

The Constitution of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas

Revised May 2022
Version 3

DRAFT

CONTENTS

ARTICLE I – NAME	4
ARTICLE II – PURPOSE	4
ARTICLE III – DISTINCTIVES.....	4
ARTICLE IV – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT (STATEMENT OF FAITH).....	4
1. THE BIBLE AND THE TRUTH.....	5
2. GOD	6
3. MAN.....	7
4. SIN	8
5. SOTERIOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF SALVATION)	8
6. COVENANTS AND LAW	9
7. PREACHING AND WORSHIP SERVICES.....	9
8. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS.....	10
9. THE CHURCH	10
10. MEMBERSHIP	10
11. DISCIPLESHIP	11
12. DISCIPLINE.....	11
13. OFFICERS.....	12
14. COOPERATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES.....	13
15. ORDINANCES.....	14
16. FINANCES	15
17. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY	15
18. CREATION.....	17
19. THINGS TO COME.....	17
ARTICLE V – CHRISTIAN LIVING	18
SECTION 1 – CONCERNING CONDUCT.....	18
SECTION 2 – CONCERNING SEPARATION	18
SECTION 3 – CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP	18
3A – <i>Membership Commitment</i>	18
3B – <i>Procedure for Membership</i>	19
3C – <i>Membership Responsibilities</i>	19
3D – <i>Termination of Membership</i>	20
ARTICLE VI – CHURCH GOVERNANCE	21
SECTION 1 – ELDERS.....	21
1A – <i>Duties</i>	21
1B – <i>Qualifications</i>	22
1C – <i>Selection</i>	22
1D – <i>Term</i>	23
1E – <i>Resignation or Removal</i>	23
1F – <i>Structure</i>	23
1G – <i>Vacancies</i>	24
1H – <i>Compensation</i>	24
1I – <i>Meetings</i>	24
SECTION 2 – DEACONS.....	25

2A – Duties	25
2B – Qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-12).....	25
2C – Selection	25
2D – Term.....	26
2E – Resignation or Removal	26
2F – Structure.....	26
2G – Meetings.....	26
SECTION 3 – PASTORAL STAFF	26
3A – Duties	27
3B – Qualifications	27
3C – Selection	27
3D – Term.....	27
3E – Structure.....	27
SECTION 4 – ADDITIONAL OFFICERS.....	27
4A – Chairman.....	27
4B – Church Secretary	28
4C – Treasurer	28
4D – Trustees	29
4E – Specifics Regarding Officer Appointments	29
SECTION 6 – STANDING OR SPECIAL TEAMS / COUNCILS	30
SECTION 7 – WOMEN IN MINISTRY	30
ARTICLE VII – ANNUAL OR SPECIAL MEETINGS.....	31
SECTION 1 – ANNUAL OR SPECIAL MEETINGS	31
SECTION 2 – DECISION BY CONSENSUS.....	31
ARTICLE VIII – GENERAL PROVISIONS.....	31
FISCAL YEAR AND AUDIT	31
DISCONTINUANCE	32
SALE OF ASSETS	32
CONTRACTS	32
ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS / INTERPRETATION	32
SECTION 1 – AMENDMENT TO THESE ARTICLES	32
SECTION 2 – INTERPRETATION	32

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the congregation shall be Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas, located in St. Thomas, Ontario.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Our purpose is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made. God is glorified as we manifest His presence in doing so. (2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Cor. 10:31).

ARTICLE III – DISTINCTIVES

At the outset of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas, six pillars were established as the biblical priorities for this ministry.

1. Bold Preaching – Expository and Applicational
Unapologetic exposition and application of the Word of God. (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:1-5)
2. Purposeful Discipleship – Intentional and in Community
Maturing believers making disciples. (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-16; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Thess. 2:8)
3. Fervent Prayer – Dependent and expectant
Prayer that is dependent on God and expectant based on His character and promises. (Jer. 33:3; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Jam 5:16)
4. Passionate Worship – In spirit and truth
Worship that engages our deepest affections for God and expresses the truth of His faithfulness, glory, and the redemptive work of Christ. (Ps. 95:6; Mark 12:30; John 4:23-24, 12:32)
5. Courageous Evangelism – Word and Deed
Gospel proclamation that overcomes fear in order to share the good news of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 9:36-38; John 20:21; Rom. 1:16, 15:20; Eph. 6:19-20)
6. Strategic Church Planting – Together and around the world.
Partnerships that multiply churches around the world. (Matt. 16:18b; Acts 11:19-30, 14:23, Acts 20:17-35; Titus 1:5-9)

ARTICLE IV – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT (STATEMENT OF FAITH)

Purpose Statement:

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world.

Vision Statement:

Reaching | Discipling | Sending

1. THE BIBLE AND THE TRUTH

- 1.1. We believe the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments, through men who wrote under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit which, being Inerrant and Infallible in the original is the supreme and final authority in ALL matters of faith, Christian life, and conduct. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; 20:31; Acts 20:32)
- 1.2. We believe that the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament canon, is the Word of God. We believe that the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament consisting of Genesis through Malachi, and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament consisting of Matthew through Revelation are the only books inspired by God and recognized as the complete canon of Scripture. Jesus affirmed the Old Testament canon by often referencing and quoting from it. Jesus also authorized the canon of the New Testament. The Apocrypha is not recognized as part of the canon of Scripture as neither Jesus nor the apostles ever affirmed the Apocrypha. (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 5:17-18; Matt. 19:3-5; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 24:38-39; John 5:39; Luke 24:27; John 14:25-26; John 16:12-25; Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)
- 1.3. We believe that God, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, guided human authors to write down His revelation to humanity in the words of the original manuscripts. These words, which He has divinely preserved, are verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant, and the sufficient and the supreme authority in all matters of truth, faith, and conduct. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2)
- 1.4. We believe that truth finds its ultimate meaning in the triune God, in whom and by whom and through whom all things were created. Truth is that which conforms to God's mind. Ultimately, truth is defined by God and by how God sees the world. Every ultimate truth will always be consistent with God's mind and His revealed truth. The devil is described as the "father of lies" and "in him there is no truth". He deceives by denying God's truth, thereby creating a distorted picture of reality. His goal is to destroy human beings by tempting them to follow his lies, instead of God's truth. (John 1:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; John 8:31-32; John 8:44-47)
- 1.5. We believe that mankind can discover truth in both God's revelation in nature and God's revelation through His written Word. We believe that Jesus Christ is the centre of God's revelation "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". He could rightfully say of Himself as the eternal Word and second person of the trinity, "I am the truth" (Ps. 19; Rom. 1:20; Ex. 34:27; 2 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:1-4; John 1:1; John 14:6)
- 1.6. Truth also has a personal dimension. Christians are called to "practice the truth". This is only possible when we are regenerated through the "Spirit of Truth" and strive to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. (1 John 1:6; John 3:5; 16:13; Mark 12:30-31)
- 1.7. We believe that God's truth is absolute and objective, not subjective or relative. It originates in God's mind, not human reason, or philosophy. We do not believe that community consensus, nor governmental laws, can replace God's truth. Therefore, we believe that all of humanity is responsible before God and will be judged according to His truth. Therefore, all our teaching will

be from the worldview of God as Creator King, and His revealed written Word, as the final source of truth. (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; John 17:17)

2. GOD

2.1. The Trinity

- 2.1.1. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. He manifests Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 2.1.2. Scripture References: Gen. 1:1, 26; John 1:1,3; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; Rom. 1:19,20; Eph. 4:5,6

2.2. God the Father

- 2.2.1. We believe that God is one, infinite, invisible, without body parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.
- 2.2.2. God is Eternal and Self-Existing. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: He is the only fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due, from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, He is pleased to require of them.
- 2.2.3. God is the Creator of ALL things but He Himself is not created or evolved.
- 2.2.4. Scripture References: Luke 10:21,22; Matt. 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Rom. 1:7; 2 Tim. 1:1,2; 2:5,6; 2 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 1:6

2.3. God the Son

- 2.3.1. Jesus the Christ was, and is, God Incarnate.
- 2.3.2. Knowing Christ is knowing the Father
- 2.3.3. He was both Human and Divine.
- 2.3.4. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

