

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS



March 8th, 2020

And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Ephesians 4:11-13

But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:42-45

Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:1-4

#### **ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION**

The elders may call a special membership meeting for the purpose of dissolving this church. **Two-thirds** (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to dissolve the church and to approve distribution of the church assets. No part of the net earnings of the association shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director, or officer of the association or any private individual; and no donor, member, director, officer of the association or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the association assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the association will be distributed to Triumph Baptist Church, Vint Hill, VA, if it then exists and is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes. Otherwise, upon dissolution any assets of the association will be distributed to the Fairfax Baptist Temple of Fairfax Station, VA, if then recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes. In either case, the request to the recipient of such funds would be that they be used to directly facilitate church planting efforts in the intermountain west region.

#### **ARTICLE IX –AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS**

Upon the recommendation of the elders, these *Bylaws* may be amended by a **two-thirds** (2/3) majority vote of church voting members present at any regular or duly called special meeting called for that purpose.

confined to specific instances but in accord with practices defined within these *Bylaws*.

H) **Endowments** - The elders may establish on behalf of the church any endowments for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the church.

**ARTICLE IV – CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Any claim or dispute arising between church members, pastor(s), staff, and/or the church shall be settled by mediation following Scriptural example. If the dispute remains between non-elders, the elders’ decision shall be final. If, however, the dispute involves a pastor or elder and no resolution is reached, legally binding Christian arbitration will be employed by the elders using elders from churches of like faith and practice, and following the guidelines described in the *Article V*.

**ARTICLE V – OUR BIBLICAL COMMITMENTS TO ONE ANOTHER**

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled *Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*, which is incorporated into these *Bylaws* by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peace-making and reconciliation, preserving marriages, protecting children, biblical counseling, confidentiality, accountability, and church discipline. These commitments shall apply both to members and to regular attenders of our church and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these *Bylaws* may be amended.

**ARTICLE VI – ORDINATION**

This church shall have the authority to ordain to the gospel ministry those men who can give a satisfactory account as to their conversion, call to the ministry, and preparation. Those men who desire ordination may request that the church conduct an examination. This examination shall be in a public meeting and shall be conducted by the church elders or by a qualified group of ordained pastors assembled for this purpose.

**ARTICLE VII – MERGER**

The elders may call a special membership meeting for the purpose of merging this church with another church of like faith. **Two-thirds** (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to approve the merger.

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MORGAN VALLEY CHURCH

## CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I – NAME

This Utah nonprofit religious association (Church) shall be known as the "**Morgan Valley Church.**"

### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this local church is to glorify and worship God by studying and declaring His Word, by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world, by seeking Him through earnest prayer, by equipping the saints to live, serve, and fellowship in the power and unity of the Holy Spirit, and by keeping the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

*Mat 28:18-20;*

*Acts 2:42-46; 1Co 11:24-25; 14:26; Eph 4:11-16; 1Ti 4:11. Article VI, Church Covenant*

### ARTICLE III – AUTHORITY AND OVERSIGHT

This church recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures<sup>1</sup> as its only authority (*Col 1:18; 2 Tim 3:16*). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a body of elders who operate in concert with the membership. *Bylaws, Article I*

### ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION AND ASSOCIATION

This church is organized as a ministry of Triumph Baptist Church in Vint Hill, Virginia, and is established with its blessing to exist as an independent, self-governing church. Therefore, it is our desire to continue to serve in fellowship with Triumph Baptist Church and other like-minded ministries as our Lord directs. *Article V, §16*

### ARTICLE III – FINANCES

A) **Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year will begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> and end on December 31<sup>st</sup>

#### B) Financial Guidelines

- 1) Financial Guidelines Preparation and Approval - The elders will be responsible to prepare a financial guidelines for approval by the members prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.
- 2) Financial Guidelines Changes
  - a) The approved overall total of the financial guidelines, as presented to and approved by the members, will be the ceiling on spending for that year.
  - b) With membership approval, the elders may adjust the financial guidelines.

C) **Income** - Normally, church funds shall be provided by freewill gifts. The receiving and handling of monies, including restricted and designated gifts, shall be handled according to the *Morgan Valley Church Financial Policies and Procedures*.

#### D) Spending Authority

- 1) During the Fiscal Year - The elders are authorized to spend funds in accordance with the financial guidelines approved by the membership. In the event that a new budget is not approved until after the new fiscal year begins, monthly spending in the new fiscal year may not exceed average monthly income in the previous fiscal year until the new budget is approved.
- 2) Year-End Surplus Funds - Funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year will be incorporated into the following year's financial guidelines.

