be affirmed by the voting partnership. The Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer shall be bonded at the expense of the church. The Treasurer is to serve for a two-year term and is to be replaced by the Alternate Treasurer, at which time a new Alternate Treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and confirmed by the partnership. The Treasurer may call upon the church Support Staff for help in carrying out the Treasurers' responsibilities described in Article VIII.

The Treasurer is responsible for the receipt of all funds that may be given to the Church. The Treasurer shall oversee receipts, disbursements, and maintenance of church records. The Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer shall be responsible for signing checks. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer. Any check over the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5000.00) shall require two authorized signatures and approval of the Elders. Requests for disbursements in excess of the Budget will be referred to the Budget Team.

Article VIII - Records and Reports

The church Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate records of all financial transactions.
2. Contribution statements for contributors.
3. An Annual Report for the business meeting.
4. Monthly reports to the Elder Team.

The church Clerk, with the assistance of the Alternate Clerk, will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Legal documents pertinent to the operation of the church.
2. Weekly worship attendance.
3. Names and dates of those baptized by the church.
4. Up-to-date partnership roll.
5. Minutes of business and Coordination Team meetings for distribution.

Article IX - Church Finances

Section 1: General:

It is the desire and goal of this church and its participants to be good stewards of the resources the Lord puts at our disposal. We recognize our God-ordained responsibility to help care for the needs of individuals within the partnership as well as our responsibility to share the tangible love of Jesus with those outside the church. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we trust that both responsibilities will be well-addressed by the distribution of church resources through the annual budget.

Section 2: Annual Budget

The church will have an annual budget, voted on by the partnership, to serve as the guide for the financial operation of the church.

Section 3: Budget Team

The church will have a Budget Team that will present the annual budget to the church for adoption. This team will consist of one Elder selected by the Elder body; the Treasurer, the Alternate Treasurer, and two ministry partners selected by the Elder Team. Participants may serve on the Budget Team for a two-year term, to be followed by at least one year off. The ministry partners selected should stagger their two-year terms.

Section 4: Development of the Annual Budget

The annual church budget will be established through the following process:

1. Leaders from each ministry team are to develop a budget based on their projected needs and the church's vision for the coming fiscal year. Financial requests are to be submitted to the Budget Team for their consideration and formation of a proposed unified church budget.
2. The Budget Team's proposal is to be printed and presented for discussion with the Coordination Team. Any adjustments deemed necessary by the Budget Committee will be made to the proposed unified church budget.
3. The adjusted budget is to be presented by the Budget Team to the partnership at the annual business meeting for adoption by the voting partnership.
4. The last approved budget shall remain in effect until a new one has been duly adopted.

Section 5: Budget Amendments

Amendments to the annual church budget should follow this process:

1. Amendments should be presented to the budget team.
2. The Budget Team will notify the Elder Team of the budget amendment request and their recommendation to approve or reject it.
3. If the Budget Team determines that a change to the budget is necessary, the Budget Team will make their recommendation to the Elder Team for their approval followed by discussion with the Coordination Team.
4. If the recommendation of the Budget and Elder Teams increases the overall Budget by \$1000 or less, the amendment does not require the approval of the partnership.
5. If however, the amendment would increase the total budget more than \$1000, the amended budget should be presented to the partnership by the Budget Team at a duly noticed and called special business meeting and require the affirmative vote of the ministry partners for adoption in accordance with Article III, Section 5.

Section 6: Contributions, Gifts or Bequests

The Elder Team on behalf of RLCC may accept any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purpose or any special purpose of the church. Any endowment for the general purpose or for any special purpose of the church shall be approved by the Elder Team.

Section 7: Designated Contributions

Special offerings may be sought by the church or by any of its organizations only upon approval of the Elder Team. This does not preclude individuals making special offerings at any time as the Spirit of God may move them. The church may accept any designated contributions, gift, bequest or devise provided it is consistent with the church's

1. Mission and spiritual priorities as determined from time to time by the church.
2. Budget process and fiscal restrictions.
3. Full ownership and control of the funds or assets.
4. Tax exempt purposes, as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.

As so limited, donor designated contributions may be accepted for special funds, purposes or uses, and such designations will generally be honored, but do not have to be so honored, at the full discretion of the church. The church shall reserve all rights, title and interests as to the control of such contributions as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any special fund, purpose or use. When the church is unable to honor a designation, the church may

- Use these funds for any other special purpose.
- Contact the donor to change their designation, or
- Return the contribution to the donor.

All of these functions are at the full discretion of the church.

Section 8: Income

The Elders shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Church not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Church. The Church ministry partners will support the Church with tithes and offerings. All tithes and offerings and gifts will be counted by the tellers and turned over to the Church Treasurer. All funds, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church. The church shall operate within sound financial accounting and budgetary procedures, and as further described in the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 9: Expenditures.

All checks or demands for money in notes of the Church shall be signed by such officer(s) or such other person or persons as the Elders may from time to time designate in the absence of a Treasurer or Alternate Treasurer.

Section 10: Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the church year, which begins on January 1st and ends on December 31.

Section 11: Contracts

The President and Chairperson of the Elders may sign all contracts approved by the partnership. The Elders may approve in writing any other officer, agent or agents of the Church, in addition to the officers so authorized by this Constitution and Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of or on behalf of the Church. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Church to any contract or any engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or in any amount. All contracts should be reviewed by a competent attorney.

