



The Constitution  
and  
Bylaws  
of  
Life Church Calvert

April 4, 2019



# The Constitution of Life Church Calvert

To foster the spirit of harmony and promote good order within the church, it is necessary to adopt statutes and procedures for its governance. The Holy Spirit says by the Apostle Paul, "...everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." (I Corinthians 14:40). Toward that end, this constitution and bylaws is presented.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

This church shall be known as Life Church Calvert.

## **ARTICLE II: COVENANT**

- A. Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our criteria of faith and practice, we humbly unite ourselves together in the love of Christ to worship, fellowship, serve, and advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ on earth.
- B. This we do with dependence upon the grace of our Heavenly Father Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation, Jesus Christ Who redeemed us through His blood, and the Holy Spirit Who guides, comforts, and empowers us.

## **ARTICLE III: AUTHORITY**

- A. The primary authority by which this church exists is received from the Holy Scriptures. It is not subject to the control of any other organizations or leadership. The church may partner with other likeminded churches as the Lord directs.
- B. Under the authority of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18) and the Word of God (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17), the founding pastors (hereafter distinguished as the Lead Pastors or Elders) are the church's servant-leaders and have been called by God to serve as the shepherds, guardians, and overseers of the church.
- C. The Leadership Council, comprised of the Elders and those serving alongside them, will serve as the governing authority for this local body.

- D. The Leadership Council will function commensurate with its designated responsibilities as specified in the church bylaws.
- E. The church will govern its activities pursuant to a set of bylaws.

## **ARTICLE IV: AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of Life Church Calvert may originate within the Leadership Council or be submitted to the Leadership Council by signed petition representative of at least 1/3 of the current church partners.

When amendments are approved by the Leadership Council, they shall be presented at either an annual partners meeting or a special partner meeting called by the Leadership Council. Notice of a partners meeting and a draft of the proposed amendment(s) shall be provided at least 15 days in advance of the scheduled meeting date. This notice may be given via announcement, print, or electronic communication.

For an amendment to be ratified, a  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the Leadership Council and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the current church partners present at the annual partners meeting or a specially called partners meeting is necessary for passage.



## **THE BYLAWS OF LIFE CHURCH CALVERT**

### **ARTICLE I: OUR MISSION**

To love God, love others, and make disciples of Jesus Christ

### **ARTICLE II: OUR VISION**

To be a place for loving, mending, preparing, and sending people in Calvert County and beyond

### **ARTICLE III: CORE BELIEFS**

- A. There is only One True God—the Creator and Sustainer of all life Who is revealed in the three persons of the Trinity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- B. The Bible is God’s authoritative and trustworthy Word to all people; it teaches us what to believe, how to live, and declares God’s plan and purpose for all mankind.
- C. Jesus Christ is fully God and man’s only Savior. He became flesh, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He was resurrected from the dead, returned to heaven, and now reigns as the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the head of His Church on earth.
- D. We were each created in the image of God. However, our sin has marred that image and separated us from Him. The remedy is reconciliation through God’s grace that is made available to each of us through repentance and by embracing the sacrificial death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- E. God’s grace through Jesus Christ is available to anyone who by faith will call upon Him. All who are in Christ become children of God and brand new creations in Him.
- F. The evidence of being a child of God is abiding in Christ, following in His footsteps, and loving Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. The outcome of being a child of God is loving others as Christ has loved us and showing them the same compassion that He has shown us.
- G. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. It is He who illuminates our minds, directs our steps, provides us divine ability to serve God and accomplish His purposes, and enables us to walk

in the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- H. The Church is Christ's body on earth; every follower of Christ is a member and He is its head. The purpose of the Church is to make known the goodness of God, to go and make disciples of all people, and to help meet the needs of others in the most tangible, meaningful ways available. Every believer is called to actively worship with, serve with, fellowship with, financially support, and be accountable to the local church.
- I. By following Jesus' example and being baptized by immersion in water, we announce that we have become followers of Jesus Christ. Sharing the Lord's Supper together with our fellow believers is a reminder that Christ laid down His life for us, and we are called to lay down our lives for one another.
- J. Praying for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done is the responsibility of every follower of Christ. Praying that God will provide healing, deliverance, strength, wisdom, and blessings is the God given privilege of every believer.
- K. Marriage, as defined by Scripture, is the blessed union of one man and one woman who have entered into a lifelong covenant.
- L. Human life is sacred, including the unborn.
- M. The family is the bedrock of a healthy society. Parents, not the government, are responsible for nurturing our children.
- N. The earth is not our permanent home. There will come a day, at God's appointed time, when He will call for His Church, and all believers on earth, including those who died in the faith, will rise to meet the Lord in the air and remain with Him forever.
- O. There will be a final judgment. Those who have abided in Jesus Christ will be rewarded for their life of faith and good deeds and will enjoy God's presence forever. Those found to be without faith in Christ will be sentenced to eternal punishment, separated from God forever.