- 2.3.5. He died to atone for the sins of His people, mankind. Those who turn to Him and repent, believe in Him as the only true Saviour and Lord, they are forgiven, justified, presented as righteous before the Father, and given eternal life in the family of God. But He will bring judgment and condemnation to those who will not believe and repent.
- 2.3.6. Christ, the Son of God, took upon Himself the wrath of His Father that will fall on sinful mankind, except for those for whom Christ absorbed this wrath.
- 2.3.7. He arose bodily from the Grave.
- 2.3.8. He ascended bodily into Heaven and now intercedes before the Father on behalf of the Believer. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; the Head and Savior of His Church; the Heir of all things; and judge of the world; unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. His actual physical return is imminent [a fact].
- 2.3.9. Scripture References: Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11; Rom. 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:28; 1 Tim. 3:16

2.4. God the Holy Spirit

- 2.4.1. The Holy Spirit is God.
- 2.4.2. The Holy Spirit works in the World to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, regenerate the repentant sinner through the baptism of the Spirit, indwell the believer, seal the believer for God, fill (control) the believer, enlighten and empower the saved to serve Christ and the Church.
- 2.4.3. Scripture References: John 14:16,17,26;15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 5:22-26

3. MAN

- 3.1. Mankind was created in the image of God by the Word of God and directly created by a unique act of God in His image, free of sin, with a moral responsibility towards God to bring glory to his Creator and to live in fellowship with God.
- 3.2. All mankind is born with a sin nature since the fall (sin) of Adam.
- 3.3. Mankind is not only a sinner by nature but also by choice, loving darkness rather than light. God has declared him as such.
- 3.4. Each person is an independent, living being with an eternal soul.
- 3.5. God created both male and female, each unique in physicality and purpose.
- 3.6. Scripture References: Gen. 2:7,15,16,17,25; 3:1,9; Ps. 14:1,3; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 17:9; John 2:36; Rom. 3:9,18,23; 5:10,12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1,3; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:13,14; Heb. 10:26; Jam. 3:9; 1 John 1:8; Gen. 2:18-23

4. SIN

- 4.1. Sin is the breaking of the commands of God, in rebellion against God.
- 4.2. Man was introduced to temptation and sin in the Garden of Eden.
- 4.3. There are fallen angels (demons) which seek to influence men against God.
- 4.4. Satan is anti-God and anti-man. He seeks the destruction of both.
- 4.5. Satan has introduced sin into the human race and thus comes forth from the heart of man.
- 4.6. Hell is the place of everlasting destruction reserved for those who suppress the knowledge of God, do not know God, and do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a place of flaming fire, the fire is not quenched, the worm does not die, consisting of the blackness of darkness forever, away from the presence of God forever.
- 4.7. Scripture References: Deut. 9:7, Josh. 1:18, Gen. 3:1-6; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 12:30-37; 15:19,29; Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 1:18-3:23; 7:7-25; 8:5-8; 14:23; Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Heb. 3:12; James 2:10,11; 1 John 3:4; 5:17; 2 Thess. 1:8-9, Mark 9:44; Jude 13

5. SOTERIOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF SALVATION)

- 5.1. The atonement, the shed blood of Christ, by His death, resurrection and ascension constitute the only ground for man's salvation by removal of our sins and crediting us with His righteousness.
- 5.2. Genuine faith in Jesus as the Christ (which includes repentance from sin) is the ONLY means of man's Salvation.
- 5.3. Positional Sanctification: At the moment of true faith a person is justified - declared righteous and is sanctified - set apart by God as holy, eternally.
- 5.4. Progressive sanctification: There is a progression in the believer's experience and appropriation of holiness. This begins only at the time of salvation when a repentant sinner is regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and continues in demonstrated "fruit-bearing" sanctification throughout one's Christian life.
- 5.5. Assurance and Perseverance: The believer in Christ is given the assurance that he possesses eternal life and that he is kept in that state by the power of God. The same God that has the power to save sinful man also has the power to keep him saved, and so will persevere to the end.
- 5.6. Scripture References: Gen. 1:26; 5:2; Gen. 3; Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Ps. 51:7; Prov. 28:13; Eccl. 2:11; Jer. 17:9; John 1:12,13; 3:14,16; 5:24,30; 6:37,40,44; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Acts 20:32; Rom. 3:19; 5:19; 8:1; 9:22; 1 Cor. 5:21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:16,25; Eph. 1:4,7,11; 2:8,10; Phil. 3:12; Col. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2:10-13; Titus 3:4,7; James 1:14; 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:1,2,18,19; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10; 14,15; 21:18;
- 5.7. Total Depravity – man is born in sin (Ps. 51:5) and inherits the sin of Adam (1 Cor. 15:22). Man is spiritually dead in trespasses and sin.
- 5.8. Unconditional Election – God has chosen His people from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4,5).
- 5.9. Limited Atonement – Jesus died for His people (Matt. 1:21).
- 5.10. Irresistible Grace – All who the Lord has chosen will come to Him (John 6:44).
- 5.11. Perseverance of the Saints – The Lord upholds His people in the spiritual battle of this life (Gal. 2:20).
- 5.12. Resurrection of the Dead – In Jesus Christ, we shall be raised from death (John 11:25)
- 5.13. The Gospel – The gospel of Jesus Christ is the news that must be embraced through faith to receive eternal life and be partakers of the life of Jesus Christ.

6. COVENANTS AND LAW

- 6.1. God has maintained one eternal purpose in Christ which has been expressed through a multiplicity of distinct historical covenants. Prominent among these are the Old Covenant (also known as the Mosaic or First Covenant) and the New Covenant. The former, confined to the people of Israel alone, was established while that nation was assembled before Mt. Sinai and was later made obsolete through its fulfillment by the life and death of Jesus the Messiah. It was comprised wholly of shadows pointing ultimately to Jesus and His body, the Church. Therefore, the age in which it remained operative was at all times a period of immaturity as compared to the age of fulfillment which was inaugurated with Christ's first advent.
- 6.2. Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas adheres to the New Covenant. The New Covenant was established through the death of Jesus Christ himself (Heb. 9:15). By means of His death Jesus has secured the promise of eternal inheritance. The New Covenant has replaced the Old Covenant – Heb. 10:9-10 “He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will (New Covenant) we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”.

7. PREACHING AND WORSHIP SERVICES

- 7.1. Worship is the overflow of a heart filled with praise, thanksgiving and adoration to the only sovereign God who changes the heart from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). Worship is therefore the saved sinner's expression of praise to God, a doxology for what He has done in and through Jesus Christ.
- 7.2. We believe that God, being the only true God, is worthy of worship, and worthy of worship from all creation. (Rev. 4:11; Ps. 96:4-9; 1 Chr. 16:25-29; Ps. 29:1-2; Ps. 99; Ps. 100; Heb. 12:28)
- 7.3. We believe the life of the believer ought to be marked by the worship of God as those who have been saved from the wrath of God, adopted as children of God, seated in heavenly places, and eagerly await for the return of Jesus Christ when salvation will be fully realized and be with Him forever, as the result of the work and merit of Jesus Christ alone by his atoning work on the cross for all those who believe. (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 2:6; 2 Pet. 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:17; Gal. 2:16)
- 7.4. We believe the saints are to meet faithfully and regularly for the edification of the saints, and to worship the Lord together. Those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Cor. 14:26-40; John 4:24).
- 7.5. We believe preaching, prayer, and praise are the ordained methods by which God is to be worshiped among His people gathered. (Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42; Acts 2:46-47)
- 7.6. We believe preaching is the expounding of the Word of God, known as the Bible, or referred to as the Holy Scriptures, which are true, authoritative, and sufficient for life and godliness. All preaching must therefore conform to the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ that the believer may be complete and thoroughly equipped. Preaching is the means by which the Lord calls people to faith in Jesus Christ resulting in salvation. (2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Rom. 10:13-15)
- 7.7. We believe prayer is the ordained method by which the believer speaks to God. Prayer must be implemented both privately and corporately. Prayer consists of the exaltation of God, giving of thanks, request for our needs, intercession for all people including those in authority, submission to the Lord's will and must be prayed in the name of Jesus only. (Matt 6; 1 Cor. 14:26; Luke 11:2; Col. 4:2; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Luke 22:42; John 14:13-14; John 16:23-24)

7.8. We believe praise consists of verbally proclaiming all the things of the Lord, singing songs to the Lord, about the Lord, and includes the use of all kinds of musical instruments. (Ps. 9:1; Ps. 111:1; Ps. 30:4; Ps. 105:1-3; Ps. 147:1; Ps. 89:1; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Ps. 33:1; Ps. 150:3-6)

8. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

8.1. The church of Jesus Christ is commissioned by Jesus to go into all the world and preach the glorious gospel message of Jesus Christ. Even with the knowledge that God has chosen His people before the foundation of the world the gospel must be preached to those who live a life apart from Jesus Christ and those who are being saved.

