



## **BYLAWS OF RENAISSANCE CHURCH**

### **ARTICLE I - NAME**

This church will be known as Renaissance Church, Incorporated (hereafter referred to as “Renaissance”). This will be a non-profit corporation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Renaissance is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and for the benefit of a wider association, this church will be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

### **ARTICLE II - BELIEFS**

The doctrinal outlook of Renaissance is reflected in the following statements:

A. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WROTE THE BIBLE THROUGH MEN WITHOUT ERROR. The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are without error in the original manuscripts. They were written by men, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore fully authoritative, clear, sufficient, and necessary in all matters for the followers of Christ.

B. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS ETERNALLY IN TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. There is one God, infinite and unchangeable in His being, knowledge, wisdom, sovereignty, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness, truthfulness, and faithfulness, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of these three persons is fully and equally God, but they are distinct in terms of their eternal relationships and roles. God desires that we should know Him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of His will and glory.

C. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD WHO BECAME A MAN, LIVED A SINLESS LIFE, DIED ON A CROSS, WAS BURIED, ROSE BODILY FROM THE GRAVE, AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN TO REDEEM SINFUL PEOPLE. He is the second person of the Trinity, fully God, eternally begotten of the Father, not created. He became fully human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and made His dwelling among his people, living a full life without sin. His perfect life and death on the cross provide the only atonement that satisfies the righteous requirements of God for sinful people. The death of Jesus Christ fully and finally paid for sin, and is redemptive, substitutionary, and effective. The historic fact of Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead testifies powerfully to His deity, and is itself humanity’s ultimate hope. Jesus Christ will make a personal return to the earth; this imminent return is a sanctifying hope having vital bearing on the life of all Christians.

D. WE BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SUPERNATURAL AGENT WHO APPLIES SALVATION TO SINFUL PEOPLE, REGENERATING, INDWELLING, SANCTIFYING, AND SEALING THEM UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST’S RETURN. He is the third person of the Trinity, fully God, eternally proceeding from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit bears persuasive testimony to the realities of Jesus Christ. He convicts humanity of sin and its

consequences. He regenerates and brings repentance and faith to sinful people. He indwells believers, gives them assurance of salvation, and sanctifies them. Christ baptizes all Christians with the Holy Spirit, thus incorporating them into the body of Christ, and the Spirit gives gifts to them and unites them for mutual service within the church. The Spirit bears the fruit of Christian character in the lives of believers, and He guides, instructs, and empowers them for godly living and service.

E. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD CREATES ALL PEOPLE IN HIS IMAGE AS UNIQUELY FEMALE AND MALE. Because of creation in God's image, every human life is sacred, full of dignity and significance. In creating people as male and female, God communicated his image in harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of personhood and importance, with a distinction in role and authority. Gender is a fundamental given of human existence, with maleness and femaleness being congruent with human embodiment and being an unchangeable, stable, and consistent characteristic of each image bearer established by God's creational intent. To his image bearers, God gave the mandate to build society through procreation and vocation. This means that most people will be married, though God also calls some to singleness (without loss or diminution of personhood, dignity, or contributive capability). Heterosexual monogamous marriage is God's design for men and women called to covenant together in matrimony. Homosexual behavior and same-sex attraction or other examples such as pansexual, asexual, and bisexual are a result of the fall to be redeemed through the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit. Gender identity confusion and expressions such as transgenderism, unigenderism, and pangenderism are a result of the fall to be redeemed through the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

F. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE SINFUL AND IN NEED OF SALVATION. SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD BROUGHT TO SINFUL PEOPLE BY GRACE ALONE, AND RECEIVED BY PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. TRUE CHRISTIANS WILL BE KEPT BY GOD'S POWER FOREVER. Though created in the image of God, all people have fallen into sin and are therefore lost, alienated from God and facing his judgment. Only through justification in Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can sinful people obtain salvation and spiritual life. The only ground of justification is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the only way to receive salvation is through faith in him and repentance from sin. Justification delivers sinful people from the wrath of God due to sin and grants them the perfect righteousness of Christ. The Spirit's work of regeneration removes the old nature and creates a new nature that loves to please God. Salvation also includes adoption as sons and daughters into the family of God, union with Christ that brings to his co-heirs all spiritual blessings, and the promise of sanctification. All genuine believers will remain Christians throughout their entire life, being protected by the power of God through faith for the experience of the fullness of their salvation. Such perseverance, a mighty work of God, brings the assurance of salvation.

G. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH IS BOTH UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL. The universal church, or Body of Christ, consists of all Christians in all times and in all places. The local church is an autonomous congregation that bands together for worship, instruction, service, fellowship, mission, and celebration of the ordinances. As a local church, Renaissance embraces the rich and vibrant traditions of the universal church. Only people who are members



of the universal church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of believers by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

H. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE AND TO RULE AND REIGN WITH HIS SAINTS FOREVER. At Christ's return, all people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. Believers in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. Unbelievers will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. The ultimate hope of all creation, and the final state of all that now exists, is the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

I. We hold these truths in humble conviction.

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. CORPORATE MEMBERS**

Renaissance shall have no corporate members. Any action, which would otherwise require approval by corporate members, shall only require approval of the Council of Elders (hereafter referred to as "Elders"). All rights which would otherwise vest in the corporate members shall vest in the Elders.

#### **B. CHURCH MEMBERS**

Nothing contained in 'A.' of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of Renaissance to refer to persons associated with the church ministry of Renaissance as "members" even though such persons are not corporate members, and no such reference in or outside of the Bylaws shall constitute anyone being a corporate member. The Elders may in specific circumstances condition its approval of matters on approval by the church membership.

### **ARTICLE IV - GOVERNANCE**

The authority of Renaissance shall rest in the Elders. Elders are selected, maintained, and removed according to the provisions as provided in the Bylaws

### **ARTICLE V - OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION**

#### **A. OFFICERS**

The officers of Renaissance shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Secretary and Treasurer may be held concurrently by the same officer. Renaissance may also have, at the discretion of the Elders, other officers as may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section C of this Article.



## B. ELECTION

The officers of Renaissance, except such officers as may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section C or Section E of this Article, shall be chosen annually by, and shall serve at, the pleasure of the Elders. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign, be removed, or become otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his successor shall be elected and qualified.

## C. SUBORDINATE OFFICES

The Elders may appoint, and may empower the President to appoint, such other officers as the business of Renaissance may require, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these Bylaws or as the Elders may from time to time determine.

## D. REMOVAL AND RESIGNATION

Any officer may be removed upon disqualification and removal as an Elder per Article VI, Section C or whenever, in the judgment of the person or persons who appointed such officer, the best interests of Renaissance would be served thereby. Any officer may resign at any time without prejudice to the rights, if any, of Renaissance under any contract to which the officer is a party, by giving written notice to the Elders, or to the President, or to the Secretary of Renaissance. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein; and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

## E. VACANCIES

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in these Bylaws for regular election or appointment to such office, provided that such vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis.

## F. INABILITY TO ACT

In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer of Renaissance and of any person herein authorized to act in his place, the Elders may from time to time delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any other officer or other person whom the Council of Elders may select.

## G. THE PRESIDENT

The President shall be a person who is a member of the Elders, and shall, subject to the control of the Elders, have general supervision, direction, and control of the activities and officers of Renaissance. He shall preside at all meetings of the Elders, which are to be conducted according to the scriptural principles such as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8. He shall be an ex officio member of all the standing committees of the Elders and otherwise, if any, and shall have



powers and duties incident to the office of President and as may be prescribed by the Elders or the Bylaws.

#### H. VICE-PRESIDENT

In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice-President, who shall be a person who is a member of the Elders, shall perform all the duties of the President, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the President. The Vice-President shall have such other powers and perform such other duties incident to the office of Vice-President and as from time to time may be prescribed for him by the Elders or the Bylaws.

#### I. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, a book of minutes at the principal office or such other place as the Elders may order, of all meetings of the church members, the Council of Elders and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at the church member meetings, the Council and Committees' meetings, and the proceedings thereof. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the original and a copy of Renaissance's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, as amended to date. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of Renaissance, a church membership register, or a duplicated church membership register, showing the names of the members and their addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

#### J. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall ensure that all financial activities and transactions are consistent with the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws as well as the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of Renaissance. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any Elder. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of Renaissance with such depositories as may be designated by the Elders. He shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of Renaissance as may be ordered by the Elders, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the President and the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of Renaissance, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as incident to the office of Treasurer and as may be prescribed by the Elders. He shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports at each regular Elder meeting and at the regular annual meeting of church members.

### **ARTICLE VI - ELDERS**

The highest level of human leadership of Renaissance Church shall be vested in a governing team of qualified male elders, hereinafter referred to as the Council of Elders, which is responsible for teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding. The Council shall be composed of

both paid and unpaid elders who follow the leading of Jesus, who is the Chief Shepherd of Renaissance (1 Peter 5:1–4). Because the terms “elder” and “pastor” are used interchangeably in Scripture, they will be used similarly in these Bylaws.