#### E) Conflict of Interest

The elders shall endeavor to remain sensitive to potential conflicts of interest in all use of church resources. The elders shall determine whether a contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the church.

F) **Reports and Reviews** - The treasurer will make financial reports to the elders as requested and to the members at least quarterly. An independent, qualified reviewing agency or individual shall examine the church financial records and money-handling procedures annually after the close of the fiscal year or more often if deemed necessary by the elders. (See the above conflict of interest statement.)

G) **Contracts** - The elders may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the church, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the church. Such authority may be general or

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document the terms "Scripture" and "Scriptures" refer to the 66 books of the Holy Bible. Cf. Article 5, Section 1

- 3) By erasure
    - a) A member may request to have his membership dissolved and his name dropped from the roll. This request must be in conjunction with our document entitled *Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*.
    - b) Any member not attending any of the meetings of the church for a period of six months, without reason, and otherwise inactive may be erased from the membership roll by the elders.
  - 4) By exclusion - Any member who conducts himself in a manner which is deemed harmful or contrary to the core beliefs and purposes of this church may be removed from membership, providing that disciplinary measures have first been taken and have failed to effect correction, and providing that such a member has been given opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the elders.
- D) **Discipline and Restoration of Members** - The Morgan Valley Church actively practices church discipline according to the principles and commands of Scripture – especially Matthew 18, Galatians 6 and 1 Corinthians 6.<sup>6</sup>
- E) **Privileges and Responsibilities**
- 1) Faithful attendance and participation in worship services and other church ministries;
  - 2) Voting on pastors, elders, and deacons;
  - 3) Voting on the annual budget of the church;
  - 4) Voting on acquisition of real property and associated indebtedness;
  - 5) Voting on the liquidation of all or substantially all of the church's assets;
  - 6) Voting on amendments to the *Constitution* or *Bylaws*;
  - 7) Voting on a merger or dissolution of the church;
  - 8) Actively participating in any other major event or decision as designated by the elders.

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed description of these practices, refer to the document *Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*.

## ARTICLE V – STATEMENT OF FAITH

**PREAMBLE:** The teaching of Morgan Valley Church is based on the Bible. Our Statement of Faith reflects those doctrines that we consider essential to understanding, teaching, and practicing God's Word interpreted:

1. *Normally* - understanding the words of Scripture in their common usage unless otherwise indicated by the context
2. *Literally* - understanding the meaning of Scripture in its ordinary sense unless the context requires a figurative interpretation
3. *Grammatically* - using the recognized rules of grammar to interpret the text
4. *Historically* - understanding the words of Scripture in the context of the times in which they were written
5. *Systematically* - categorizing and comparing any portion of the Word of God with the whole of Scripture; God cannot contradict Himself

The Morgan Valley Church affirms this Statement of Faith reflects God's truth.

**SECTION 1 - THE HOLY SCRIPTURE:** The Scriptures, consisting of 66 books which constitute the Old and New Testaments, are "God-breathed". Each individual word and the aggregate of Scripture are the result of God's supernatural, inspired authorship through the human writers. The Word of God, inerrant in the original writings and supernaturally and directly preserved by God, the Bible is the complete and unalterable special revelation of God and our final authority. (*Mat 5:18; Jn 16:12-15; 2Ti 3:16, 17; 2Pe 1:20-21*)

**SECTION 2 – DISPENSATIONALISM:** Interpreted in their normal sense, the Scriptures reveal divinely determined dispensations, or economies, defining man's responsibility towards God in successive ages. A dispensation is a divinely ordered stewardship (*1Co 9:17; Eph 1:10, 3:2-10; Col 1:24-25*) by which God administers His relation with men, but not a way of salvation. Salvation is always by grace alone through faith alone regardless of the dispensation. The basis for God's unmerited provision of salvation has always been the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. (*Rom 3:21-26*)

**SECTION 3 - THE GODHEAD:** God is one triune being, existing forever in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – eternal in being and equal in deity, power and glory. (*Deu 6:4; 2Co 13:14*) God's nature and character are unchanging (*Mal 3:6; Jam 1:17*) from everlasting to everlasting (*Ps 90:2*); He is all-powerful (*Rev 19:6*), all-knowing (*Ps 147:5; 1Jn 3:20*), and everywhere present (*Ps 139:7-10; Jer 23:24*) God is the creator of all things from nothing. (*Gen 1:1; Jn 1:3; Section 8*)

**SECTION 4 - THE PERSON AND WORK OF GOD, THE SON** The Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God from everlasting to everlasting. He became human without ceasing to be God, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (*Luk 1:35*), and He lived a sinless life. He came in order to reveal God and redeem sinful man. (*Jn 1*)

The Messiah accomplished redemption (*Eph 1:7*) by His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, (*1Pe 2:24*) providing propitiation for the sins of the whole world (*Rom 3:24,25; Heb 2:9; 1Jn 2:2*), and justification of whoever will trust in Him is verified by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead.