Section 12: Partnerships, Joint Ventures, LLCs and Auxiliary Corporations.

The Elders may authorize in writing any officer(s), or agent(s) of the Church to enter into any partnerships or joint ventures or create auxiliary corporations or limited liability companies that the Elders determine will advance the religious purposes and goals of the ministry partners as described herein and not violate the Church's tax-exempt status.

Section 13: Financial Review

An annual review from an outside agency, to be selected by the Budget Team, will be performed on the church's financial matters and made available to the church and to the public upon request.

Appendix A – RLCC Statement of Faith



Real Life Community Church Statement of Faith

August 15, 2008

Everything that we are and seek to become has been shaped by the historic Christian beliefs reflected in these statements. *Real Life Community Church* is a community of faith. In these essential beliefs, we agree with one another—in non-essentials, we pledge our respect for and acceptance of one another—and in all things, we love one another.

We hold this statement to be an accurate and Biblically based means of summarizing our essential beliefs as a church. On those issues where the Bible is silent or the teaching is obscure we trust in the continued guidance of God's Spirit to lead us as we seek deeper understanding characterized by balance, mutual respect, humility and love.

About God

We believe there is only one true God—Creator of all that exists. God is eternal. God is love. God is holy. God is mystery. God is all truth, righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, power, justice, and glory. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ through the moving of His Holy Spirit—evidence of God's tri-unity. God is transcendent, and yet present, and continues to be intimately involved in sustaining His creation. Throughout human history, God has passionately pursued an intimate relationship with us and is continually reaching out to us, inviting us by His grace to follow Him and be with Him in faith, worship, fellowship, learning, and service.

About Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus is Lord. Jesus is God come to earth in human form—sinless, yet with human feelings and characteristics. Jesus is the fullest expression of what God is like. Jesus is the Christ—the Messiah—the fulfillment of God's promises sent to rescue a lost and dying world. Jesus was born of a virgin—crucified for the sins of all of us—resurrected from the dead—and ascended into heaven to dwell at the right hand of God, serving as intermediary for humanity. Thus the events of the Cross, and Christ's resurrection as the ultimate victory over sin and death, exist as the turning point of human history as God made available through Jesus forgiveness for our sins, abundant life on earth, and eternity spent with God in Heaven. Jesus will come again at a time known only to the Father, to gather the faithful into His eternal presence. Jesus Christ is the Leader of our lives, and founder and head of the Church. No individual, group, or outside body can take His place of prominence. All we endeavor to do—every decision we make—is to be a reflection of His leadership and teachings.

About the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is God's presence living within us. The third person of the Trinity, the Spirit of God comforts, teaches, empowers, convicts, reveals, and guides the hearts and minds of those who follow Jesus in faith. Through the Holy Spirit, every believer is given unique and diverse gifts with which to serve God for Kingdom purpose. The Holy Spirit draws us to God individually, fosters our collective unity, shapes us into Christ-like character, and nurtures our love for God and one another.

About the Bible

We believe the Bible is the written Word of God—inspired by His Voice—infallible in its original manuscripts—and perfect in its truth and teaching as God's guidebook for all of life, in every age. It is both our privilege and our responsibility to seek to understand God's message to us and apply it as the standard for all we say and do. As God's means of revealing Himself to us, the unchanging truth of Scripture must be communicated in ways that are relevant and clear to the people of our community. The dominant theme of the Bible is God's redemption of humanity, thus Scripture must be interpreted and obeyed in light of the person, message, and mission of Jesus Christ.

About Humanity

We believe we have been created by a loving God to be in relationship with Him for eternity. All human life is equally precious and valuable. We are created in God's image for lives of purpose and meaning. However, our nature is to sin—to fall short of God's moral standards. Through our sin, the image of God within us becomes marred and stained, our relationship with God is broken, and our purpose becomes unclear. Our only hope for restoration and for eternal life with God, and for abundant meaningful life here on earth, is His boundless, marvelous, amazing grace shown to us in His Son Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, we receive the free gift of God's forgiveness and a spiritual rebirth. It is grace alone, through faith that rescues us from our sin. Good works, though evidence of faith, and vital to an authentic Christian life, are not enough to save us.

About the Church

We believe the Church is to continue the Mission of Christ to the world. The primary purpose of the Church is to reach those far from God and draw them lovingly into a relationship with the Father through the Son, and then equip them for life as fully devoted followers of Christ. All believers in Christ are members of the Church, universal. The best expression of the Church as Jesus intended it is the local, voluntary gathering of believers called the church. The local church, when it is functioning well, will emphasize the equipping of all believers as ministers, and will devote itself to outreach, discipleship and prayer, fellowship, servanthood, generosity, and worship. We believe Jesus gave the church two particular forms of worship to serve as public expressions of our faith—communion and believer's baptism. The church is both a community of oneness and a celebration of our diversity. Church partnership is defined as a deep personal commitment made in partnership with a particular body of believers to serve in unity of purpose, to further the work and ministry of the church through faithful and responsible use of one's time, talents and treasures, to be supportive of those in leadership, and to practice loving, God-honoring relationships.