

 New Story Church
**Constitution
& Bylaws** ●●●

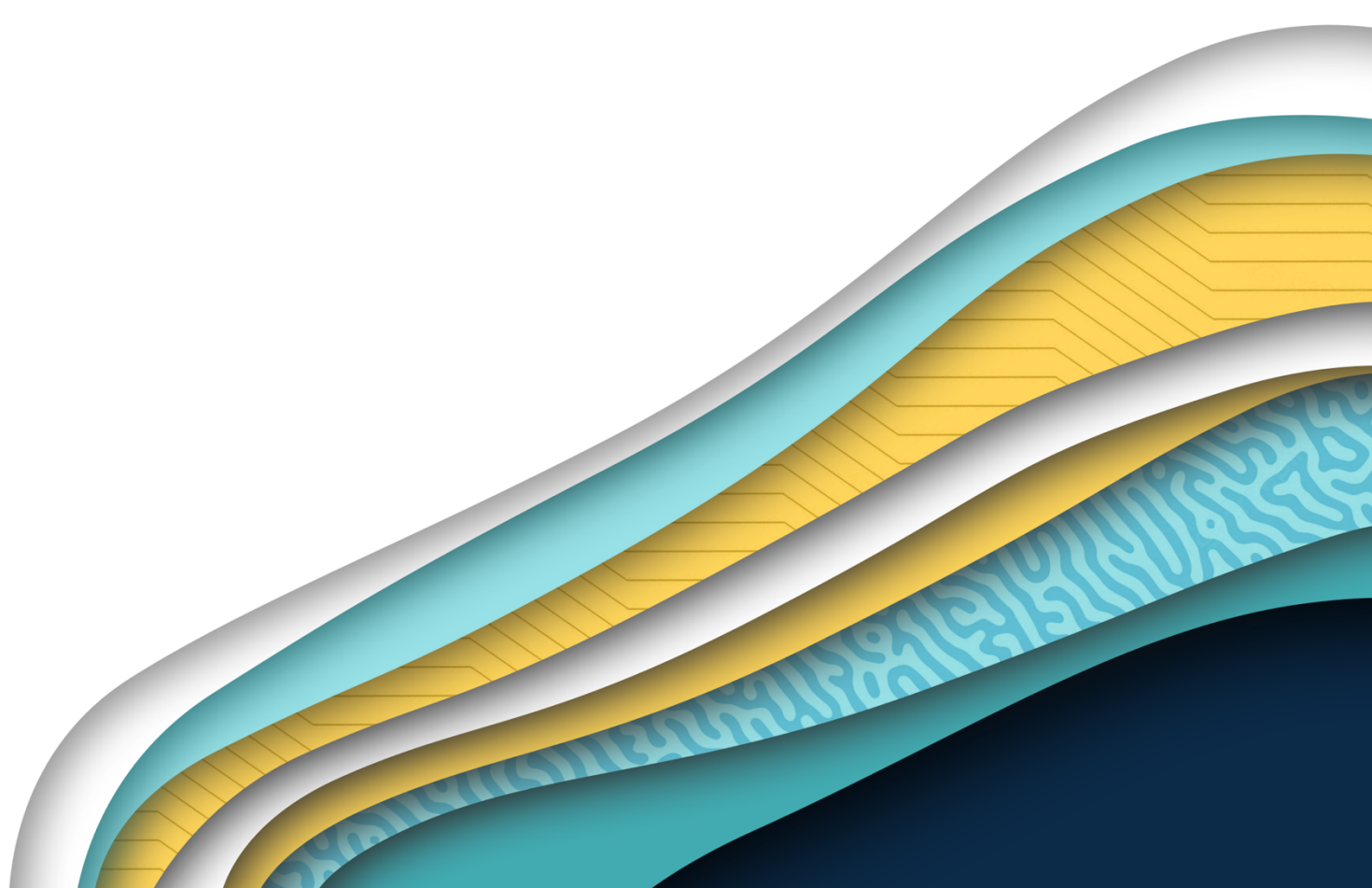


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ARTICLE 1 – Name, Mission, Purpose, Core Values

Section 1: Name

New Story Church, formerly known as Oak Grove Baptist Church, was organized July 4, 1954 and is incorporated under the laws of the state of Kansas. This church was constituted as a Baptist church to worship God, encourage Christian fellowship, and proclaim the gospel of His Son, Jesus, as guided by His Word.

Section 2: Mission

New Story Church exists to make more and better followers of Jesus Christ. (Acts 16:5)

Section 3: Purpose

We are committed to fostering life transformation through worship, teaching, evangelism, service, and community.