The Messiah bodily ascended into heaven (*Acts 1:9-11*) and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (*Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1Jn 2:1-2*)

Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, will return in the same manner that He ascended (*Acts 1:11*), physically returning to the Mount of Olives (*Zec 14:4*). He will judge the nations, rule over the earth with a rod of iron (*Rev 12:5, 19:15*) from Mount Zion for a literal thousand years, and finally judge each person. Those who are "in Christ", and have been made the righteousness of God in Him shall be forever with Him; those who are judged upon their own merits will be found guilty, and condemned to everlasting condemnation. (cf. *Section 22*)

**SECTION 5 – THE PERSON AND WORK OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT:** The Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead Who in this present age convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (*Jn 16:8-11*); He regenerates and baptizes (*1Co 12:12*) into the body of Christ those who believe; and He indwells (*1Jn 4:12-14*), authenticates (*Rom 8:9*), guarantees (*Eph 1:13-14*) and seals believers unto the day of redemption. (*Eph 4:30*)

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Teacher Who guides believers into all truth. It is the privilege of believers to be filled with, and their duty to walk in, the Holy Spirit. (*Jn 16:13; Gal 5:16; Eph 5:18; 1Jn 2:20, 27*)

**SECTION 6 - THE KINGDOM OF GOD:** The Kingdom of God is a major theme of Scripture, woven through nearly every book of the Bible, and shall be realized in the consummation of all things. Beginning with the mediatorial reign of Adam (*Gen 1-3*), and moving through subsequent dispensations and covenants, such as the reigns of and covenants with Abraham (*Gen 15,17, 22*) and King David (*2Sa 7*), heralded all along the way by prophets of all the ages, God is moving in the grand arc of history towards that day when He Himself will rule *OVER* the earth *FROM* the earth. (*Rev 22, Sec 8: Covenants*)

## **ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

The Bible is very clear that church membership is not a requirement for salvation (*Eph 2:8-9*). However, membership in a local church is biblically important and beneficial – to the individual members as well as the local body.<sup>5</sup>

A) **Qualifications** – Each candidate for membership shall:

- 1) Express personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
- 2) Give clear evidence of regeneration and demonstrate a sincere desire to live a godly, exemplary, separated, and obedient Christian life.
- 3) Conform to the ordinance of believer's baptism.
- 4) Read and agree with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Our Biblical Commitments to One Another* of this church.
- 5) Agree to support this church by prayer, faithful attendance, and systematic giving as taught in the Word of God.

B) **Procedure for Receiving Members**

- 1) The candidate for membership shall submit to the pastor a completed membership application on the form provided by the church for this purpose
- 2) The candidate will be given copies of the church's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*. After reading these documents, the candidate shall indicate agreement by signing and returning the *Membership Agreement*
- 3) The candidate shall then be interviewed by the pastor and elders. Upon satisfactory examination the candidate shall be recommended to the members at a regular service.
- 4) If no member raises any concerns about the candidate during a two week waiting period, the individual shall become a member and the church shall be notified during the next worship service. If any concern is raised, the elders and pastor shall make a thorough investigation and decision. The decision of the elders and pastor shall be final.
- 5) Associate membership may be permitted to missionaries, students, or temporary residents, as approved by the elders.

C) **Dissolution of Membership** - Membership may be dissolved by one of the following:

- 1) By death
- 2) By letter of recommendation to unite with another church - Any member uniting with another church thereby automatically ceases to be a member of this church – his name shall be erased from the roll except when the elders approve associate membership.

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on what the Bible says about local church membership, see the booklet *Why Join a Local Church?* and Article VI of our *Constitution, Church Covenant*.

rule of order for meetings will follow (TBD, but NOT Robert's Rules of Order; these parliamentary procedures are not for a church, but for a parliament, and are inordinately complex and generally not applicable to church business.)