## **ARTICLE IV: CORE VALUES**

- A. ***The Church is Not a Building:*** The church is not a building; it's a community of individuals in the process of becoming more like Jesus. At Life Church, you will find no perfect people. Instead, you'll encounter a vibrant, welcoming community of believers from all walks of life who have been captured by Christ's love, are being transformed by His power, and are experiencing the irrepressible joy of life in Jesus.
- B. ***It's About Relationships, Not Religion:*** Organized religion is not the church. Jesus laid down His life so that each of us may find forgiveness of sins, be transformed by His power, and experience abundant life in Him. He is the God of the second chance Who desires a relationship with every person on earth. The life that Jesus gives is also meant to be experienced in

community with others. Life Church is committed to helping you discover a personal relationship with Christ and build rewarding, Christ-like relationships with others.

- C. ***Worship is Everything:*** God created us to worship Him with everything we have and everything we are, and wherever His church gathers should be the most exciting place on earth! At Life Church, be prepared to experience a warm, family friendly, and joy filled celebration that glorifies the Father, exalts the Son, and makes room for the Spirit.
- D. ***Everyone Has Value in God's Eyes:*** We believe the followers of Jesus Christ should be the most compassionate people on earth. Life Church is committed to being Jesus to others, loving them where they are, as they are, and when they least expect it.
- E. ***Every Believer is Gifted By God and Called to Serve:*** Every believer has been gifted by God and called to faithfully serve Him. A priority of Life Church is to help you discover your calling and giftedness, and then encourage, prepare, and equip you to fulfill God's calling.
- F. ***Prayer is Not an Option, it's a Lifeline:*** Prayer is a spiritual connection with God and is necessary for anyone desiring to truly know Him. Prayer is also the fuel upon which we depend in order to fulfill our calling. You can expect Life Church to model a great reliance on prayer and emphasize its importance within the life of every believer.
- G. ***The Bible is the Word of God:*** The Bible is the Word of God; it is God's reliable message to us, His divine and infallible blueprint for our lives. At Life Church we live, worship, teach and serve together under the Bible's authority.
- H. ***We Cannot Out Give God:*** God has held nothing back from us; we should hold nothing back from Him. The ministries of Life Church are provided for by the tithes and offerings of its participants. Life Church also tithes from its income to support other ministries in our area and around the world.
- I. ***Playing it Safe is Risky:*** There is nothing passive about following Christ; we are not called to be comfortable, play it safe, or do church as usual. In fact, we believe irrelevance is irreverence and "good enough" is not good enough. Instead, we are committed to serving God by all available means and in the most meaningful, relevant, and innovative ways. As a church we will make the most of every opportunity to glorify God, recognizing that great opportunities to serve Him may often come disguised as insurmountable obstacles or insignificant moments.

## **ARTICLE V: CORE PURPOSE**

The core purpose of Life Church Calvert is to be great at the Greatest Commandments. Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

- Matthew 22:37-39

## ARTICLE VI: CORE OBJECTIVES

### A. To become a place for loving people:

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. - John 13:34-35*

God, Who has loved us with an unfailing love, has called us to demonstrate this love to those around us. In fact, Jesus said it will be convincing evidence that we truly belong to Him. Life Church is committed to obeying Christ's command to love one another and follow His example to make His love known beyond our walls. - *1 John 4:7-12, 20, 1 Peter 1:22*

### B. To become a place for mending people:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. - Luke 4:18-19*

The Church of Jesus Christ is called to be a caring, healing community. Of course, what each of us needs most is inner, spiritual healing. We need our hearts to be healed and our souls set free so that we may know God and have a relationship with the One who created us. This spiritual healing is made available to us when we call upon Jesus, repent of our sins, and entrust our lives to Christ as our Savior and Lord.

There are also many other kinds of healing needed today. Some are in need of physical healing. Others are carrying deep hurts, are burdened down emotionally, or are struggling with life controlling issues. Brokenness within marriages and families is epidemic.

Life Church is committed to being a healing community, coming along side those who are in need, offering prayer for the sick, providing biblical counsel and encouragement for those who are discouraged, and instilling hope in the hearts of those bruised and broken. *Isaiah 42:3, 1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27, James 5:13-16, Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2*

### C. To become a place for preparing people:

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. - Ephesians 4:11-13*

At Life Church, we believe that every believer has been gifted by God and called to serve. Believers being discipled and prepared to fulfill their calling is vital if the kingdom of God is going to effectively advance within the church and into all the world. We believe it is the responsibility of the church to help believers discover the joy of getting "plugged in" to ministry within the body, as well as experiencing the joy of serving Christ beyond our walls.

### D. To become a place for sending people:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. - Matthew 28:18-20*

Discipleship is not an option for the Church. Fulfillment of the Great Commission is the responsibility of each believer individually and the whole Church collectively. Jesus said that those who follow Him will take the gospel with them into the world. At Life Church, our goal is to make disciples and equip and encourage each to live his or her faith out loud.