## A. QUALIFICATIONS

To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Renaissance (Acts 20:28), exhibit the highest Christian character, demonstrate the requisite competencies of pastoral ministry, and display unity with the other elders, according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

**Calling:** an elder possesses a godly ambition to serve in the office of elder. This aspiration comes from the Holy Spirit, who establishes leaders in the church (Acts 20:28). This internal sense of divine calling must be confirmed by the elders and members of Renaissance.

**Character:** an elder exhibits the character qualities as detailed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These qualities include being above reproach, a mature Christian, a good husband (if married) and a good father (if he has children), temperate, self-controlled, without addictions, respectable and respected by others, and gentle and kind rather than contentious. While still sinful and needing to repent of sin when his life does not manifest these qualities, an elder must exhibit these characteristics in increasing measure.

**Competencies:** an elder demonstrates the requisite competencies for this office, including the ability to teach (cherishes sound doctrine for himself, is able to communicate sound doctrine to others, and is able to refute false doctrine), lead (carry out governing responsibilities), pray (for all church matters, especially for the sick), and shepherd (exercise church discipline, protect the members, and provide stellar examples of faithfulness and obedience for members to follow).

**Chemistry:** an elder displays good chemistry with his fellow elders so that they are united in theological vision, core values, philosophy of ministry, and brotherhood.

**Capacity:** while all elders will exhibit the four previous requirements, the amount of time and energy given to varying responsibilities of this role will differ from elder to elder based on giftings, life stages, vocational demands, health, and other circumstances.

## B. ELDER SELECTION

To be selected as an elder, the following process is generally followed: assessment of calling, character, competencies, chemistry, and capacity; successful completion of the elder-in-training process; approval by the Council of Elders; affirmation (through voting) by the members; installation as an elder. In the case of hiring an elder from outside of Renaissance, the investigation, interviews, and due diligence carried out by the elders doing the hiring constitutes the above process. Upon his hiring, he is installed as an elder.



### C. ELDER SERVICE

Elder service continues for as long as an elder is qualified to be an elder. Sabbaticals for various reasons may be granted for a season, during which the elder is inactive and does not vote. Resignation from the office of elder must be preceded by a letter of resignation, to be approved by the Council of Elders.

An elder shall be dismissed from office in the following instances (an illustrative, not exhaustive, list): moral impropriety, doctrinal error, bringing reproach to the name of Christ and/or Renaissance Church, incompetency, disunity with the rest of the elders, and any other failure that would fall under the category of actions that demand church discipline. A task force established by the Council of Elders shall investigate a credible charge against an elder, and shall follow the investigative process outlined in 1 Timothy 5.

### D. GOVERNANCE

The Council of Elders may structure and organize itself however it deems necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of Renaissance Church and the size of the Council of Elders. Any such restructuring must preserve the plurality of elders and the calling, character, competencies, chemistry, and capacity requirements for elders articulated above.

To promote efficient handling of its matters, the Council of Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Council of Elders.

All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Council of Elders and serve under its authority.

## **ARTICLE VII - DEACONS**

Deacons are qualified men and women who serve Jesus Christ by leading the many ministries of Renaissance Church. These ministries include, but are not limited to, missional communities, kid's ministries, mercy ministries, women's ministries, men's ministries, missions, connect ministries, worship and arts ministries, and care ministries. Because this office is not one of authority in areas of teaching and leading, deacons and deaconesses serve in it (deaconesses are not in violation of Paul's prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12).

### A. QUALIFICATIONS

To be considered as a deacon/deaconess, they must meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They must be of sound doctrine and character, not duplicitous in speech so as to deceive people, without addictions, a good husband or wife (if married), a good father or mother (in the case of having a family), faithful, and full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3). A



deacon/deaconess is first tested for the competency to serve as a leading servant and, having been found blameless in life and ministry, is installed in this office.

## B. SELECTION

To be selected as a deacon/deaconess, the following process is generally followed: nomination by a ministry leader; assessment of the above qualifications and passing the test of service; successful completion of the deacon-in-training process; approval by their elders; installation as a deacon/deaconess.

## C. SERVICE

Deacon/deaconess service continues for as long as they are qualified to serve and actively serve. Resignation from the office should come by way of a letter of resignation sent to the Elders.

A deacon/deaconess shall be dismissed from office in the following instances (an illustrative, not exhaustive, list): moral impropriety, doctrinal error, bringing reproach to the name of Christ and/or Renaissance Church, incompetency, disunity with the rest of the deacons/deaconess and elders, and any other failure that would fall under the category of actions that demand church discipline.