- 2) **Notification** - Notice of any duly-called membership business meeting will be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting both from the pulpit on successive Sundays. Electronic methods will not preclude these public announcements. Notice will also be published on the Morgan Valley Church website at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. (morganvalleychurch.org) Elders will provide sufficient information to the members to allow them to make an informed decision on recommendations from the elders.
- 3) **Frequency of Meetings** - Membership meetings will be held to approve the annual budget and to provide an annual report to the members. The elders may call other membership meetings at any time.
- 4) **Voting**
  - a) An affirmative vote by a **simple majority** of those present is required for approval of a business item unless a larger majority is specified elsewhere in the *Constitution* or *Bylaws*.
  - b) Voting privileges (motions and voting) at business meetings shall be limited to members with good membership standing who are eighteen years of age or older.
  - c) A ballot vote may be requested by existing church leadership or by at least **one-third** (1/3) of the members present by the raising of hands.
- 5) **Quorum** – The active members present at a duly-called business meeting constitute a quorum. All Elders shall be present at business meetings, pending escape clause. (cf. Article I, C, 3)
- 6) **New Business** – A member may submit new business items to any elder at any time for consideration, evaluation, and prayer by the elders. New business brought to the floor of a business meeting will likewise be referred to the elders.

**SECTION 7 – COVENANTS:** God used covenants to present to men unshakable commitments in His dealings with humanity. (*Gal 3:15-18*) A covenant is similar to a contract, but in most cases, there is no “escape” clause; the parties are inescapably bound to the covenant. The covenants of the Bible include the Adamic (*Gen 1-3*), Noahic (*Gen 8:21-9:17*), Abrahamic (*Gen 15, 17, 22*), Mosaic (*Deu 11*), Palestinian (*Deu 30*), Davidic (*2Sa 7*), and the New (*Jer 31:31-37*).

**SECTION 8 – CREATION:** (*Gen 1; Is 40:21-31*) The triune God, without the use of existing materials or secondary causes, over six literal days (*Ex 20:8-11*) brought into being – immediately and instantaneously by the word of His mouth – the whole universe (*Neh 9:6*).

**SECTION 9 - MARRIAGE AND FAMILY** - Marriage and family are sacred institutions ordained by the God Himself from the very beginning of human history. Marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman. Any other definition of marriage is contrary to the clear teachings of the Bible and hence against the expressed design and desire of God. (*Gen 1:26-28; 2:20b-24*) Sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between a man and a woman within the context of marriage. (*Rom 1:26-27; 1Co 7:1-4; 1Th 4:3-5; Heb 13:4*) The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image (*Gen 1:27; 1Pe 3:7*). The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. (*Eph 5:22-33*)

Children, from the moment of conception (*Ps 139:13-16*), are a blessing and heritage from the Lord (*Ps 127, 128*). Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. (*Prov 6:20-22; 13:24; 22:6*) Children are to honor and obey their parents. (*Eph 6:1-4*)

**SECTION 10 - THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN:** Satan is a created being (*Job 1:6*), the author of sin, the tempter in the fall, (*Gen 3*) the declared enemy of God (*Is 14:12-17*) and man, and the “god of this age”. (*2Co 4:3-4*) He shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (*Mat 25:41; Rev 20:10*)

**SECTION 11 - THE DEPRAVITY OF HUMANITY:** Humanity was created morally perfect, in the image and likeness of God. (*Gen 1:26,27*) In Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature (*Rom 5:12-21*), and became alienated from God. Every person is a sinner by nature, and commits sin against God. (*Rom 3:22-23*) Apart from God, mankind is unable to recognize or remedy his sinful condition. (*Rom 3:10-11*) As the Holy Spirit illuminates and draws every person to Christ (*Jn 1:9; 12:32*), each one is capable of obediently responding to God's call by committing his trust to the provision and person of Jesus Christ.

**SECTION 12 - SALVATION AND SECURITY:** The Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of all people (*Tit 2:11; 1 Jn 2:2*) as a representative, substitutionary sacrifice. (*1Pe 1:18-19*) All who trust Him are saved (*Jn 1:12*) by His grace through faith (*Eph 2:8-10*) on the ground of His shed blood and not our works. They are then "accepted in the beloved," kept by God's power, and secured in Christ forever. (*Jn 10:27-30; Rom 8:38-39; Jud 24*)

Every saved person possesses two natures,<sup>2</sup> with command (*Rom 6:12-14; Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:8-17; 1Pe 1:13-16*) and provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (*Gal 5:16*). All claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (*1Jn 1:8-10*) It is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, and that the Bible clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh. (*Gal 5:13*)

**SECTION 13 - THE CHURCH:** The Church, which began with the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, (*Act 2:1-13, 47*) is the Body (*Eph 1:22-23; 1Co 12*) and Bride of Christ (*2Co 11:2*). It is the spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of the present age. God's intention for the church is to use it to sanctify (*Eph 5:25-33*) and perfect the saints to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (*Eph 4:11-16*) The establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (*Act 20:17; Tit 1:5*)