We will also reach beyond our walls by investing our time and resources in the community ministry opportunities the Lord gives us, by providing outreach events to share the Good News, and by partnering with others churches, individuals, and ministry organizations that are serving others within our community and beyond our borders. *Matthew 25:35-40*

## **ARTICLE VII: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

### **7.00 Life Church Calvert Leadership and Governance**

We recognize that Life Church Calvert is a church that Christ has built and that He is the Chief Shepherd of this church.

#### **7.01 Lead Pastors/Elders**

The founding pastors (*hereafter distinguished as the Lead Pastors or Elders*) are the church's servant-leaders, and have been called by God to serve as the shepherds, guardians, and overseers of the church, its ministries, and its finances.

As the overseers of the church, the Lead Pastors are responsible for praying for God's blessings upon the church, seeking His direction, teaching the Word, making disciples, watching over, caring for and encouraging the body, casting vision for the church's future, and otherwise serving as the leaders of the congregation, the church staff, and all church ministries, groups and organizations in accordance with the mission, vision, beliefs, values, and objectives of Life Church Calvert and in harmony with the constitution and bylaws. As the overseers of the church, the Lead Pastors are expressly authorized to serve in all manners deemed necessary and proper to fulfill their spiritual and administrative roles. (*Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18, Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17*)

#### **7.02 Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council, which consists of the Elders/Lead Pastors and those chosen to serve, shall have between (5) five and (7) seven members. As the church's governing body, it shall have the authority to make decisions that uphold and further the mission, vision, beliefs, values, and objectives of Life Church Calvert in harmony with the constitution and bylaws. If in the future, the Leadership Council believes that the church body would be better served through the addition of council members, the council may determine the number to be added, and seek out such candidates pursuant to these bylaws.

**A. Specific responsibilities of the Leadership Council shall include:**

Like Aaron and Hurr who lifted up the arms of Moses in support, those serving alongside the Lead Pastors/Elders are to provide encouragement, counsel, and accountability to those charged with overseeing God's church. Other responsibilities of those serving as members of the Leadership Council include:

- 1.) Helping assess the health and well being of the church and its ministries
- 2.) Serving in governance of the church
- 3.) Assuring the church is fulfilling its mission and objectives
- 4.) Assisting with establishing ministry goals
- 5.) Overseeing and securing all of the church's official documents. A member of the Leadership Council, other than the Lead Pastors, will be appointed to serve as the Council Secretary. The secretary will be responsible for keeping all official minutes and properly preserving all official business records of the church. The Council Secretary's duties will include:
  - a. Preserving the church constitution and bylaws and all official documents of the church
  - b. Keeping a record of all who are church partners and providing and retaining minutes of all official church Partners Meetings
  - c. Providing and retaining minutes of all Leadership Council Meetings
  - d. Retaining any other documents, notations, records, or correspondence deemed by the Council as important to preserve.
- 6.) Overseeing the finances of the church. The Leadership Council's responsibilities will include:
  - a. Assisting with the establishment of the church's annual budget
  - b. Reviewing monthly financial statements to help ensure that funds are allocated and expended appropriately.
  - c. A member of the Leadership Council, other than the Lead Pastors, will be appointed to serve as Council Treasurer. The treasurer will be responsible for keeping and preserving all financial records of the church, including individual giving statements, church income and expenditures. The Council Treasurer's duties will include:
    1. Providing an itemized monthly report to the Leadership Council of income expenditures.
    2. Insuring that individual giving records will be provided on a yearly or semi-annual basis for those who are financially supporting the church.
    3. Assisting with the formation and presentation of the Annual Ministry Report to

be made available to the partners of Life Church. The Annual Ministry Report will provide an overview of the previous year's ministry, celebrating God's faithfulness, ministry milestones, and provide a financial report.

4. Assisting with the preparations and presentation of the annual partner meeting.
5. Providing any church related financial records or documentation to the Council when requested.
- 7.) Assisting with recommendations for and funding options for the development of our church property and facilities.
- 8.) Taking the lead in determining salaries and benefit packages for our Lead Pastors and compensated staff, based on, among other things, the level of responsibilities placed upon the church's senior leaders and staff members, their ministry performance, years of service, their family needs, past and current levels of support, compensation comparability data, the financial health of the church, and other relevant information that is available, all with the goal of seeking to bless and honor those who oversee and lead the church.
- 9.) Assisting the Lead Pastors in ministering to the body when requested by the pastors.
- 10.) In keeping with an individual's calling and giftedness, he may at times be requested to assist with Sunday worship services and other church gatherings, which, among other things may include leading in prayer, serving communion, providing a devotional or other teaching as requested, and otherwise serving or being responsible for overseeing ministries or individuals as may be requested by the Lead Pastors.
- 11.) When requested by the Lead Pastors, members of the Leadership Council may be asked to assist with the biblical resolution of a conflict or a grievance or charge brought against a leader or church partner, which may include the administration of church discipline if and when warranted. If a charge is lodged against one or both Lead Pastors or a council member, the Leadership Council will discuss the matter privately with the pastor(s) and/or council member and earnestly seek to see that the matter is satisfactorily resolved. As is stated within the *Life Church Leadership Covenant*, any conflicts that may arise within the church are to be resolved following the New Testament pattern, with reconciliation and restoration as the goal. Where there is no repentance, and when deemed necessary, guidelines are also provided for the removal of a leader from his or her position.