8.2. Scripture References: Matt. 28:19; John 17:18

9. THE CHURCH

9.1. The Universal Church (the Body or Bride of Christ) is composed of all those chosen before the foundation of the earth. (Eph. 1:4).

9.2. The Universal Church in every age is manifested by the Local Church.

9.3. We believe that God calls all believers to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, drawing men unto Christ towards belief and repentance, thereby being added to the body – the Church.

9.4. Scripture References: Eph. 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:23-25.

10. MEMBERSHIP

10.1. Any person shall be eligible for membership who professes repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:12), who manifests a life transformed by the power of our Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17), who has been baptized by immersion upon profession of his faith (Acts 2:41), and who expresses substantial agreement with the Mission, Constitution, and By-laws of this church (1 Cor. 1:10). However, the Elders, with the affirmation of the members, reserve the right as to whom it finally accepts into its membership (Acts 9:26-27).

10.2. Privileges and Responsibilities: Membership in the church shall include the following:

10.2.1. Maintenance of a godly lifestyle, which must include personal and family devotions (Daniel 6:10, Gen. 18:19), separation from worldliness (James 4:4), and conscientiousness in the expression of one's Christian liberty (Rom. 15:1-23).

10.2.2. Attendance at church services, congregational, business, and special meetings called upon by the Elders (Acts 2:42, Heb. 10:24-25).

10.2.3. Labouring to extend God's kingdom through the ministries of the church, according to their gifts, graces and calling (1 Cor. 15:58, Eph. 4:7-16).

10.2.4. Financially supporting the work of the Lord by giving cheerfully as the Lord has laid it upon his heart (Mal. 3:8-10, 2 Cor. 9:6-15).

10.2.5. Seeking the welfare of all other members (Heb. 3:12-13) by cultivating their acquaintance with them, praying for them (Eph. 6:18), responding to their practical and spiritual needs (James 2:14-16, 1 Thess. 5:14-15), and refraining from all gossip and evil speaking about them (Prov. 16:28).

10.2.6. Submitting to the Elders as they discharge their duties of teaching and oversight and co-operating with the Deacons as they administer the ordinary and outward affairs of the church (Heb. 13:17).

- 10.3. Termination: Termination of membership removes all rights and privileges of membership in the church. Membership in the church shall be terminated by:
- 10.3.1. Death: When a member of the church is removed from our midst by death, his name shall be removed from membership.
 - 10.3.2. Transfer: When it is so requested, the Elders may grant to a departing member in good standing a letter of commendation to the fellowship of another church (Acts 18:27), and consequently that member will be removed from membership. No such letter may be given to a member who is, at the time, under corrective discipline of the church. The Elders may refuse to grant a letter of commendation to any church which is, in their judgment, disloyal to “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) or which does not exercise godly care over its members.
 - 10.3.3. Excommunication: Any member who teaches or insists on holding false and heretical doctrine, who blatantly and impenitently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession, who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church or in defiling its purity, ceases to regularly attend worship services, or withdraws completely will be excommunicated, and consequently that member will be removed from membership (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13). The Elders will lovingly admonish a member who does not conduct him or herself in a godly manner and if the member does not show signs of repentance after repeated admonition the Elders will meet with the members of the congregation to proceed with excommunication. (1 Cor. 5:4).
- 10.4. Inactive Members: Absence from regular worship services will result in the member being placed on the inactive roll. Elders shall follow-up with inquiry with the member(s) on the inactive roll to assess the spiritual well-being of the member and the status of membership. Each case will be handled according to circumstances. If it is determined that the member continues to stray from the faith and is negligent in the responsibilities of membership the discipline process will be initiated. No member who is absent because of illness, military service, missionary work, or schooling shall be removed while in such capacity.

11. DISCIPLESHIP

- 11.1. A child of God is to be a Disciple of Christ and as such is a visible sign of one’s faith. We therefore hold to the practice of:
- 11.1.1. Submission to the Lord, each other, and authority.
 - 11.1.2. Hope in the Coming of Christ and the Final Resurrection.
 - 11.1.3. Integrity in our walk and word.
 - 11.1.4. Purity in Conduct.
- 11.2. Scripture References: Matt. 18:5,14,15,22; 28:19,20; Acts 5:1,11; 1 Cor. 5:1,13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 15; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:10,16

12. DISCIPLINE

- 12.1. Formative discipline: The church will reform and discipline itself continually by the diligent application of the Word (Rev. 2:3), by mutual care and exhortation of the members (Eph. 4:7-16), by the orderly utilization of the gifts Christ has bestowed upon each member (Rom. 12:3-8), and by the watchfulness of the Elders over the flock (Heb. 13:17).

- 12.2. Corrective discipline: The church will apply corrective discipline when a member stubbornly holds on to heretical doctrines or conducts himself in a disorderly, immoral, or scandalous manner. This will be done for the purpose of, among other things, restoring the offender, maintaining the health and purity of the church, and upholding the honor of God (Gal. 6:1, James 5:19-20, 1 Cor. 5:6-8).
- 12.3. Offenses liable for corrective discipline: These are stubborn private offenses (Matt. 18:15-17), divisive teaching or behavior (Titus 3:10), disorderly behavior (2 Thess. 3:6-15), scandalous sin (1 Cor. 5:1-13), and contempt of church discipline (Matt. 18:17).
- 12.4. Means of corrective discipline: These include public reproof or censure (1 Tim. 5:20), dissociation (Rom. 16:17-20), and excommunication (1 Cor. 5:1-5).
- 12.5. Procedure for corrective discipline: As a rule, and whenever feasible, effort must be made to resolve difficulties, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before formal corrective discipline is taken (Matt. 18:15-16, Titus 3:10). Where this fails to bear the desired fruit, the Elders shall determine as to which means of corrective discipline shall be applied (1 Cor. 5:3). All the members of the church will be obligated to submit to and enforce the corrective discipline (1 Cor. 5:4).
- 12.6. Restoration from corrective discipline: In the case where a member has been excommunicated and gives satisfactory evidence of his repentance, the church shall forgive and restore such a person to full membership (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

13. OFFICERS

- 13.1. Headship: The church's head, the Lord Jesus Christ, governs the church through officers whom He appoints (Acts 20:28), who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. (Eph. 4:7-13).
- 13.2. Types: The church shall have only two kinds of officers; namely, Elders and Deacons (Phil. 1:1)
- 13.3. Appointment
 - 13.3.1. The existing Elders of the church shall determine the need for extra Elders and Deacons in the church, present to the church the necessary qualifications for persons to be appointed into these offices and request the church for nominations. After careful evaluation and prayer on whether these qualifications are met, the Council of Elders will:
 - 13.3.2. For an Elder: Set the name(s) of the men chosen by the Council for the office of Elder before the membership for prayerful consideration and affirmation. Giving the church membership opportunity to express their mind by giving feedback of any opposition or any information not known or considered by the Council of Elders in the individual(s) presented.
 - 13.3.3. For Deacon: Set the names of the nominated men or women for the office of Deacon for prayerful consideration and affirmation by the congregation. Giving the church membership opportunity to express its mind by giving of feedback of either approval or opposition in the individuals presented. If affirmation is gained, the Elders shall confirm the persons thus chosen and set them apart for office by prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 1:15-26, 6:1-6, 14:23; Titus 1:5). The Council of Elders reserve the right to appoint any persons thus nominated to any office in the church (1 Tim. 5:22).
- 13.4. Discipline and Removal: Church officers are subject not only to the same rules of discipline as other members but in addition are subject to removal from office if they are no longer qualified

for their office or capable of fulfilling its functions or if their behaviour is disorderly or scandalous, thereby bringing reproach to Christ and the church and setting a bad example before the brethren (1 Tim. 5:19-21, Titus 1:7).