**SECTION 14 - CHURCH OFFICES:** The Scriptures prescribe two offices within the church in this present age. These are pastor (or elder or bishop; terms referring to differing functions of the same office) and deacon. Pastors serve the body through teaching the doctrine of the scripture, prayer, and oversight of the body, whereas deacons focus on administration and attending to the physical and temporal needs of the members. (*Act 6; 20:17, 28; 1Ti 3; Tit 1*)

**SECTION 15 - CHURCH ORDINANCES:** The Lord Jesus Christ established two ordinances for the Church in this present age: believer's water baptism, practiced by immersion, (*Mat 28:18-20*) and the Lord's Supper, observed obediently as a memorial of His death (*1Co 11:23-26*). These ordinances are not a means of saving grace. (*1Co 1:17*)

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<sup>2</sup> The term "nature(s)" in this section refers to an inherent disposition of a person which affects the conduct and character of that person.

development, ancillary oversight, managing day-to-day needs, and/or special ministries. Members of advisory councils are not necessarily required to meet the biblical qualifications of elder or deacon but should be Spirit-filled individuals who have a good testimony in the congregation and community. The normal term of service for this advisory council will be one year. If it is mutually agreeable, and approved by the congregation, members may be re-appointed for an additional term.

- 4) The advisory council shall function as elders as required in these bylaws.
- 5) Any form of transitional government shall be dissolved immediately upon attaining plurality of elders.

#### C) Church Leadership Meetings

##### 1) Place and Time

- a) Elders shall meet regularly, at least monthly, to plan and execute the spiritual affairs of the church.
- b) Deacons shall meet regularly to plan and execute the material affairs of the church as directed by the elders.
- c) Meetings shall be held in such places and at such times as determined by the chairman of the elders or deacons. The chairman shall call a special meeting when requested to do so by any other elder or deacon.

2) **Notice of Meetings** - Elders and/or deacons shall be notified of a regular meeting not less than seven days prior to the meeting. A special meeting can be called if adequate notice is given to all members.

3) **Quorum at Meetings** - Elders shall attend all regular meetings except for special circumstances in which case they may be excused. A quorum for the transaction of business at all meetings shall be at least **two-thirds** (2/3) of the total number of elders or deacons.

4) **Actions without Meetings** - Any urgent action required by the elders shall have the verbal consent of all elders available, and such action shall be formalized as soon as possible thereafter at a special meeting of the elders. However, the pastor may administrate the daily business of the church in keeping with the provisions of these *Bylaws*.

5) **Decisions at Meetings** - After careful discussion, prayer, and submission to applicable biblical principles, the elders and/or deacons shall strive to reach consensus on all decisions. A **two-thirds** (2/3) vote of the elders or deacons shall constitute a final decision. All disagreements of the elders or deacons are to be voiced during meetings, but once a decision is made, elders and deacons are to publicly support the decision of the majority. Minutes of all official meetings shall be kept with a copy given to the clerk.

#### D) Membership Business Meetings

- 1) **Rule of Order** - Meetings will be conducted according to the principle of mutual respect and the spirit of humility required by Philippians 2:2-8. The



(iii) The elders may also appoint qualified ladies to serve in leadership with women's and children's ministries.

**4) Ancillary Officers<sup>4</sup>**

**a) Clerk**

(i) A church clerk shall be elected from the members of this church for a one-year term.

(ii) The clerk shall keep an accurate record of all membership business meetings; of all church membership activity such as admissions, dismissals, deaths, baptisms, and ordination services; and of all correspondence and/or other such records as may pertain to this office. He/she shall also oversee the custody of all such other documents as directed by the elders.

**b) Treasurer**

(i) The church treasurer shall be elected from the members of this church for a one-year term.

(ii) The church treasurer shall receive all funds and shall be responsible for the banking of such funds to the account of the church in a bank designated by the elders. He/she shall give to the elders each month, if desired, a financial report showing the true status of the various funds, prepare an accurate financial report for presentation at the annual meeting, and issue annual receipts of personal church financial contributions to those individuals desiring them.

(iii) The treasurer shall oversee the counting of all offerings wherein at least two individuals are required to tabulate the monies collected.

**c) Special Appointments** - Special appointments may be made by the elders as the need arises.

**B) Transitional Government**

**1)** Transitional government is a temporary provision for this church in the event that there are not enough scripturally qualified elders to fill the roles specified in these *Bylaws*. At the discretion of the pastor, transitional government may be implemented any time there are not enough scripturally qualified leaders in the church.