#### **B. Qualifications for serving as a member of the Life Church Leadership Council:**

Candidates who serve as members of the Leadership Council must be individuals who support the mission, vision, beliefs, values, and objectives of the church. They will have been faithfully attending, actively serving, and consistently tithing to Life Church Calvert for a minimum of two years. Because of their diversified responsibilities, candidates will also be required to meet the qualifications of deacons as outlined in the New Testament. They must also agree to serve and abide by the *Life Church Calvert Leadership Covenant*.

### **C. Appointment to the Life Church Leadership Council:**

During the formative years of the church, the Lead Pastors will select and interview prospective members of the initial Leadership Council and will present their selections for affirmation by the assembled Ministry Team Leaders.

### **D. Nomination to the Life Church Leadership Council:**

Beginning in the year 2020, the Leadership Council and/or church partners may nominate a candidate to serve on the Leadership-Council during the church's annual partner meeting.

### **E. Procedure to determine a candidate's calling to serve on the Leadership Council:**

A nominee will be provided (30) thirty days to pray and seek the Lord's direction before notifying the Leadership Council of his or her intent to accept or decline candidacy. If he or she wishes to proceed with his candidacy he or she will meet with the Leadership Council to begin the process of determining whether he or she meets the qualifications to serve on Leadership Council. This process will include study, mentoring, discussions, prayer, an examination of the candidate's serving and giving record, and opportunities for hands on ministry.

The candidacy process will occur over a (6) month period. The nominee's candidacy will move forward only when it is determined that he or she has met the requirements to serve as a member of the Leadership Council, he or she senses a clear calling from God to serve, and a unanimous agreement by the Leadership Council. At such time the nominee will then be presented to the church partnership to affirm him or her as a member of the Leadership Council.

### **F. Term of Service and meetings times for members of the Leadership Council**

Leadership Council members will be expected to serve a (3) three-year term, which may be extended upon mutual agreement between the Lead Pastors, the Leadership Council, and the individual member. The Leadership Council will strive to meet at least once a month and at other times as may be deemed necessary.

### **G. Vacancies**

When for any reason a position on the Leadership Council becomes vacant, the Leadership Council may choose to call for a partners meeting for the purpose or receiving nominations to fill the empty seat or wait until the next annual partners meeting.

## **7.03 Life Church Ministry Directors, Team Leaders and Assistant Team Leaders**

The Life Church ministry directors, team leaders and assistant team leaders fulfill an invaluable role at Life Church. These leaders, including both men and women, compensated and volunteer, serve alongside our pastors providing leadership for the ministries of the church to ensure that its objectives are fulfilled.

- 1.) Each Life Church ministry director, team leader and assistant team leader will be provided a portfolio to include an overview of the goals and objectives for the ministry he or she is leading, and a description of his or her responsibilities, to include:
  - A.) Assisting with the ongoing ministry goals and objectives of the church
  - B.) Assisting in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the team's ministry as measured against its stated goals and objectives.
  - C.) Ensuring that all volunteer team members are valued and appreciated, and as needs or concerns arise, they are addressed in a caring and timely manner.
- 2.) The lead pastors will meet with individual ministry directors at least once per month, and with team leaders at least once per quarter. Goals of these meetings will include the opportunity for the pastors to provide encouragement, guidance, a listening ear, and to pray with the ministry directors and team leaders. This will also serve as an opportunity to assess the current health and effectiveness of the ministry or team, including celebrating God's blessings, discussing any challenges or conflicts being encountered, ways to effectively respond to them, and laying out plans for future ministries and ministry events.
- 3.) The lead pastors will also meet with the entire ministry team periodically to provide an opportunity for fellowship among leaders, to celebrate God's blessings, to pass along and discuss pertinent information regarding the ministries of the church, and to have the opportunity to pray together as a group.

#### **7.04 Ministry Director and Team Leader Selection**

At Life Church our goal is to see leaders raised up from within the church. Prospective ministry leaders will therefore be selected from those who have been faithfully worshipping with, serving within, and who have been financially supporting Life Church for at least one year. Other requirements include successful completion of the courses *Doing Life Together* and the *Life Church Leadership Covenant*. Each leader will be expected to sign and agree to abide by all of the provisions of the *Life Church Leadership Covenant* while serving as a leader with Life Church Calvert.