## **ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH MEMBERS**

At the annual meeting of the members, the elders are required to submit a budget to the members of Renaissance for approval.

The elders may call other meetings of the members, as deemed necessary.

## **ARTICLE X - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Church membership is an important and formal process based on a confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. There are both privileges and duties associated with church membership as specified in membership training materials and consistent with Section F & G of Article II of these bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XI - CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

God involves his church in every aspect of his redemptive work. This holds true even when God disciplines his children out of his love for them so they can share in his holiness (Heb. 12:4-11). In what is commonly referred to as church discipline, God invites his church to participate with him as he carries out his loving, redeeming discipline. God carries out his discipline in and through the body of Christ (Matt. 18:15-20).



Church discipline makes membership meaningful—members and leaders care about one another and commit to encourage each other to follow Christ, enabling the church to enjoy life with God and participate in his mission.

#### A. PURPOSE

Church discipline has four broad purposes: (1) restoring relationships, (2) removing wickedness, (3) renewing God’s people and (4) revealing God’s love and glory.

#### B. PEOPLE

Church discipline involves members and regular attenders who refuse to seek and obey God as well as those who seek to encourage them to turn back to Jesus Christ for mercy and forgiveness (Isa. 55:1-7). God’s discipline is accomplished as the people of God seek to fight the good fight of faith together as a community of believers (1 Tim. 6:12). The elders oversee church discipline as they seek to shepherd the church.

#### C. PROCESS

Jesus offers a general process for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-20. God’s discipline expands (involving more people, to include elders) and escalates (involving increasing efforts of warnings, telling the church and removal). As agreed to in the church covenant, if a person is the subject of pending disciplinary action, the person consents and submits to the elders' continuing authority to complete the disciplinary process and not withdraw from membership.

By joining this church, all members agree that the church discipline process shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the church and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency.

### **ARTICLE XII – CALENDAR TAX YEAR**

The calendar year of the Church shall be a period of 12 consecutive months starting on January 1 and ending on December 31.

### **ARTICLE XIII - BUDGET**

On an annual basis, the elders must submit a budget to the members for approval (see Article IX). During the course of the fiscal year, the elders may need to make amendments to the approved budget. The following are guidelines for making such amendments:

- A. Affirmation of the annual budget and significant changes in the budget exceeding 5% of the annual budget.
- B. Adjustment to accommodate giving growth: The elders may increase the budget if giving exceeds the amount estimated in the annual budget. The elders may make such amendments and member approval is not required.

- C. Adjustment to accommodate ministry needs: The elders may increase the budget for expanding the scope of ministry up to 5% of the originally approved annual budget. Increases in excess of 5% to the annual budget must be approved by majority vote of the members.
- D. Reallocation of the budget: The budget may be amended by reallocating funds from one account to another (e.g., transferring staffing dollars to missions funds) by the elders up to 5% of the annual budget. Reallocation of funds that result in a change of greater than 5% must be approved by majority vote of the members.

### **ARTICLE XIX - VOTING**

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute corporate members, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon Renaissance, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of Renaissance, or rights to vote on its disposal, except any vote specifically provided in these Bylaws or as specifically provided by the Elders. Said property of Renaissance is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation. Member voting shall occur in the following instances:

- A. Affirmation of the annual budget and significant changes in the budget exceeding 5% of the annual budget.
- B. Affirmation of elder candidates from within Renaissance for installation.
- C. Purchases of land and real estate.
- D. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

A quorum shall be necessary only in the case of the rejection of any of the above instances. A quorum is not necessary for a vote of affirmation.

If a vote is taken resulting in the rejection of one of these items, an attendance record is to be taken. If the number of church members present is less than 50% of all the church membership, the elders are to communicate in writing to all members the result of the vote, and within 30 days, a time for either:

- A. A second vote on the same issue, with the goal to have a quorum present at that meeting.
- B. A membership meeting to present an alternative (in the case of a budget).

### **ARTICLE XV - RULES OF ORDER**

The current edition of *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* by Alice Sturgis shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws.



**ARTICLE XVI - AMENDMENTS**

Renaissance may later amend, revise, add to, repeal, or rescind these Bylaws and/or adopt new Bylaws at pleasure by a majority vote of the members, provided that notice of the proposed alteration, amendment, revision, addition, repeal, or rescission of the Bylaws or adoption of new Bylaws shall have been given at least thirty days preceding the meeting.

DATE APPROVED: The \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_