13.5. Qualifications: The general qualifications for those chosen to fill the offices of Elder or Deacon are clearly set forth in Scripture (Acts 6:3, 1 Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9). Anyone called to this office must be able to conscientiously affirm an agreement with our Statement of Faith, Constitution, and By-laws of the church (Titus 1:9). Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the church.

13.6. Elders

13.6.1. The duty of the Elders is that of overseeing the work of God in the local Church (Titus 1:7). The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. These duties include:

13.6.1.1. The preaching and teaching of God's Word, both publicly and privately. This is to be done side-by-side with prayer (Acts 6:2-4, 1 Tim. 5:17).

13.6.1.2. The governing and spiritual oversight of the church (1 Tim. 3:4).

13.6.1.3. Equipping the members for the ministry, work, and mandate of Jesus Christ – the Great Commission (i.e., Sharing the gospel and making disciples of all nations)

13.6.1.4. The spiritual care of individual members (Heb. 13:17).

13.6.1.5. The formative and corrective discipline of the church (Matt. 16:19).

13.6.1.6. To be role-models by the example of their godly lives (1 Pet. 5:3).

13.6.2. The rule of Elders only goes as far as authoritatively declaring and implementing in the church the faith and practice stipulated in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 14:36-38, 1 Tim. 3:14-15, 4:11). According to God's Word only men qualify for this office (1 Tim. 2:12).

13.6.3. Some Elders will be maintained in material necessities as to disentangle them from the cares of another vocation according to their gifts, and the needs and capability of the church. This will be especially the case with "the pastor", i.e., the elder whose work is preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18, 1 Cor. 9:14).

13.7. Deacons

13.7.1. Deacons are responsible to administer the ordinary business, secular affairs and benevolent concerns of the church as directed by the Elders, so that the Elders may devote themselves directly to spiritual matters and to the Word of God (Acts 6:3-4). Deacons shall assist in the care of the membership. They shall also advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that will support and promote the ministries of the church. According to God's Word the office of Deacon is to be filled with men and/or women who meet the biblical qualifications (Acts 6).

13.7.2. A Deacon may be maintained by financial support where the need of the church requires such an extent of service and/or ministry. Such a Vocational Deacon would then receive remuneration as approved by the Elders.

14. COOPERATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES

14.1. The church acknowledges no ecclesiastical authority outside its membership other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church (Eph. 5:23) and who directs the affairs of the church through Elders chosen and ordained according to Holy Scripture (Acts 14:21-23). The Elders themselves, at all times and in all their activities, stand under the authority of Holy Scripture (Acts 16:4, 1 Cor. 7:17).

- 14.2. The church will co-operate with other like-minded churches in matters of evangelism and missions, and other matters of mutual interest and concern (2 Cor. 8:18-24). The church may also seek the assistance and Counsel of other churches (1 Cor. 16:1-2). However, no decision made by any individual, church or group of churches shall at any time be binding on this church.
- 14.3. All affiliations and cooperation with any conference or groups is voluntary and may be terminated at any time, at the sole discretion of the Elders.

15. ORDINANCES

There are only two ordinances (sometimes called “sacraments”) commanded in Scripture: namely, Believers’ / Water Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 11:26). To believers who properly participate in them, these two are means of grace and powerful aids to their faith.

15.1. Believers’ Baptism

- 15.1.1. Baptism that is truly saving (salvific) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By grace, the Holy Spirit is given to all who come to the Savior, Jesus Christ, with saving faith and in repentance of sin (Mark 1:8, Acts 2:38). It is Jesus Christ himself who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit the moment when we are saved. (Matt. 3:11)
- 15.1.2. Through-out the ages, churches have practiced paedobaptism (or infant baptism) and credobaptism (or adult/believers’ baptism). The New Testament is clear that baptism with the use of water is to be administered to believers who have come to Jesus Christ in faith in repentance of sin (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38). Although many true believers including giants of the faith (Martin Luther, John Calvin, Matthew Henry) were baptized as infants they possessed true saving faith and lived their lives for God. Even though their water baptism did not line up with what we read in God’s Word about baptism their lives were dedicated to Jesus Christ. We may therefore conclude that water baptism is not salvific in nature, but a life committed to obedience to Christ bears evidence of salvation.
- 15.1.3. We believe that according to God’s Word the believer in Christ is to be baptized after faith in Christ has occurred. This is something that an infant is not capable of. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Saving faith is a sure knowledge of God and all His promises and a firm confidence that His promises are also for us in and through Jesus Christ (Heb. 11:1-2, 2 Cor. 1:20). Believers’/Water Baptism is to be administered upon a personal declaration of faith and is as such a public testimony of one’s commitment to Christ (Rom. 6:3-14). Baptism without personal faith holds no meaning. Water Baptism has no saving merit, but it is a response in faith and obedience to God’s Word.
- 15.1.4. We believe that baptism, using water, is the God-ordained symbolic and physical representation of what has already happened to the believer in the Spirit, being buried, dead to sin, and raised again into a new life in Christ Jesus. This also becomes a door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God.
- 15.1.5. We recognize other forms of Christian believers’ baptism with water (sprinkling, pouring, dipping) and in the name of the triune God however we shall only baptize by immersion and into "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". We believe immersion best symbolizes what takes place the moment a believer comes to a

position “in” Christ (Rom. 6:3-6, Col. 2:12 – buried with Him -going under the water, raised with Him -coming out of the water).

15.1.6. Scripture References: Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27

15.2. Communion

15.2.1. Believers are to observe the Lord’s Supper as a memorial of His sacrificial death, and as a witness to His Second Coming.

15.2.2. All believers in good standing are welcome to partake of the Lord’s Supper. (1 Cor. 10:16-18).

15.2.3. Scripture References: Matt. 28:18-20, Rom 6:3-5, 1 Cor. 11:23-26

16. FINANCES

16.1. We are commanded through God’s Word to give to the Lord and His work (1 Cor. 16:2), that everyone must determine in his own heart to give and give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).

16.2. The finances of the church, including those of all the ministries, will be safeguarded and administered by the Deacons under the oversight of the Elders (Acts 11:27-30). The use, disbursements, or handling of these funds may be delegated to members of the church (Acts 6:1-6) who have been approved by the Council of Elders.

16.3. The normal means of raising the necessary funds for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ will be through the donations and offerings of the members (1 Cor. 9:13-14, 16:1-2).

17. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

17.1. Marriage

17.1.1. Marriage is a life-long, monogamous covenant between a man and a woman, which is ordained of God for mutual companionship and the parenting of children, which is God’s chief building block of society.

17.1.2. God is the sole creator of the sacred and holy institution of marriage, and He alone defines it. Therefore, no man has the right or privilege to redefine or alter the God ordained institution of marriage regardless of opinion, legislation or laws of any organization, courts or governments seeking to redefine it. As such, all other unions, be it same sex, or polygamous unions, are deemed as unnatural, inappropriate, and not recognized by God, and, therefore, not recognized by Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas.

17.1.3. Furthermore, Jesus advised those who are, for congenital reasons, unable to enter into marriage to remain single and, therefore, celibate. Marriage is not a right but rather a privilege and can only be recognized as a marriage when meeting the God-ordained criteria of the Holy Scriptures, which are God’s defining authority for all creation.

17.1.4. Scripture References: Gen. 1:27,28; 2:18-24; 24:58,60; Prov. 5:15-19; Jer. 7:34; Mal. 2:14,15; Matt. 19:5,6; John 2:1-11; Rom. 7:2,3; 1 Cor. 7:2,9; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4

17.2. Family

17.2.1. God created and designed the family consisting of one man and one woman joined in the bonds of marriage as the institution in which to raise children. Childbearing and adoption are both the design of God. Regardless of the means by which children enter a

family, children are a gift from God. (Rom. 8:15, 23; Eph. 1:5; Mark 10:9; Mal. 2:15; Ps. 127:3; Ps. 34:11; Prov. 23:13-14)

17.2.2. God commands parents to raise children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and in all His ways and promises. He has also instituted compassionate, loving discipline for the edification and well-being of children and society. Proper, compassionate, and consistent discipline brings a “harvest of righteousness” and failure to discipline results in dishonour to both the parents and child. Salvation is of the Lord and parents cannot save their children.