Ministry directors are appointed by the Lead Pastors and affirmed by the Leadership Council. Nominations for a team leader may be made by the Lead Pastors, Leadership Council, current ministry team leaders, or team members. Interviews for the position of Ministry Team Leader will be conducted by the Lead Pastors. The final selection of a ministry team leader will be made by the Lead Pastors and affirmed by the Leadership Council. In the event that a team leader may wish to nominate an assistant team leader, he or she will first seek the counsel of the Lead Pastors.

Only the Lead Pastors in conjunction with the Leadership Council have the authority to appoint anyone to a position of leadership within the church. All ministry directors, team leaders, and assistants, whether compensated or volunteer, serve at the discretion of and are directly accountable to the Lead Pastors.

## **7.05 Lead Pastor, Leadership Council, Ministry Director and Team Leader Vacancies or Resignations**

When a Leadership Council member resigns, or his position is vacated, the position will remain vacant until the Leadership Council, by unanimous vote, chooses a suitable replacement. He will then serve until the next annual partner's meeting, or until a special partner's meeting is called for the purpose of receiving nominations for candidacy.

When a ministry director or team leader resigns, or his or her position is vacated, the Lead Pastors will seek a qualified replacement. When an assistant team leader resigns, or his or her position is vacated, the respective ministry leader will recommend a replacement to the Lead Pastors.

If and when one of the positions of a Lead Pastor is vacated, after much prayer and seeking God's wisdom, the Leadership Council determines that another pastor should be added, the Council will take all appropriate steps to find a qualified candidate.

## **7.06 Pastoral Hires**

When considering a candidate to serve as a pastor at Life Church, the Leadership Council will take time for prayer, fasting and counsel, including making multiple opportunities available for discussion and fellowship with the candidate (and his or her family if married) to ensure that the right selection is made. Responsibilities of the position, compensation negotiations, terms and length of service will be the sole responsibility of the Leadership Council.

After a candidate for pastor has been selected and unanimously affirmed by the Leadership Council, he will be introduced to the entire leadership team. Afterwards, a majority affirmative vote will be required. If a majority affirmation is received from the entire leadership team, the candidate will then be presented to the supporting partners of the church at a meeting

especially called for this purpose. A majority vote of the supporting partners present will be required for affirmation.

Candidates having received affirmation of the supporting partnership of the church may then be offered the position of pastor at Life Church. All pastors at Life Church will be accountable to the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council.

## **7.07 Conflict Resolution and terminations**

At Life Church, all conflicts are to be resolved as quickly as possible following the New Testament pattern, with reconciliation and restoration as the goal. If, at any time, an issue or conflict arises involving anyone serving within Life Church, as is provided within the Leadership Covenant, they will be expected to make every effort to ensure that the conflict is expeditiously resolved.

Leaders and team members may be requested to counsel privately with the pastors to ensure that any conflict in which they may be involved is expeditiously and satisfactorily resolved. If the steps outlined in the Life Church Leadership Covenant have been followed, and the issue or conflict has still not been satisfactorily resolved, and, after further investigation, it is determined that a member(s) of the Leadership Council, or a ministry director, team leader, or team member is at fault, the individual(s) may be asked to step down.

In extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the Leadership Council, the brother(s) or sister(s) involved may be offered a leave of absence in order to work on satisfactorily resolving the conflict. If, however, after a predetermined period of time, full resolution and reconciliation has not been secured, if he or she is determined to be at fault, the leader or team member will be relieved of his or her position of ministry.

In the event that the Leadership Council/Lead Pastors of the church are not serving in a manner consistent with the mission, vision, beliefs, values, purpose, or objectives as described within this document, a majority of current partners by signed petition presented to the Leadership Council may call for a special partner meeting, for the purposes of seeking conflict resolution and restoration in accordance with the principles within Matthew 18. The special partner meeting requested must be scheduled within (30) thirty days of receipt of petition.

## **8.00 Partnerships**

All who desire to be in partnership with Life Church Calvert and who fulfill the expectations of said partnership will share in all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of being a partner of Life Church.

### **8.01 Benefits of a Life Church partnership:**

Scripture identifies many blessings associated with our commitment to the local church. A partner of Life Church may expect the following:

- A) Opportunities to serve as leaders within the church and beyond
- B) Documentation of the church's ministry outreaches, achievements, and future goals, including personal giving statements and the church's yearly financial accountability statement.
- C) Opportunities to affirm major decisions of the Leadership Council to include the acquisition or disposal of real estate, the selection of pastors, or the selection of Leadership Council members.

### **8.02 Qualifications for Life Church Calvert partnership:**

Partnership at Life Church Calvert is offered to men and women who are at least (18) eighteen years old. All those who abide by and fulfill the following qualifications will share the rights, privileges and responsibilities of being a partner of Life Church Calvert.