**2)** The stated goals of any transitional government are (a) to model mutual leadership accountability, (b) to submit to a plurality of biblically qualified leadership, and (c) to provide for the congregation an outlet for pastoral accountability. Any form of transitional government is by definition temporary and a step toward fully functioning, biblical elders.

**3)** In order to facilitate these goals, the pastor may appoint a special advisory council from within the congregation for, but not limited to, leadership

**SECTION 16 – MISSIONS:** It is the obligation of the Christian to witness by life and by word to the truth of the Gospel; making disciples in all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. (*Mat 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2Co 5:17-21*) It is the responsibility, obligation, and priority of the Church to train, send, and support evangelists to preach the gospel of the Cross of Jesus Christ in implementation of the Great Commission.

**SECTION 17 - THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS:** Jesus Christ gives His Church evangelists and pastor-teachers. These gifted men are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. (*Eph 4:7-14*) The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon believers for Christian service and for the edification of the Church. (*Rom 12:3-8; 1Co 12:4-11; 1Pe 4:10-11*) The Church Age was initiated through the ministry of the apostles and prophets accompanied by sign gifts to confirm their message. These sign gifts gradually ceased by the time of the completion of the New Testament. (*1Co 13:8-10; 14; 2Co 12:12, Heb 2:1-4*) God hears and answers prayer in accord with His own wisdom and desires, including for the healing of the sick and afflicted. (*Jn 14:12-14, 15:7; Jam 5:14-15; 1Jn 5:14-15*)

**SECTION 18 - BIBLICAL SEPARATION AND UNITY:** We believe that the saved should be separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ, (*Rom 12:1-2*) necessitating holy living in all personal and ecclesiastical associations and relationships (*1Jn 2:15-17*). It is the believer's responsibility to endeavor to maintain the unity of the faith (*Mat 18:15-17; Rom 14:13; Eph 4:1-6*) while separating from apostasy and from those who have deviated from and rejected biblical doctrine and behavior (*Rom 16:17; 2Th 3:11-14; 2Ti 3:5; Tit 3:10, 2Jn 9-11*). Every proposed alliance must be considered in the light of our commitment to biblical separation. (*2Co 6:14-18*)

**SECTION 19 - THE DEPARTURE OF THE SAINTS:** The Lord Jesus will personally gather His redeemed ones in an imminent, pre-tribulational, and premillennial appearing, commonly termed, "The Rapture", and celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb for seven years, while progressively judging the unbelievers on the earth (*1Th 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:9; 2Th 2:3-4; Tit 2:13, Rev 3:10*).

**SECTION 20 - THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST; THE MILLENIAL KINGDOM:** After a seven-year Marriage Supper of the Lamb, The Lord will return to earth with His saints in power and glory to judge the nations (*Zec 14:4-11; Rev 19:11-21, 20:1-6*) and to reign for a thousand years in a literal earthly kingdom from the Throne of David in Jerusalem. (*Rev 20:4-6*)

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<sup>4</sup> Ancillary Officers may also be serving as an elder or deacon.

**SECTION 21 - THE EVERLASTING STATE:** All men will be resurrected bodily (*Jn 5:28-29*), the saved to everlasting life in the everlasting Kingdom (*Mat 25:34*), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment and death. (*Mat 25:46, 2Th 1:7-10, Rev 20, 11-15*)

The souls of the redeemed are, at physical death, absent from the body and present with the Lord (*2Co 5:8*), where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection (*Luk 23:43*), when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.

The souls of unbelievers are, at death, absent from the body and in conscious misery (*Luk 16:19-26*) until the second death (*Rev 20:11-15*), when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.

## ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

**SECTION 1** - Articles III-VII of this Constitution shall not be changed in their essence or meaning at any time in the future by any amendment to this Constitution. This Constitution may be otherwise amended by the action of the members assembled in congregational meetings for such purposes.

**SECTION 2** - Any proposed amendment must be publicized to the congregation at least **thirty days** prior to the meeting at which action is taken.

**SECTION 3** - Amendments to this Constitution shall require a **three-fourths** (3/4) majority vote of members present at a congregational business meeting.

the church is then using the provisions of the "Transitional Government" section of these *Bylaws*, selected individuals from the advisory council may also be involved in the pastoral search. In this manner, approved pastoral candidates shall be presented to the members for approval at a duly-called business meeting. A **three-fourths** (3/4) majority vote of members present shall be required to call a pastor.