Section 4: Core Values

- Found people find people
- Saved people serve people
- Life is better connected
- Growing people change
- You can't outgive God

ARTICLE 2 – Statement of Faith

This church holds the following Statement of Faith to be a summary of Christian belief whose authority is based only in its agreement with the Bible. We hold these doctrines as essential to the unity of New Story Church.

Section 1: Distinctive Beliefs

A. The Bible

We believe the Bible is God's Word revealed to us through divine inspiration. It consists of sixty-six books written by human authors as guided by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are the supreme source of truth for Christian belief and living. *(References: John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)*

B. God

We believe there is only one God who exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are fully divine. God is the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. *(References: Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Exodus 20, 2-3; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; Revelation 4:11)*

C. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless human life, and sacrificed himself on the cross for the sins of mankind. He was raised from the dead and ascended to Heaven to sit at the right hand of God, the Father. Jesus Christ will return to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *(References: Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:1-12; Matthew 1:20-25; 16:16; John 1:1-14; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 4:14-15)*

D. Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, coequal with the Father and the Son. He was involved in creation and the inspiration of the Bible. The Spirit makes people aware of their sin and points them to the truth. He lives within those who trust in Jesus, guides them to live for Christ, and grow in grace. He gifts and empowers Christ followers to serve. *(References: Genesis 1:2; Matthew 3:16; 28:19; John 14:16-17; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18; 1 John 4:13)*

E. Angels and Satan

We believe that angels are spirit beings created to serve God as messengers. Satan, a spirit being, fell into sin through pride. He is a tempter and accuser of man and an adversary of God and His purposes. Satan, also known as the Devil, will suffer eternal punishment along with the angelic beings that fell with him. *(References: Job 38:4-7; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Ephesians 4:27; 6:11; Hebrews 1:4-7; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10; 20:2, 10)*

F. Mankind

We believe that man and woman were created by God in His image and likeness. Even though they were created innocent, they voluntarily chose to disobey God. As sinners, they were alienated from God and adversely impacted the whole creation with sin and death. Their sin affected their thinking, feelings, and will to the extent that they are incapable, of themselves, to respond to the things of God. *(References: Genesis 1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-17; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3)*

G. Salvation

We believe that God, by His grace and mercy, offers forgiveness of sin and a relationship with Him based on the work of Jesus. This provision is given to all who place their trust in Jesus alone. Salvation is expressed in a life of spiritual growth through the power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This new life begins when the lost person repents and receives Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The Christ follower is eternally secure in Jesus, being kept by God's love and power. *(References: John 1:10-13; 3:16-18; 10:25-30; Romans 3:21-26; 5:1-11; 6:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-10; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24)*

H. The Church

We believe that the Church, in a universal sense, consists of all those who trust in Jesus beginning at Pentecost. This Church is known from the Scriptures as the body of Christ. In a local sense, a church is a voluntary gathering of Christ followers identified by their baptism and assembled to accomplish Christ's instructions to make disciples. A church is led by pastors (elders) guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. They are assisted by deacons (servant leaders). Each Christ follower is gifted with abilities to serve to build the body of Christ. A church observes two ordinances—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the believer's immersion in water symbolizing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This ordinance identifies a believer with Jesus and the other Christians. The Lord's Supper is a memorial symbolizing the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. A church is constituted as a congregation of believers under the headship of Christ. It is self-governed and accountable only to Christ. A church is distinct from the civil government which has been ordained by God for protection and order of all people. *(References: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:40-47; Romans 6:3-7; 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:11-22; 4:1-16; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 15; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 2:4-10)*

I. Eternity (Things to Come)

We believe that Jesus will personally and visibly return before His 1000-year reign. All of humanity will be resurrected. Believers will dwell eternally in heaven with God; those condemned in their sin will spend eternity in hell separated from God. Christ will bring an end to sin and death. *(References: Matthew 19:28-29; 24:3-51; Luke 17:22-36; John 3:16; 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 17:31; Romans 6:23; 14:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-15; 21:1-8)*

Section 2: Position Statements

A. Gender Complementarity

We believe that the opening chapters of Genesis express God's design and intention for human flourishing. In these chapters we learn, and we affirm, that men and women are equal in dignity, value and worth before God but are also distinct and complementary expressions of God's image. They are necessary partners and co-laborers in growing God's kingdom, but they are not interchangeable. The functional differences between the roles of men and women are part of God's design to reflect his attributes and promote humanity's flourishing. Human sinfulness leads to both the erasure and exploitation of differences that are intended to be received and stewarded as gifts from God. The rest of the Bible builds upon this foundational perspective, and our understanding of these scriptures shapes our understanding of sexuality, marriage, and ministry in the church. *(References: Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Colossians 3:18-19)*