To be a partner of Life Church Calvert means that:

1. I am a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. I am committed to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
3. I will do my best to be an example of Christlikeness by walking in humility, practicing love towards all others, and pursuing a life of biblical, ethical, moral, and sexual integrity.
4. I will consistently pray for the church, its ministries, and its leaders.
5. I have been consistently worshipping with, serving with, and financially supporting Life Church Calvert for at least six months and will continue to faithfully worship with the church, serve within at least one recognized ministry within the church, and will continue to faithfully provide financial support for the church and its ministries.
6. I will make the most of every opportunity to invite the unchurched to share in the activities of the church and to warmly welcome and build relationships with those new to the church.
7. I will refuse to gossip, murmur, or grumble in order that I may honor God and not cause others to stumble
8. If I become involved in a conflict of any kind, I agree to make every effort to see that it is resolved biblically and will seek counsel from my pastors if it is not resolved.
9. I have completed a required *Doing Life Together* session. I fully embrace the Core Beliefs, Core Values, Core Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Core Objective of Life Church Calvert and will abide by the church's constitution and bylaws. If, for any reason, I am unable to continue to fully embrace the tenets of this covenant, I will not hesitate speaking with the Lead Pastors.

### **8.03 Dissolution of a Life Church partnership**

A partnership at Life Church may be considered dissolved or revoked for any of the following reasons:

- A) By ceasing to consistently exemplify an example of Christlikeness i.e., walking in humility, practicing love towards all others, and pursuing a life of biblical, ethical, moral, and sexual integrity.
- B) Having submitted a request to the Leadership Council and receiving confirmation of acceptance.
- C) By ceasing to faithfully worship with the church, serve within the church, or provide consistent financial support for the church and its ministries.
- D) By not seeking to biblically resolve any conflict, or otherwise ceasing to uphold or live in compliance with the core beliefs, core values, partnership covenant and teachings of Life Church.

Because God has called us to love one another and to live in peace with one another, before a partnership will be considered dissolved, the church partner will be invited to meet with the Lead Pastors to seek resolution where a conflict is involved. If deemed necessary the Lead Pastors may request the entire Leadership Council to participate in this or a subsequent meeting with the hope that the issues may be satisfactorily resolved. However, regardless of whether an individual agrees to participate in a meeting(s) with the Pastors and/or Leadership Council, if it is believed in the best interest of the individual and/or the church for a partnership to be revoked, this authority rests with the Leadership Council.

#### **8.04 Restoration to full partnership**

Upon request, a former partner of Life Church may be restored to full partnership by the Leadership Council when he or she provides satisfactory evidence that he or she has, for the last six months or longer been living in compliance with the core beliefs, core values, partnership covenant, Constitution and Bylaws of Life Church Calvert, and has biblically resolved any preexisting conflicts.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **9.00 Personal Giving Statements, Annual Church Financial Statements, Annual Partnership Meeting, Partnership Teams, Updates & Special Meetings, Affirmations**

#### **9.01 Personal Giving Statements**

Partners of Life Church will receive a record of their giving a minimum of twice a year. A yearly giving statement of the previous year will be provided for each partner by January 31 of the new year.

#### **9.02 Annual Church Financial Statements**

During the first quarter of each new year, Life Church partners will receive a copy of the church's financial statement for the previous year as well as a preliminary future budget prepared by the Leadership Council.

#### **9.03 Annual Partnership Meetings**

To celebrate God's blessings and to share ministry goals for the upcoming year, the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council may conduct an annual church partnership meeting. These meetings will be open to all current church partners. When deemed appropriate, an agenda will be prepared by the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council and made available at two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. Partners may submit questions regarding agenda items to the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council up to ten days prior to the partnership meeting.

#### **9.04 Partnership Teams**

From time to time, those who are partners of Life Church may be asked by the Lead Pastors to serve on special ministry teams. These teams may be formed to help with a special outreach, help organize new ministries, or assist the Lead Pastors and Leadership Council on a special project.

#### **9.05 Partnership Updates and Special Meetings**

Although the day to day business of the church is accomplished by the Lead Pastors with the support of the Leadership Council and Ministry Team Leaders, from time to time partners may be asked to weigh in on and/or affirm the direction to be taken by the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council. This may take place in the form of electronic mailings, small group meetings, or a gathering of the partners of Life Church.

#### **9.06 Affirmations**

Affirmation of a decision or transaction presented by the Lead Pastors and the Leadership Council to the church's partnership will be by majority vote of all church partners present.

## **ARTICLE X**

#### **10.00 Hiring Church Staff, Ordaining, Commissioning, and Sending Fellow Servants**

##### **10.01 Hiring Church Staff**

The Lead Pastors are responsible for interviewing and hiring all church staff members and will present their selections to the Leadership Council for counsel and affirmation.