- d) Dismissing a Pastor - Since the pastor is an elder, any accusations, investigation or discipline of a pastor shall also refer to the above section "*Removal of an Elder*." If at any time his personal conduct, beliefs, preaching, or teaching shall not be in full accord with the *Constitution* (including the *Statement of Faith*), and *Bylaws*, his services as pastor shall be terminated in the following manner. Upon the recommendation of a simple majority of the elders at a duly-called business meeting, a **simple majority** vote of members present shall be required to dismiss a pastor. Thirty days' notice shall precede the effective date of dismissal or resignation, unless by mutual agreement of the other elders and pastor.
- e) Disqualification - Should the pastor/teacher be potentially disqualified, he may be suspended from his ministerial duties by immediate action of at least 50% of the elders or the transitional government advisory council pending an investigation. If the church retains a transitional governmental structure, the leadership of Triumph Baptist Church, Vint Hill, VA, shall be engaged by the advisory council to assist Morgan Valley Church through such difficulty. During any investigation, the Pastor's compensation, if any, will continue.<sup>3</sup>

### 3) Deacons

- a) Responsibilities - Deacons serve the church in the work of the ministry. Specific areas of service shall be determined by the elders.
- b) Selection and Qualifications - Deacons shall be nominated and elected from among the male members of this church and shall meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in the Scripture (*1Ti 3:8-13*). A **three-fourths** (3/4) majority vote of church members present at a duly called meeting shall be required to elect a deacon.
- c) Number and Term
  - (i) The number of deacons shall be determined by the elders.
  - (ii) The length of term shall be determined by the elders according to the need.

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<sup>3</sup> For guidelines in resolving such a conflict, see article IV, *Conflict Resolution*.

the sick and those who are bereaved, and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of the members. Each elder shall personally accept the responsibility to maintain the spirituality of the church and guard against corruption by sin or false doctrine.

(v) Elders shall be responsible to nominate qualified men to serve as deacons, and to oversee the ministry of the deacons.

d) Number and Term

(i) There should be at least two elders to have plurality. However, a minimum of three is preferred.

(ii) The term of service shall be indefinite.

e) Removal of an elder: Any elder may be removed from office at any meeting of the elders if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture including *1Ti 3:1-7* and *Tit 1:5-9*), after a thorough corroborating investigation by the elders (in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including *Mat 18:15-18* and *1Ti 5:19*.) When an elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church at a regularly scheduled worship service as prescribed in *1Ti 5:20*.

2) Pastor

a) An elder gifted as a pastor-teacher is necessary to equip and shepherd the saints and to administrate and serve in humility and harmony with the other elders. The Scripture directs the church to provide financially for elders serving in this capacity (*1 Cor 9*; *1Ti 5:17-18*) Elders financially supported by the church, for purposes of this constitution, shall be designated by the term *Pastor*. This distinction between the pastor and the other elders is for "task organization" purposes only; the pastor is one of the body of elders, and has no more authority than any other elder in the oversight of the Morgan Valley Church.

b) Authority and Responsibilities - The pastor's primary responsibility is to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry," through the preaching and teaching of God's Word (*Eph 4:11-12*). This ministry of building up the saints includes spending time with individuals in personal counseling and encouragement. He shall lead by example in seeking the lost for Christ through personal witnessing. He shall serve as the *de facto* representative of the elders in all situations for which another elder has not been specially designated. (cf. Article I, A, 1, c, 4)

c) Calling a Pastor - In the event this church should need a pastor, a candidate shall be selected and screened by the elders (cf. A, 1, c, 4). If

## ARTICLE VII – CHURCH COVENANT

As those redeemed unto God by the precious blood of Christ, it is our desire to live in a manner befitting our relationship with Christ, being obedient to the Word, to diligently seek to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (*2Pe 3:18*) and to "walk by the Spirit of God," enabled by His power to manifest the fruit of His work in us. (*Gal 5:16, 22-23*) Accepting the totality of Scripture as our basis for faith and practice, we desire to live according to its teachings. The following specific goals are stated as representing that desire:

### Section 1 – LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

We purpose to love one another, "without hypocrisy" to help one another when needed, and to "pray for all saints." We shall endeavor by all means to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", refraining from "all bitterness and wrath and clamor and evil speaking." *Rom 12:9; Eph 4:3,31; 6:18*

### SECTION 2 – TEACHING OF SOUND DOCTRINE

We purpose that we shall "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (*Jud 3*), "speaking the truth in love." (*Eph 4:15*) The essentials of the Christian faith we believe to be embodied in our Statement of Faith, and we shall therefore strive to defend and propagate these truths, both vigorously and graciously.