17.2.3. Scripture References: Deut. 6:6-7; Deut. 11:19; Eph. 6:4; Prov. 3:11; Heb. 12:5; Prov. 23:13; Ps. 94:12; Heb. 12:11; Prov. 10:1; Prov. 15:32

17.3. Complementarianism

17.3.1. We believe, as the Scriptures teach, that there is no difference in quality, importance, or worth between men and women. Both are of equal worth in God’s sight and plan. Women are not inferior to men. Rather, God assigns different roles to men and women in the church and the home according to His purposed design and function, which is a reflection of the function within the triune Godhead. As such, we believe the office of elder, the preaching, teaching of the Word of God, and the humble exercise of executing authority over the church in accordance with the Word of God should be limited to men. Furthermore, a husband as ordained by God as the head/leader, is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and give himself for her. Furthermore, husbands are to honour their wives as heirs of the grace of life. A wife should not teach and/or have authority over a man, and as such, live in submission to her own husband, and love him.

17.3.2. Scripture references: 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:9-15; 1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:6-9

17.4. Sexuality

17.4.1. We affirm the Biblical teaching that God created both male and female as two distinct and equal genders, both, which bear the image of God. Therefore, a person’s gender is not determined by a person’s sexual inclinations, but rather by the physical/genetic gender in which God created them. As such, homosexual and lesbian inclinations, and all other forms of sexual inclinations outside the God-ordained bonds of marriage between one man and one woman are sin and forbidden according to the Bible. Furthermore, gender distortion to justify sexual inclination is contrary to the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore, the Bible addresses cross-dressing as an abomination.

17.4.2. Scripture References: Gen. 1:27; Gen. 19:1-13; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:24-28; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Lev. 18:23; Deut. 22:5

17.5. Pornography

17.5.1. Pornography must be abstained from both by the unmarried, and those married. Indulging in pornography brings disrepute on the gospel of Jesus Christ as faithfulness in marriage demonstrates the faithfulness of Christ to His bride, the Church. Indulging in pornography is the vicarious fulfillment of adultery in marriage and fornication outside of marriage, and as such is sin. Pornography is destructive to an unwed person, as well as a person who is wed, and to their spouse. Marriage and the marriage bed are holy. Pornography violates the sanctity of marriage. Believers must treat pornography in the same manner as fornication and adultery and must flee from it. Where habitual, unrepentant devotion to pornography characterizes a person’s life, such a person demonstrates an unregenerate heart.

17.5.2. Scripture References: Heb. 13:5; Matt. 5:27-28; 1 John 2:16; Prov. 6:25-28, 32-33; Eph. 4:19; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9

18. CREATION

- 18.1. We believe that the Father, by the Word, that is His Son, and by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, created from nothing, the heavens, the earth, and all creatures, as it seemed good to Him, giving to every creature its being, shape, form, and capacities to serve its Creator (Heb. 11:3; Gen. 1:1; Ps. 148:4-6; Isa. 40:25-27; Eph. 3:9; Rev. 4:10-11)
- 18.2. We believe that God continues to uphold and govern creation by His eternal providence, and infinite power, for the service of mankind, to the end that mankind may serve and glorify Him. (John 5:17, Matt. 10:29-30; Rom. 8:28).
- 18.3. We believe that the creation was given to mankind as a gift to enjoy and care for; therefore, it is the responsibility of all human beings to be good stewards of the creation in which we live. (Gen. 1:26; 1 Tim. 6:17).
- 18.4. We believe that God's creative acts, as presented in Genesis 1-2, are to be understood as God literally creating the world, including various species after their kind, and including fully formed humanity. Therefore, we do not accept the theories of macro-evolution. (Col. 1:15-17).
- 18.5. We believe that God created the heavens, the earth, and all creatures in six literal 24-hour days.

19. THINGS TO COME

- 19.1. We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed hope of His return has vital bearing on the personal life, service, and mission of the believer (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The lost will be raised to judgment and experience eternal wrath in hell. The saved will be raised to eternal joy in the new heaven and new earth in the manifested presence of God (Acts 1:3, 9; Heb. 7:25-26).
- 19.2. Scripture References: Matt. 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:1-11; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-15

ARTICLE V – CHRISTIAN LIVING

SECTION 1 – CONCERNING CONDUCT

The Bible teaches that all believers are saints, set apart unto God and are thus called to live godly, obedient lives honouring Christ in all they do. As well, they are responsible to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:14-19; 2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 2) lest the Word of God be blasphemed (1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5). As Christians we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things which are above, walk as He walked and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world (1 John 2:3; Col. 3:1; Eph. 5:23; Matt. 28:19-20).

A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do (Rom. 6, 7, 12:1-2; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18).

SECTION 2 – CONCERNING SEPARATION

Because of God's holy nature and the believer's high calling, Scripture teaches and commands personal and ecclesiastical separation from religious apostasy (2 John 7 – 11; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10), from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:1-5), and from professing believers living in willful disobedience to the Word of God (2 Thess. 2:15, 3:6, 14, 15; 1 Cor. 5).

SECTION 3 – CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament clearly indicates that groups of people who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body.

In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership at Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas is for all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and have visibly demonstrated that commitment through believer's baptism.

Membership in a local assembly is good and proper in that it is the expression of fellowship with a group of believers for the furtherance of the Gospel. It should not be confused with salvation in any aspect.

3A – Membership Commitment

The effectiveness of joining together will be determined by the level of the commitment we make. In a society where so few make commitments and fewer still keep them, Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas is seeking a group of people who are determined to know the joy Christ intended for His body, the church. To this end, members of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas must be willing to live in submission to the doctrinal statement. Further, they must be willing to abide by the entire Membership commitment which in summary states:

1. I have, by faith, become a follower of Jesus Christ and I have been baptized as a visible way of demonstrating that commitment.

2. I will, with God's help, seek to maintain my consistent disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and evangelism.
3. I will neither criticize nor listen to criticism concerning any member(s) of this body and will, when personally offended, speak directly and lovingly with those involved.
4. I will financially support the ministries of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas by faithfully giving back to the Lord a biblical portion of my increase.

3B – Procedure for Membership

A person is to be in regular attendance at Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas and then attend the Redemption Membership class (also known as Step 2). This class, offered regularly, is a clear and concise overview of who Christ is, how one becomes a Christian, and how to be meaningfully connected to the church.

Upon completion of the class, any person professing personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour who has expressed that commitment visibly by being baptized or are willing to be baptized at the next available service, should indicate their desire for membership by completing a membership covenant application.

All membership covenant applications will be reviewed by the Elders and a possible interview with the applicant may be carried out by the Elders.

Upon recommendation by the Elders your name will be placed in the bulletin or posted at the church for a period of two weeks. During this period members will be encouraged to clear up any relational or other difficulties which could hinder the applicant's ministry among us. This is done in the spirit of Matt. 18:15-17 so that both you and the Redemption family will benefit.

At the end of the two-week period those who remain approved by the Elders as candidates will be welcomed into membership by the Elders.

Staff personnel shall be, or shall become, members of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas. When a new staff member is hired if they are not already a member, they shall sign a membership covenant document, and this combined with their hiring shall qualify them as members.

3C – Membership Responsibilities

Present at Services – All members shall be urged to participate in the regular services of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas.

Giving – The Church believes that every Christian should give of their means as God enables, as a positive command of Scripture and an act of worship. Members should support the Church on a regular basis and do it gladly as God directs. Gracious, consistent, and free offering of one's resources to God through the local church is the normal and expected behaviour of every Christian. Old Testament tithing is not required in the New Testament church, but we believe the example of Old Testament of giving first fruits of all that God has granted to your is a pattern to be followed.

As such, we encourage Christ – followers to commit to a practice of giving back to God through their local church a minimum of 10% of what He has entrusted to them as His stewards. This should be the priority in their finances as the practice of biblical first fruits teaches (Ex. 23:16-19; Deut. 26:1-11; Prov. 3:9). The New Testament is clear that where your treasure is there will your heart be as well, and that

God loves a cheerful and regular giver to the advancement of His kingdom. (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:5-15; Matt. 6:19-21).