B. Sexuality

Sex is a gift designed by God to be enjoyed within the context of marriage between one man and one woman and serves as a physical reminder of their whole-life union. Our sexual desires point to a fundamental longing for intimacy and union with God. Because sin affects all aspects of creation, in ways that we see and don't see, our sexual desires are prone to disorder and misdirection. Due to the effects of sin, we can experience frustration within and alienation from our own bodies. All believers are called to submit their sexual desires and sense of self to God's creational intent. We wait in hope for the completion of Christ's redemptive work of our body, soul, and mind. *(References: Genesis 2:18-25; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)*

C. Marriage

Marriage is first and foremost a picture of Christ's relationship with the church. Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in their families. We believe that God has given to husbands the primary responsibility to protect and preserve his wife and family in accordance with the servant-leadership and sacrificial love characterized by Jesus Christ. We believe that God has given wives the primary responsibility to help her husband and family with the nurture, cultivation and guidance that is characterized by the Holy Spirit.

God's desire and design are for marriage to flourish for a lifetime. Due to the hardness of human hearts in our fallen world, there will be cases when a person will break their vows, and for this reason, there is grace. In God's word there are provided two clear exceptions to His command to believers not to divorce: adultery and desertion by an unbelieving spouse. For followers of Jesus who divorce on account of these exceptions, we believe that God gives them the freedom to remarry.

God has provided instructions on how married couples can experience oneness and fulfill His vision for their union. He has provided not only the means needed to love and serve each other but also the forgiveness and healing needed when marriages fall short or fall apart.

Through His church, He has provided a community that can give counsel and support in restoring the marriages. (*References: Genesis 2:24; Matthew 5:32, 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7:12-15; Ephesians 5:22-33*)

D. Biblical Justice

We believe that one of the primary calls on the life of a believer is to pursue biblical justice, which is characterized by generosity, equality, advocacy, and responsibility. Biblical justice has its ends in reconciliation and peace. It results in all parties flourishing and models Christ's sacrifice of self-giving love for our neighbor. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus embodied and modeled that this call to biblical justice extends to every arena of life; we are called to do follow this example. Biblical justice is rooted in the very character of God. His mercy is demonstrated by treating people who are made in His image with the status and respect that matches them as image bearers, with a special concern for those who are vulnerable to mistreatment and marginalization. Motivated by the hope of Jesus' return and His promise to make all things new, the Church bears witness to our good and just King as we live as a faithful presence, embodying truth and grace, wherever God has us. (*References: Genesis 1:27; Psalm 41:1; Proverbs 29:7; 31:8-9; Matthew 19:18, Luke 11:41, 12:32-33; Acts 17:30-31; James 1:27; 2 Peter 3:13*)

E. Church Discipline

A church is a congregation of sinners saved by the grace of God. As such, each person deals with an inclination to sin. The relational consequence of that sin is conflict. New Story Church is committed to resolving all disputes in a biblical manner. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive to live at peace with one another.

When an owner at New Story Church has a conflict with another owner, a church discipline process based on biblical principles will be followed. The objectives in the disciplinary process are maintaining the spiritual integrity of the church and restoring the offender to fellowship. Resolving conflict in the church begins with the offended person prayerfully examining themselves and taking responsibility for their contribution to the problem. Then, if the offense is too serious to be overlooked, that person will go to the offender to resolve the matter personally and privately. (If the offense involves a minor, refer to the New Story Church Child Protection Policy.) If the offender does not listen, the offended person will return with one or two other people to attempt to resolve the problem. If there is no confession and repentance forthcoming, the conflict will be submitted to the church to seek resolution. If the offender will not listen to the corporate action of the church, that person will be excluded from ownership at New Story Church.

Owners at New Story Church agree to submit themselves to this process of conflict resolution as described in this position statement. Owners also agree to deal with conflict by allowing the church to resolve disagreements and not pursue civil litigation against each other as instructed in Scripture. (This agreement is not to be construed as a substitute for or a mitigating factor in any criminal litigation as defined by Kansas statute.) If a person requests removal during the disciplinary process, the principles described above will continue to be followed. (*References: Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:9; 7:3-5; 18:15-17; Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:1-6, 20-32; Colossians 3:13*)

ARTICLE 3 – Church Ownership

Section 1: Admission of Owners

A person may be received into the membership of this church upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, agreement with the beliefs and methodology held by this church, baptism by immersion, an

interview with the Ownership Team, and a vote of the church. People requesting ownership from churches of like faith and practice may be received by an affirmative majority vote of the church.