##### **10.02 Ordaining, Commissioning, and Sending Fellow Servants**

The Lead Pastors may ordain and/or commission men and women to perform designated ministries and ceremonies within Life Church and on behalf of Life Church. These designated ministries may include but are not limited to leading small groups, teaching, preaching, providing pre-marital and marital counseling, officiating over marriage ceremonies, performing water baptisms, serving communion, conducting funerals, and any other ministry deemed appropriate by the Lead Pastors. Candidates for ordination and /or commissioning will be mentored as by the Lead Pastors and must be unanimously affirmed by the Leadership Council.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **11.00 Affiliation**

Life Church Calvert is an evangelical, non-denominational Christian church and is not affiliated with, or subject to any other churches, denominations or organizations. The church is recognized as a 501(c)3 tax exempt non profit organization by the United States Internal Revenue Service.

As an evangelical, non-denominational Christian ministry, Life Church Calvert enjoys and maintains the right to affiliate with and support like-minded organizations and associations to engage in ministry opportunities and share the love of Christ by all available means.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **12.00 In the advent of dissolution**

If, upon the unforeseen dissolution of Life Church Calvert, and upon the satisfaction of all debts, all assets shall be distributed to one or more like-minded tax exempt organizations within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **13.00 Amendments**

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of Life Church Calvert may originate within the Leadership Council or be submitted to the Leadership Council by signed petition representative of at least 1/3 of the current church partners.

When amendments are approved by the Leadership Council, they shall be presented at either an annual partners meeting or a special partner meeting called by the Leadership Council. Notice of a partners meeting and a draft of the proposed amendment(s) shall be provided at least 15 days in advance of the scheduled meeting date. This notice may be given via announcement, print, or electronic communication.

For an amendment to be ratified, a  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the Leadership Council and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the current church partners present at the annual partners meeting or a specially called partners meeting is necessary for passage.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **14.00 Certificate of Adoption**

This constitution and bylaws of Life Church Calvert was adopted by the initial corporate board of Life Church Calvert on April 4, 2019.



Life Church Calvert  
Partnership  
Covenant

April 4, 2019

## ***Why Partnership?***

Many congregations have chosen the term *member* to define who belongs to the local church. However, at *Life Church*, we have chosen the term *partner* to describe this relationship; why do we make this distinction?

Although the Apostle Paul speaks of the church as a body of many *members*, (*1 Corinthians 12:12-27*), our understanding of membership has become skewed over the years. For instance in today's culture, a member of an organization may be someone who has paid to belong and may be more or less a consumer of a product or a benefit as a result of his membership, rather than a contributor. This seems to be evident within some of today's churches where, although a person does not pay to gain entrance, a distorted view of membership may nevertheless contribute to a consumer mind set.

A *partner* is an active participant in the life of the church, believes in the vision and gives of himself to see it fulfilled. A *member* wants to know what he gets. A *partner* wants to know how he can give. When the Apostle Paul described the followers of Christ within the local church as *members*, he was not describing those who infrequently participate in worship, or are seldom involved in serving, or who rarely give in support the local church and its ministries. Instead, in the New Testament *members* of the body are individuals who are bound together in Christ and who are functioning together, serving together, and supporting one another for the common good.

As with each part of the human body, we really do need each other; and as we are taught in the New Testament, there are no unimportant members. Within the local church everyone is important, we are to make every effort to love, encourage, and care for one another. Each part of the body functioning properly as God has designed it contributes to the health of the whole body and allows the church to reach its goals and fulfill God's redemptive mission.

Thus, at *Life Church*, those who are followers of Christ, who consistently participate in worship with the church, who are actively involved in serving within the church, who regularly give in support of the church and its ministries, and who are willing to abide by the *Life Church Partnership Covenant* shall be considered partners of *Life Church Calvert*.

## ***Benefits of Partnership***

Scripture identifies many blessings associated with our commitment to the local church. A partner of *Life Church* may expect the following:

- A) Opportunities to serve as leaders within the church and beyond
- B) Documentation of the church's ministry outreaches, achievements, and future goals, including personal giving statements and the church's yearly financial accountability statement.
- C) Opportunities to affirm major decisions of the Leadership Council to include the acquisition or disposal of real estate, the selection of pastors, or the selection of Leadership Council members.

## **II. Qualifications for partnership**

Partnership at Life Church Calvert is offered to men and women who are at least (18) eighteen years old. All those who abide by and fulfill the following qualifications will share the rights, privileges and responsibilities of being a partner of Life Church Calvert.