Obedience – Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas expects its believers to follow the commands and principles which are clearly taught in the Word of God and to demonstrate this daily in every area of their lives. Examples of disobedience to these moral precepts would be illegal use of drugs, use of pornography, substance abuse, sexual immorality, physical and mental abuse, etc.

Affirmation Privileges – Members shall have the right to vote on matters deemed by the Elders as requiring affirmation or approval of the membership when they reach the age of eighteen years.

3D – Termination of Membership

A person's name shall be removed from the active Membership of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas under the following conditions:

1. **By Death** – Upon the death of a member, their name shall be removed from the Membership of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas
2. **Request for Transfer** – Letters of referral resulting from a request for transfer shall be granted upon approval by the Elders. Such requests must be made in writing to the church office.
3. **Move** – It is expected that when a member moves to another town or city, they will unite with another Bible believing church as soon as possible. In the event they have not requested a letter of transfer/referral after a six-month period, they shall be advised in writing that their membership will be removed as per direction of the Elders.
4. **Extended Absence** – Absence from regular services for at least four months shall result in the member being placed on the inactive roll pending a satisfactory answer to the inquiry by the Elders. Those persons under inquiry due to four months absence shall be placed on an inactive roll while determination is being made. While on the inactive roll, members forfeit their privileges of affirmation should any vote arise.

No name shall remain on the inactive roll for longer than six months. Persons who satisfactorily give reason why they should remain on the active roll shall be replaced on that roll at the discretion of the Elders. No person who is absent because of illness, military service, missionary work, or schooling shall be removed while in such capacity.

5. **By Dismissal (Excommunication)** - (as related to the following process of disciplinary action). First, it should be stated that it is the goal of all members of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas to restore any fallen member and to seek reconciliation as much as humanly possible. In all cases of divisive or disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine so opposed to the church's life and faith that it destroys the possibility of fellowship, the procedure in such cases shall be as follows:
 - a. First, the instruction of Matt. 18:15-18 shall be followed.
 - b. If it does not lead to restoration, then the situation shall be told to the Elders in writing.
 - c. The accused shall be heard by the Elders in the presence of the accusers.
 - d. If the decision of the Elders is that the accusation is just (based on Scripture) appropriate action shall be taken by the Elders which may include removal from fellowship and Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas membership. Should the accusation

prove unwarranted, the Elders shall deal with the issue in an appropriate manner. In either case should the accused not appear before the Elders within a reasonable length of time the Elders shall examine the situation and arrive at a decision based on the testimony received.

- e. Public disclosure of discipline shall be made at the discretion of the Elders.
- f. As written in 1 Tim. 5:19 should the accused by an Elder, then at least two witnesses to the sin are required or else the accusation will not be heard by anyone.
- g. Being in this process in any step forfeits the member's privileges of affirmation should any vote arise.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH GOVERNANCE

SECTION 1 – ELDERS

The biblical teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Tim. 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Though there are several terms used for the offices of the church (i.e., bishop, elder, overseer, and Deacon) a careful analysis of these terms indicates that bishop, overseer, and elder are used interchangeably.

Therefore, Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas recognizes two primary church offices – the Elders and the Deacons.

The government of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas shall be by the Elders as described in the Constitution.

The Elders shall be accountable to God and shall seek to make all major decisions by communicating and building consensus among the members as described in the Constitution. The responsibility for interpreting the consensus of the membership through the leading of the Holy Spirit shall rest with the Elders.

1A – Duties

The Scriptures are clear that the Elders' responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The Elders' responsibility can be broken down into three main areas:

1. Ensuring that the **doctrine** of the church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Elders.
2. Ensuring that the **direction** of the church remains consistent with our statement of purpose and the six distinctives as outlined in the Constitution.
3. Administering in love and humility the biblical process of church **discipline** as outlined in Matt. 18:15-20 and Gal. 6:1-4.

All decisions affecting the overall doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church will be the responsibility of the Elders.

1B – Qualifications

The Church Elders shall consist of those who have demonstrated the qualifications for eldership (according to Biblical elder qualifications as per 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) and believe they are called by God to serve as an Elder.

- Individual of dignity
- Above reproach
- Husband of one wife
- Sober minded
- Self controlled, free from immoral behaviour and submissive
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Able to teach and holds firmly to the Word
- Humble and not quick-tempered
- Not addicted to alcohol
- Not violent but gentle
- Not quarrelsome
- Upright, holy, and disciplined
- Not a lover of money but a lover of good
- Must manage his own household well
- With dignity keeping his children submissive
- Not a recent convert
- Well thought of by those outside our church

Potential candidates shall be recommended from among those who are members of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas and who are recognized for their spirituality in matters pertaining to the Word of God and conduct of life.

1C – Selection

The number of Elders serving on the Elders Team is to be a minimum of three (3) and may vary from time to time up to a maximum of twelve (12) by resolution of the Elders without amendment of this constitution. In no case will the number of Elders serving be less than three.

Should the number of Elders who also are considered “staff” account for more than fifty percent of the sitting Elders due to an unexpected Elder resignation, the Elders will seek to add a non-vocational Elder as soon as possible always seeking to ensure that at least half of the Elders are comprised of non-vocational Elders.

When the need arises for additional Elders, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Elders. In keeping with the clear biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the church only men will be considered for the office of Elder. An in-depth interview will ensue to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified.

The congregation will then be reminded of the biblical requirement for Elders and given thirty days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter

remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

1D – Term

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for Elders no specific limit will be placed on how long an Elder can serve. Instead, each Elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a two-year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow Elders. During the review, both the individual and the other Elders shall evaluate his continued service as an Elder including input and feedback from the congregation.

Consideration shall be given to the biblical qualification for Elders as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as an Elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by a consensus decision of the other Elders. A person leaving the Elders would not preclude his service as a future Elder, subject to the regular selection process.

Shorter commitments may be requested of some Elders in order that no more than approximately one-half of the Board's commitments would expire each year. This will help preserve continuity among those actively serving on the board. Notwithstanding the length of commitment, each actively serving Elder will continue serving (when able) until his successor has been appointed and is actively serving.

1E – Resignation or Removal

Notice of resignation of an Elder shall be given in writing to the Chairman and will take effect on the date of receipt of notice or at any time specified therein. In the event it is necessary to remove an Elder, the remaining Elders will first conduct a reasonable inquiry and hearing concerning the cause of removal. A person under consideration for removal shall not be recognized in establishing a quorum, nor have any privileges in decision making. The affirmative consensus of the remaining Elders to remove the said Elder will result in his immediate removal as an Elder. In the event that the number of Elders for any reason falls below the minimum number as authorized, the Elders shall move to appoint additional Elders in the manner as defined in the Constitution, in order to meet the minimum requirements. Any such action shall be communicated to the church as soon as possible.

Members of the Elders Board are encouraged to fulfill their two-year commitment resigning (if needed) just prior to the expiration of their term unless they must move out of the St. Thomas area or are incapacitated.

1F – Structure

The Scriptures teach that a plurality of Elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23, 20:28; Titus 1:5; Phil. 1:1). The Scripture does not mention any congregations featuring a stand-alone pastor and leader. A plurality of godly Elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scriptures' teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counsellors (Prov. 11:4, 12:15, 15:22, 19:20, 24:6).

The number of Elders is to be a minimum of three (3) and may vary from time to time to a maximum of twelve (12). In no case will the number of Elders serving be less than the minimum.

The Elder Board shall consist of the Chairman, the Senior Pastor, and additional Elders selected and appointed as defined in the Constitution. All Elders will have equal authority, but not necessarily equal

influence, as there is a possibility and likelihood that some will stand out from others as more public in their area of ministry, or more influential in their participation on the Elder Board.

The Senior Pastor will work in cooperation with the Chairman to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. The Chairman will be an Elder who is selected by consensus of the Elders. The Chairman has no fixed term of office and shall not be one of the pastoral staff (see Section '4A – Chairman' for additional details on Elder Chair).

1G – Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the Elders due to resignation or removal is to be filled by the Elders as soon as practical. An Elder will be so elected to fill a vacancy only until the next annual meeting of the Elders.