Section 2: Termination of Ownership

Ownership may be terminated by any of the following conditions: a written resignation, the biblical process of discipline, failure to meet covenantal responsibilities, or the death of the owner. Notification shall be made to the church of any changes in ownership at the next available church business meeting.

Section 3: Voting

The voting age of owners shall be sixteen years of age and over, except cases whereby State Law requires eighteen years of age. No voting shall be by proxy.

ARTICLE 4: Organization

All staff, salaried or volunteer, are required to affirm the New Story Church Statement of Faith.

Section 1: Pastor/Elder/Overseer

A. Definition

The words “pastor”, “elder”, and “overseer” are used interchangeably in the New Testament to refer to the same office within the church. They reference the different aspects of responsibility. Elder expresses wisdom and maturity. Pastor expresses care, teaching, and correction. Overseer expresses leadership and oversight. These are individuals that are called to shepherd the church, teach, guard against false teaching, and exemplify Jesus as they use wisdom and discernment to provide counsel, help, and encouragement to the church.

B. Qualifications

A pastor/elder/overseer must meet the qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7, I Peter 5:1-3, Titus 1:6-9, I Timothy 5:17. The qualifications focus on godly character as well as specific skills. We believe that the office of pastor/elder/overseer is to be held by a qualified man.

C. Areas of Responsibility

The duties of the pastor will be based upon the responsibilities found in Scripture and the needs of the church for which they were hired (e.g. teaching, students, family ministries, etc).

D. Selection Process and Search Team

The church shall hire a pastor upon a vote of 90% of the owners at a church business meeting. The recommendation of a Pastor will be made by the Search Team. The Search Team is a group of wise, discerning leaders chosen by the pastor(s) from within the ownership of New Story and approved by the church. They are responsible for finding and communicating with candidates before a recommendation to the church. They must be in full agreement with New Story’s methodology and beliefs. They must take a collaborative approach to decision making and have familiarity with New Story’s ministries and structure. Any other Pastors on staff will serve as advisors to the Search Team.

E. Resignation/Termination

Pastors are voted in to serve indefinitely. Their service will end by resignation after notice to the church or by three-fourths vote of the owners at a meeting especially called to consider the termination of the pastor. At least two weeks’ notice of the time and purpose of such a

meeting is required. In the event if a pastor is terminated by vote of the owners, the pastor may, at the desire and option of the owners, continue for a period of ninety days salary. In the event of the death of a current pastor, consideration for the welfare of the family should be made.

Section 2: Deacons

A. Definition

Deacons are qualified servant leaders that are instrumental in meeting needs within the church and community.

B. Qualifications

Similar to the pastor/elder/overseer role, a deacon must meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The qualifications here focus solely on godly character.

C. Areas of Responsibility

A biblically functioning team of deacons take a service-oriented posture toward the church. While the pastor(s) have authority, the deacons have responsibilities. Among the responsibilities are preparing communion, extending generosity and compassion, as well as delegated administrative activities. They are to care for the physical or temporal concerns of the church which allows the pastors to spiritually shepherd the church. The number of deacons will be based upon the needs of the church.

D. Selection Process

Deacons are recommended by the church body and reviewed by the pastor(s). Deacons are then presented to the church to be voted on individually. Deacons are approved by the church by a three-fourths majority vote. Though a deacon shall be recognized as a deacon for life, subject to good standing in the church, their tenure shall be for three years. After a deacon has been off the active deacon body for a period of one year, the church shall be at liberty to elect them to another term of service of three years.

Section 3: Staff

The pastor(s) may hire salaried and voluntary staff as is necessary to provide for the ministry needs of the church. The vocational staff must be approved by the church and will be employed at a salary agreed to by the pastor(s) and deacons. All staff must be in full agreement with New Story's methodology and beliefs. They must take a collaborative approach to decision making and have familiarity with New Story's ministries and structure.

Section 4: Pastoral Advisory Team

The Pastoral Advisory Team will assist the pastor(s) in making decisions for the church. This team is recommended by the pastor(s) and is composed of deacons, staff, and lay owners within the church. They provide counsel and assistance to the pastor(s) in fulfilling the mission and purpose of the church. Members of the Pastoral Advisory Team will serve for a term of two years and be approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the church. Similar to the Staff and Search Team, they must be in full agreement with New Story's methodology and beliefs. They must take a collaborative approach to decision making and have familiarity with New Story's ministries and structure.