### SECTION 3 – REACHING THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

We purpose to witness to the lost in both deed and word, seeking to win them to saving faith in Christ and then bring them into the fellowship of a local church. We purpose also to give our earnest support to home and foreign missions, seeking to do all we can, as the Lord enables, to get the Gospel to all men. *Act 1:8*

### SECTION 4 – SEPARATION UNTO GOD

We purpose to "abstain from all fleshly lusts" (*1Pe 2:11*), being "not conformed to this world" (*Rom 12:2*) and to "yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." *Rom 6:13*

### SECTION 5 – COMMITMENT TO OUR MINISTRY

We purpose to support this church faithfully in all its ministries, attending its services, diligently exercising our individual gifts of the Spirit on its behalf, and contributing both bountifully and cheerfully to its expenses and ministries "as the Lord hath prospered." *1Co 16:2*

## MORGAN VALLEY CHURCH

# BYLAWS

### INTRODUCTION

The following bylaws help the Morgan Valley Church operate in a biblically faithful manner. They cover basic issues related to the governance and function of the church, but also issues often overlooked in standard bylaws such as biblical counseling, confidentiality, and conflict resolution. In particular, the bylaws are designed to accomplish the following goals:

1. To prevent surprises and disappointment by providing potential members with a thorough explanation of how the church governs herself.
2. To reduce confusion and conflict within the church by establishing clear operational guidelines.
3. To prevent the misuse or abuse of authority by church leaders by establishing procedures that protect members.
4. To protect our elders from civil court subpoena related to information they receive through pastoral counseling, while at the same time giving them guidelines for reporting actual or suspected harm to others.
5. To reduce the church's exposure to legal liability by satisfying recently developed legal requirements, even where we deny that the State has jurisdiction, and by requiring that potential lawsuits be resolved through biblical mediation or arbitration rather than through litigation.

Most people agree that these are worthwhile goals, but some might still be troubled by the amount of detail found in these bylaws. *"Why can't we live by just a few general rules?"* Because general rules are susceptible to differing interpretations, it is often necessary to develop detailed rules to eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings.

Scripture does not tell us exactly how to give notice or establish quorums for congregational meetings, what information should remain confidential and what may be shared with others, how long church officers should serve without re-election, or how to dispose of property if a church dissolves. These bylaws are designed to practically address these types of issues in accordance with biblical principles, to spare us from unnecessary confusion and conflict, to help us act in consistent and respectful ways, and to allow us to devote ourselves to the service of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

As you read the bylaws, look up and study the Bible citations for particular provisions. If such study does not answer all of your questions and concerns, please approach one of our elders who will be grateful to discuss these matters.

### ARTICLE I – GOVERNMENT

This church recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures as its only authority (*Col 1:18; 2Tim 3:16*). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a body of elders who operate in concert with the membership.

#### A) Church Leadership

##### 1) Elders

- a) Qualifications - An elder must be a man who meets the standards of *1Ti 3:1-7* and *Tit 1:5-9*; be an active member of this church; believe in, support, and agree to abide by its *Constitution* (including the *Statement of Faith and Covenant*); *Bylaws, Our Biblical Commitments to One Another* and written policies.
- b) Appointment - The elders will identify qualified candidates to serve as elders. Church members may also submit names of candidates. The elders will evaluate each candidate to see that he meets the standards of *1Ti 3:1-7* and *Tit 1:5-9* and to seek evidence of the Lord's calling to the office. The elders will present candidates before the members, who will be given 30 days to show cause why any of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. After considering any such membership input, the elders will present the name(s) of candidate(s) to the members for approval. For approval of a candidate, at least **three-fourths** (3/4) of the votes cast at a duly-called meeting must be in the affirmative.
- c) Authority and Responsibilities
  - (i) The elders shall be the executive body of the membership. They shall exercise supervision over the general work of the church and organizations within the church and shall serve as the association's directors. To facilitate the business of the elders, they shall select a lead for any given matter from amongst themselves.
  - (ii) The elders shall not arrange to borrow, purchase, sell, or transfer any property or real estate involving the church without specific authority from the members in a duly-called meeting.
  - (iii) All financial expenditures shall be decided by the elders within the limits provided by these *Bylaws*. (*cf.* Article III)
  - (iv) Elders shall serve as spiritual advisors to the church. They shall serve as a pulpit committee or appoint others to serve with them in the event the church is without a Pastor (*cf.* Article I, A, 2). They shall conduct business, plan and execute the spiritual business and ministry of the church, examine all applicants for membership and make recommendations to the members, and administer all discipline. Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church, assist in administering the ordinances of the church, visit