1H – Compensation

Elders will not receive any stated salaries for their service as an Elder. In special circumstances travel expenses for an Elder who is required to attend a special meeting may be paid if approved by the Elders. This section on compensation will not preclude the Pastors receiving compensation for their role as pastors (as determined by the remaining Elders).

1I– Meetings

The Elders will not meet less than monthly with a goal to meet every other week. The Elders will ensure that at least once a year they have a meeting (known as 'the Annual Meeting') primarily devoted to reviewing the financial statements including the budget as well as to select or reaffirm Elders for the coming term.

Special meetings of the Elders may be called by or at the request of the Chairman or any three of the Elders. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Elders may determine the location of the special meeting called by them. A majority of the Elders will constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business at any meeting of the Elders.

The Book of Acts reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the Elders. The Elders are responsible to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to discern on behalf of the congregation the Holy Spirit's direction. It is the intent of the Elders to employ the methods of Consensus as the most appropriate decision-making model. Consensus decision-making acknowledges mixtures and nuances of favour and opposition and the need for a process of prayer, discussion, and discernment so that all board members reach a unified conclusion.

Consensus means either unanimity among the Elders or a general (although not necessarily uniform) agreement after all present Elders have had a fair and reasonable opportunity to be heard. Consensus will have been achieved if most Elders agree on an issue and the Elders in the minority are willing to join the majority in public support of a decision. Consensus requires that each and every Elder publicly support the decision of the entire Elder board.

When the Elders believe an issue is sufficiently significant to require membership input, the Elders will present the pertinent information to the membership. The membership will have opportunity to give input to the Elders. It is the responsibility of the Elders to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Scriptures, prayer, an understanding of the pertinent issues at hand, and input from the membership.

Any meeting of the Elders may be conducted in simultaneous multiple locations if the various locations are effectively connected by telephone conference call lines or video calls. In the event any meeting that will be so held, the results of any decisions made will be recorded in writing and signed by all members present.

SECTION 2 – DEACONS

The office of Deacon is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualifications for Deacons are the same as Elder in the area of character, but different in aptitude. The Elders are to be “apt to teach” while the Deacons are to be “able and proved as servants” (1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1). Deacons “lead by serving” and they serve under the authority of the Elders in various capacities within the church seeking to support and advance the various ministries in the church.

2A – Duties

The Deacons, working under the authority of the Elders, will be responsible to review and audit the financial, facility, and benevolent operations of the church ensuring all areas operate according to the charter set out by the Elders. The Elders may also from time to time direct the Deacons to give oversight to special projects or areas within these three categories of ministry.

2B – Qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-12)

- Individual of dignity
- Above reproach
- Not double tongued
- First tested as servants
- Not addicted to alcohol
- Spouses must be faithful
- Dignified
- Temperate
- Not fond of sordid gain
- Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- Husband of one wife
- Manages household well

In addition, all Deacons must be active members of the church. Change of membership status for any Deacon member will automatically remove such person from participation as a Deacon.

2C – Selection

When the need arises for additional Deacons, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Deacons or the Elders, but approval of any new Deacon is done by the Elders.

Following an independent interview to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirements for Deacons and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

2D – Term

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for Deacons, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each Deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a two-year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow Deacons.

2E – Resignation or Removal

During the review at the end of a two-year term, both individual and the other Deacons shall evaluate his continued service as a Deacon, again considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as a Deacon may be recommended for discontinuation by his own decision or by the consensus decision of the Deacons. Upon their request the Elders will have the opportunity to participate in the review process and will make the final decision.

A Deacon is encouraged not to resign during his two-year commitment of active service unless he moves out of the area or becomes incapacitated and unable to perform his duties as this will help ensure continuity of leadership. Written notice of a move specifying the effective date of the resignation may be given to the Chairman of the Deacons. A Deacon may be removed at any time by resolution adopted by a consensus of the Deacons or the Elders. A person leaving as a Deacon would not preclude his service as a future Deacon, subject to the regular selection process.

2F – Structure

The number of Deacons is to be a minimum of three (3) and may vary from time to time to a maximum of nine (9). In no case will the number of Deacons serving be less than the minimum.

The Deacon Board shall consist of a Chairman who will be appointed by the Elders, and may also be an Elder, the church treasure, and other members as may be required from time to time. All Deacons shall be selected based upon the qualifications of Deacon as defined in the constitution.

The Deacons may on occasion and for a specific time, project, or matter, invite other people to attend a meeting or meetings in order to bring a specific area of expertise or experience to such a project or matter. Such "invited guests" would be deemed to be consultants and would serve as such in that capacity and not as a Deacon.

2G – Meetings

All meetings of the Deacons will be convened by their designated Chairman. Minutes of each meeting will be maintained by a Recorder who is to be appointed by the Chairman. Meetings will be conducted under the same rules of notice, quorum, and action as prescribed for by the Elders.

SECTION 3 – PASTORAL STAFF

Redemption also recognizes a key role of Pastoral Staff in the life of the church. Some senior pastoral staff could be invited to also function as Elders or Deacons, but the primary function of Pastoral Staff would be to have shepherding and oversight care of people and/or ministries on a full or part-time basis. Any remuneration staff receives will be for their role as a staff member and not for any duties as an Elder or Deacon.

3A – Duties

Their primary role will be to take care of the day-to-day execution of church ministries as well as to provide spiritual and miscellaneous care and shepherding of the people of the church.

The Senior Pastor role is a special role among the staff wherein he will be called upon to faithfully preach God's Word and model the priority of discipleship within the church. He will give oversight and direction to all other Pastoral Staff and work with the Elders in carrying out the overall vision of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas. He shall also be an ex-officio member of all other teams within the church.

3B – Qualifications

The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an Elder for all staff given the title of Pastor. For staff carrying the title of Director or Team Leader or other ministry roles, the qualifications will be detailed in the job description for the specific role.

3C – Selection

All new members of the Pastoral Staff will be selected by existing staff as well as by teams involving non-vocational leaders. All recommendations for additions to the pastoral staff shall be approved by the Elders.

3D – Term

All Pastoral Staff members will serve for an indefinite period of time depending on their employment contract. Remuneration provided to staff members for their work would not include any responsibilities or roles as an Elder.

3E – Structure

The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Elders. All other staff members are responsible to the Elders through the Senior Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by consensus decision of the Elders. Ministry descriptions for the remaining Pastoral Staff will be established by the Elders in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and agreed upon at the time of hiring.

SECTION 4 – ADDITIONAL OFFICERS

The officers of the Church are the Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer will be appointed by the Elders. Such other officers and assistant officers, agents, and assistant agents as may be deemed necessary may be elected or appointed by the Elders. Any two (2) or more offices may be held by the same person, except that the offices of Chairman or Secretary may not be held by the same person concurrently.

4A – Chairman

The Chairman will be the principal officer of the Church, and subject to the control of the Elders, will preside at all meetings of the Elders. The Chairman will chair all meetings of the Elders, unless otherwise stipulated by the consensus of the Elders. The Chairman may sign, with the Secretary or any other officer of the Church authorized by the Elders, such documents, and deeds of the Church as necessary or appropriate including, but not limited to, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Elders have authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof will be

expressly designated by the Elders or by this constitution to some other officer or agent of the Church, or will be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed, and, in general, will discharge all duties incident to the office of Chairman and such other duties as may be assigned by the Elders.

4B – Church Secretary

The Church Secretary will be any member of the church with the qualities of faithfulness, spiritual maturity, and a reputation for keeping confidences. The Secretary will be chosen annually by the Elders for a one-year commitment and shall be responsible for the general secretarial duties for Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas. In addition, it shall be the responsibility of the Church Secretary to keep all membership records, record minutes of all Elder meetings or church business meetings as may be called by the Elders.

4C – Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be selected and appointed by the Elders and shall be responsible for the recording of all income and expenditures of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the preparation of timely financial reporting to the Elders and the congregation as may be required. The Treasurer shall supply the auditors with such records as may be necessary when auditing the account records of the church.

In addition, the Treasurer shall be responsible for the recording of all charitable gifts and the issuance of charitable receipts in a way that establishes accountability and conduct above reproach and as defined by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) under its Charitable Registration or shall appoint a member of the church to carry out the charitable recording/receipting as described. This person must be approved by the Elders before being appointed to the role.