Section 5: Leadership Structure

A. Pastor/Elder/Overseer

New Story Church places its confidence in the spiritual and directional leadership of the church in its pastor(s). Where there is one pastor on staff, the pastor will serve as the spiritual and directional authority of the church while utilizing the Pastoral Advisory Team. Where there

is a plurality of pastors, they will serve the church as a team, equal in spiritual and directional authority but diverse in responsibilities while utilizing the Pastoral Advisory Team. Regarding the directional, spiritual, or financial decisions of the church, there must be unanimous consensus among the pastors while utilizing the input of the Pastoral Advisory Team.

B. Staff, Deacons, and Pastoral Advisory Team

Under the leadership of the pastor(s), the Staff, Deacons, and Pastoral Advisory Team serve the church as integral parts of the ministry and leadership at New Story Church.

ARTICLE 5: Missions

The policy of New Story is to support only missions engaged principally in evangelism and/or church planting. They must be in agreement with New Story's Statement of Faith and methodology. Requirements for missionary partnerships are outlined in the church's "Missions Philosophy and Policy."

ARTICLE 6: Church Covenant

Having been brought by God's grace to repent of our sins and trust in Jesus for salvation, and having been baptized, we now join ourselves together with the other believers of New Story Church and commit ourselves to the following:

- We will submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the authority on all issues of faith and practice.
- We will actively participate in the life of this gathering of the local church by attending weekly services, living in community with others, participating in owner's meetings, and serving both those within and outside of New Story Church. For the sake of modeling the oneness Jesus prayed for, we will refrain from divisive speech, attitudes, and behavior, but instead will count others as more significant than ourselves, especially in areas of Christian freedom. We will cultivate a community where people can safely share their hurts, weaknesses, fears, and failures, that they may find healing in Jesus. We will make a habit to repent of sin and submit ourselves to the accountability of others and the discipline of the church in the event of unrepentant rebellion and sin.
- We will support, value, and come alongside the next generation.
- We will, step by step, grow in our knowledge of and relationship with Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, living in community and the practice of other spiritual disciplines.
- We will be faithful stewards of the resources God has given us, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in the community of believers that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary.
- We will strive to demonstrate the reality of the gospel to an onlooking world by living lives of godliness with contentment and will make regular attempts to tell others about the hope and new life available in Jesus, living all of life with gospel intentionality. We will seek to be a faithful presence in our community and do our part in seeking the flourishing of our society, especially those who are vulnerable.
- We will encourage, pray for, and submit to the pastor(s) of New Story as they seek to lead our church with faithfulness and integrity.

ARTICLE 7: General

This constitution may be amended, supplemented, or replaced by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a business meeting called for that purpose where the nature of the proposed amendment has been presented to the church three weeks prior to that meeting.

All articles, rules, resolutions, or regulations heretofore adopted or in force in this church and not consistent with these articles, are hereby repealed.

ARTICLE 8: Indemnification

Section 1: Indemnified Persons

To the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, New Story Church agrees to and hereby does indemnify all corporate trustees, and officers (past, present, or future), their heirs (executors and administrators), acting in any capacity at the request or on behalf of this corporation, from and against all liability, judgments, decrees, fines, penalties, expenses, fees, amounts paid in settlement or any other costs, losses, and expenses (including but not limited to attorneys; fees and court costs) arising or resulting from or in connection or association with any threatened or pending action, suit or proceedings (whether civil, criminal, administrative, investigatory or otherwise) and any appeal related thereto, under which said indemnified persons are parties or participants because of actions or omissions of the corporate trustees, officers, employees, agents or other persons acting in any capacity at the request or on behalf of New Story Church.

Section 2: Liability

To the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, no corporate trustee or officer shall be liable to the corporation and no action shall be maintained against them by this corporation (or for its benefit, by any other person) because of any action or omissions of such trustee or officer.

Section 3: Exclusions

The provision of this Article shall not exclude or limit any rights or benefits to which any person so indemnified is or may be entitled as a matter of the law or statute; By the Article of Incorporation, Corporate By-laws, any agreements, the vote of members or trustees, or insurance purchased by this corporation; or otherwise.

Section 4: Clarifications

Where the context of this Article requires, words used in the masculine shall include the feminine, and words in the singular, the plural.

ARTICLE 9: Dissolution

No part of the property or other buildings of this church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, owner, officer of the church, or any individual. If for any reason the church is dissolved, all assets shall be distributed to organizations selected by the church and recognized as in general agreement with this church's policy and practice.