To be a partner of Life Church Calvert means that:

1. I am a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. I am committed to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
3. I will do my best to be an example of Christlikeness by walking in humility, practicing love towards all others, and pursuing a life of biblical, ethical, moral, and sexual integrity.
4. I will consistently pray for the church, its ministries, and its leaders.
5. I have been consistently worshipping with, serving with, and financially supporting Life Church Calvert for at least six months and will continue to faithfully worship with the church, serve within at least one recognized ministry within the church, and will continue to faithfully provide financial support for the church and its ministries.
6. I will make the most of every opportunity to invite the unchurched to share in the activities of the church and to warmly welcome and build relationships with those new to the church.
7. I will refuse to gossip, murmur, or grumble in order that I may honor God and not cause others to stumble
8. If I become involved in a conflict of any kind, I agree to make every effort to see that it is resolved biblically and will seek counsel from my pastors if it is not resolved.
9. I have completed a required *Doing Life Together* session. I fully embrace the Core Beliefs, Core Values, Core Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Core Objective of Life Church Calvert and will abide by the church's constitution and bylaws. If, for any reason, I am unable to continue to fully embrace the tenets of this covenant, I will not hesitate speaking with the Lead Pastors.

## **III. Dissolution of a Life Church partnership**

A partnership at Life Church may be considered dissolved or revoked for any of the following reasons:

- A) By ceasing to consistently exemplify an example of Christlikeness i.e., walking in humility, practicing love towards all others, and pursuing a life of biblical, ethical, moral, and sexual integrity.

- B) Having submitted a request to the Leadership Council and receiving confirmation of acceptance.
- C) By ceasing to faithfully worship with the church, serve within the church, or provide consistent financial support for the church and its ministries.
- D) By not seeking to biblically resolve any conflict, or otherwise ceasing to uphold or live in compliance with the core beliefs, core values, partnership covenant and teachings of Life Church.

Because God has called us to love one another and to live in peace with one another, before a partnership will be considered dissolved, the church partner will be invited to meet with the Lead Pastors to seek resolution where a conflict is involved. If deemed necessary the Lead Pastors may request the entire Leadership Council to participate in this or a subsequent meeting with the hope that the issues may be satisfactorily resolved. However, regardless of whether an individual agrees to participate in a meeting(s) with the Pastors and/or Leadership Council, if it is believed in the best interest of the individual and/or the church for a partnership to be revoked, this authority rests with the Leadership Council.

#### **IV. Restoration of a Life Church partnership**

Upon request, a former partner of Life Church may be restored to full partnership by the Leadership Council when he or she provides satisfactory evidence that he or she has, for the last six months or longer been living in compliance with the core beliefs, core values, partnership covenant, Constitution and Bylaws of Life Church Calvert, and has biblically resolved any preexisting conflicts.



## Core Beliefs

- a. There is only One True God—the Creator and Sustainer of all life Who is revealed in the three persons of the Trinity, as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- b. The Bible is God’s authoritative and trustworthy Word to all people; it teaches us what to believe, how to live, and declares God’s plan and purpose for all mankind.
- c. Jesus Christ is fully God and man’s only Savior. He became flesh, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He was resurrected from the dead, returned to heaven, and now reigns as the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the head of His Church on earth.
- d. We were each created in the image of God. However, our sin has marred that image and separated us from Him. The remedy is reconciliation through God’s grace that is made available to each of us through repentance and by embracing the sacrificial death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- e. God’s grace through Jesus Christ is available to anyone who by faith will call upon Him. All who are in Christ become children of God and brand new creations in Him.
- f. The evidence of being a child of God is abiding in Christ, following in His footsteps, and loving Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. The outcome of being a child of God is loving others as Christ has loved us and showing them the same compassion that He has shown us.
- g. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. It is He who illuminates our minds, directs our steps, provides us divine ability to serve God and accomplish His purposes, and enables us to walk in the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- h. The Church is Christ’s body on earth; every follower of Christ is a member and He is its head. The purpose of the Church is to make known the goodness of God, to go and make disciples of all people, and to help meet the needs of others in the most tangible, meaningful ways available. Every believer is called to actively worship with, serve with, fellowship with, financially support, and be accountable to the local church.
- i. By following Jesus’ example and being baptized by immersion in water, we announce that we have become followers of Jesus Christ. Sharing the Lord’s Supper together with our fellow believers is a reminder that Christ laid down His life for us, and we are called to lay down our lives for one another.

- j. Praying for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done is the responsibility of every follower of Christ. Praying that God will provide healing, deliverance, strength, wisdom, and blessings is the God given privilege of every believer.
- k. Marriage, as defined by Scripture, is the blessed union of one man and one woman who have entered into a lifelong covenant.
- l. Human life is sacred, including the unborn.
- m. The family is the bedrock of a healthy society. Parents, not the government, are responsible for nurturing our children.
- n. The earth is not our permanent home. There will come a day, at God's appointed time, when He will call for His Church, and all believers on earth, including those who died in the faith, will rise to meet the Lord in the air, and remain with Him forever.
- o. There will be a final judgment. Those who have abided in Jesus Christ will be rewarded for their life of faith and good deeds and will enjoy God's presence forever. Those found to be without faith in Christ will be sentenced to eternal punishment separated from God forever.