All cheques, bills of exchange, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent, or agents of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas and in such manner as shall from time to time be appointed and approved by the Elders. Any one of such officers or agents may alone endorse notes and drafts for collection on account of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas through its bankers and endorse cheques or notes for deposit for the credit of Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas or the same shall be endorsed “for collection” or “for deposit” by using Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas’ rubber stamp for such purposes.

Any one of such officers or agents so appointed may arrange, settle, balance, and certify all books and accounts between Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas and its bankers and may receive all paid cheques and vouchers and sign all the bank’s forms or settlements of balances and release or verifications slips.

Regular offerings are received at every Sunday service. Funds received are disbursed at the discretion of the Elders for various church and missionary activities according to the budget prepared by the Elders and/or Deacons. Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas shall be carried on without purpose of financial gain for its members and any profits shall be used solely for the purposes and promotions that fit objectives as set forth in Article II.

4D – Trustees

Until such a time as Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas incorporates any Real Estate belonging to the church shall be held “in trust” by the Trustees of the church for the church. These shall be three in number. They shall be appointed by the Elders in agreement with the Religious Societies’ Act of Ontario. Trustees shall remain in office until such a time as they resign, decease, or are dismissed by the church. The duties of a Trustee shall be to sign legal documents on behalf of the church as the church may direct.

4E – Specifics Regarding Officer Appointments

COMPENSATION

Officers will not receive any stated salaries for their services as officers, but by resolution of the Elders, expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed for each regular or special meeting, provided that nothing herein contained is to be construed to preclude any Officers serving the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation for that service.

VACANCIES

Any vacancies occurring in any office to be filled by reason of any increase in the number of members or resignation or termination are to be filled by the Elders as soon as practical. Any member so elected to fill a vacancy will be elected for the unexpired commitment of their predecessor in office.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

In case of the absence of any officer of the Church, or for any other reason that they may deem sufficient, the Elders may, by consensus, either delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any Elder or employee of the Church, for the time being, or may eliminate some or all of such powers or duties of such officer.

ELECTION AND TENURE

The Elders will appoint officers of Treasurer and Secretary annually. Each officer will hold office until the first of the following to occur: until their successor has been duly elected and will have qualified; or until death, incapacity, or if he moves out of the area; or until removal in the manner hereinafter provided.

REMOVAL

Any officer or agent may be removed by the Elders whenever, in their judgment, the best interest of the Church is to be served thereby, but such removal will be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of an officer or agent will not in itself create contract rights.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Chairman must be an Elder. The Secretary and Treasurer must be either an Elder or a Deacon of the Church and meet the qualifications specified in this constitution for the position of Elder or Deacon. All officers must be members in good standing.

SECTION 6 – STANDING OR SPECIAL TEAMS / COUNCILS

The Elders will have power to appoint teams or councils for the purpose of conducting certain aspects of the corporate business not otherwise delegated. If any Team/Council will have authority in excess of merely advising the Elders, then that Team/Council will have two or more Elders, a majority of its membership will be Elders, and all Team or council members will serve at the pleasure of the Elders. Members of the Team/Councils may be any person deemed to be qualified by the Elders who has actively demonstrated a willingness to work toward the goals of the Church. The term of office for these special teams or councils will be one year unless otherwise specifically designated in the resolution appointing the Team/Council.

Meeting of a Special team may be called by the Chairman of the Elders, the chairman of the Special Team, or a majority of the Team's members. Notice of the time and place of any meeting of a Team is to be given at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.

Any member of a Team may resign at any time by giving written notice to the chairman of the Team or to the Secretary of the Church. Such resignation, which may or may not be made contingent on formal acceptance, is to take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified therein. Any member of a Team may be removed at any time by resolution adopted by a consensus of the Elders.

Unless otherwise provided in the resolution of the Elders designating a Special Team, the act of a majority of any Team will be the act of the entire Team. All Team members, including the Chairman of the Elders, are to be notified in advance of all meetings of the Team.

Each Team may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with this constitution or with rules adopted by the Elders.

At the discretion of the Elders, a Church Council meeting may be called to provide input to the Elders. The Church Council consists of the combination of the three divisions of church leadership: 1) The Elders, who oversee the doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church; 2) The Pastoral Staff, who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the church; and 3) The Deacons who support the financial, benevolent, and facility operations of the church.

The Elders may also include, when needed, small group coaches and/or leaders or other key members who are not on staff but hold leadership roles in other areas of ministry within Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas. All those participating in the Church Council come under the authority of, and in submission to, the Elders.

SECTION 7 – WOMEN IN MINISTRY

At Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas we affirm the significant and God-ordained role that women are to play in the establishment and leadership of the local church. We believe that every opportunity of leadership is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture.

The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9). We desire to see qualified women serving in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

We do not see this restriction of roles as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God in every way. We see this as an issue of sameness. Men and women are not the same as the Bible makes clear. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in function and responsibility yet equal, so it is with the relationship between men and women. While we reject the movement within Christianity to see men and women as the same, we do stand against the other extreme which de-emphasizes the significant leadership role of women in the church.

ARTICLE VII – ANNUAL OR SPECIAL MEETINGS

SECTION 1 – ANNUAL OR SPECIAL MEETINGS

There will be no regular meetings of members for governance purposes, as members do not have a role in the governance of the church. However, the Elders will call at least one congregational meeting each calendar year with the purpose of communicating important information, casting vision, and answering questions. An overview of the finances and budget will be provided. The format and agenda for these meetings will be determined by the Elders and may differ from year to year.

SECTION 2 – DECISION BY CONSENSUS

As explained under Section 1I (page 24) regarding Elders meetings, the Bible reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the Elders. The responsibility of the Elders is to interpret and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the members as it relates to the direction of the church. When the Elders consider a matter of sufficient importance as to require a congregational decision, the process will begin with a presentation of all the pertinent information.

Following that, a motion will be made by the Elders and the membership will be given opportunity to have all their questions answered. At the end of the question-and-answer time, an extended period of time will be taken for reflection and prayer to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. When prayer is concluded, those members who feel strongly impressed by the Holy Spirit as to the direction, should be asked to express their conviction publicly.

It will be the responsibility of the Elders to interpret the direction of the Holy Spirit through the expressed convictions of the membership. Where agreement among the members is not obvious, the leaders may decide to table a decision to provide further opportunity for reflection, prayer, and discussion.

ARTICLE VIII – GENERAL PROVISIONS

FISCAL YEAR AND AUDIT

The fiscal year for Redemption Bible Chapel St. Thomas shall be a calendar year.

The Deacons shall appoint one member or engage professional accountants / auditors to review, and, when deemed necessary by the Elders or the Deacons, audit the accounts and submit a report to be presented to the Deacons and Elders as well as offered for distribution to the congregation.

DISCONTINUANCE

In the event this local church discontinues and is dissolved, its assets not required for payment of its liabilities and obligations shall be paid over and transferred to one or more organizations engaged in activities similar to our own and in agreement with our Statement of Faith in this Constitution and being a recognized charitable organization in Canada. Such distribution shall be determined as directed by the Elders. They may choose to solicit input and ideas from within the congregation or from other Canadian charities of similar belief and mission.

SALE OF ASSETS

A sale, lease, exchange, mortgage, pledge, or other disposition of property or assets of the Church may be made by the Elders upon such terms and conditions and for such considerations, which may consist in whole or in part of the money or property, real or personal, as may be authorized by the Elders.

CONTRACTS

The Elders may authorize any officer or officers, agent, or agents, to enter into any contracts or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS / INTERPRETATION

SECTION 1 – AMENDMENT TO THESE ARTICLES

Amendments to the Constitution will be made as needed by the Elders. However, such amendments will be distributed to the entire membership for input and feedback before any changes would be made.

Notice of the proposed amendment (including the suggested text of the change) shall be given in writing to all Elder members at least 20 days before the meeting at which the decision thereon is to be made and shall identify the persons proposing the amendment.

SECTION 2 – INTERPRETATION

In this Constitution and in all subsequent additions and amendments to this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires words importing the singular number and the masculine gender shall include the plural number and the feminine gender (unless otherwise stipulated), as the case may be and vice versa; and references to persons shall include firms and corporations.

Any references to the Holy Bible in this document (the books of the Old and New Testament) and the interpretation of any of these verses so referred to is placed in the hands of the Elders.