

CONSTITUTION OF SOLOMON'S PORCH

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Solomon's Porch Community Church

1675 Baldwin

Jenison, MI 49428

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ARTICLE I
Name

The name of this church is "Solomon's Porch Community Church".

ARTICLE II
Authority

The Scriptures shall be our final court of appeal in all matters of church governance. It is understood that the Scriptures supersede the constitution and give definition where the constitution is silent or not exhaustive. Simply put, the constitution is subject to the application of Scriptures, not vice versa.

ARTICLE III
Government

The government of this church is vested in its membership, executed through the church leadership.

ARTICLE IV
Incorporation

This is a non-profit organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan; the term of this corporation shall be perpetual.

- A. This organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and/or scientific purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

- B. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall be designated to be for the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
- C. Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the County in which the principle office of the organization 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 V

Object

To glorify God by becoming a community of believers where grace and truth lead people into spiritual integrity and unity through a balanced ministry of worship, edification, and evangelism [John 17; Ephesians 4; 1 Corinthians 12].

ARTICLE VI

Doctrinal Statement

[Go To Doctrinal Statement]

ARTICLE VII

Membership

SECTION 1: Qualifications

Persons to be received into membership of the church must be in agreement with and willingly submit to the church's doctrinal statement. They must accept the Bible as the Word of God, verbally inspired, infallible, and of full and final authority in all spiritual matters; and give satisfactory evidence of having been born again of the Spirit of God; and be consistent followers of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

SECTION 2: Procedure and Acceptance

Candidates for membership must be committed followers of Jesus Christ, agree with the doctrinal statement of this church, and agree with the constitution of this church. Christians who desire to associate themselves with this church, and who fulfill the qualifications for membership, shall make application to the Pastor and the Board of Elders. They shall then meet with the leadership of the church for examination and approval.

Applicants who have been approved for reception into the membership shall be recommended to the church by announcement from the pulpit or in the bulletin for two consecutive Sundays. If no valid objections are received by the Board of Elders during that period, the right hand of fellowship shall be extended to them at the following Sunday service. Their membership shall then be in force.

SECTION 3: Types of Membership

The membership of this church will consist of two groups: active and inactive.

- A. Active membership shall consist of such Christians as have been received in accordance with this constitution.
- B. Inactive membership shall consist of the following:
 1. Those who have been absent from the services of the church for a period of six months or more without giving a satisfactory reason for such absence.
 2. Those who have come under disciplinary action of the church.

If at any time it is appropriate to place a member on inactive status, the eldership may do so after appropriate contacts have been made.

Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or to hold office or position of service in the church. The elders and senior pastor shall seek to restore the Inactive Membership to Active Membership. If this has not been accomplished after 12 months of being on the Inactive status, they may be dropped from the membership roll at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

SECTION 4: Letters of Transfer

- A. Letters of transfer shall be received from other Christian churches, subject to the provisions in Sections 1, 2, and 3.
- B. Letters of transfer to Christian churches shall be granted to those on the Active Roll. Application for a letter of transfer from this church and a recommendation for membership in other Christian churches should be made by letter to the Church Clerk, being careful to state the name of the church with which it is desired to affiliate. Letters of transfer shall be granted by an action of the Board of Elders.

SECTION 5: Responsibility

It is the responsibility of every member, as enabled by God, to attend services regularly, to partake of the Lord's Supper, to spend a portion of each day in Bible reading and in prayer, to be a personal and public witness, to be concerned about winning others to Christ, and to have a willingness to serve in the work of this church.

SECTION 6: Giving

It is our conviction that proportionate giving is a distinct privilege and positive command given to God's people. We therefore pledge ourselves to contribute systematically to the support of the church, with such a portion of our income that we believe God desires of us, according to the principle laid down in 1 Corinthians 16:2.

SECTION 7: Walk and Conduct

We will urge upon each other in our daily walk and conversation loyal obedience to all those precepts laid down in the Word of God. We will warn against immorality and against practices that tend toward immorality. We will also warn against practices that are known to be harmful to the human body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. All members will be expected to live so as not to be a reproach to the Lord.

“And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:17 NIV)

“If anyone considers himself to be religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.” (James 1:26 NIV)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22-23 NIV)

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Col. 3:12-16 NIV)

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial {a name of Satan, the personification of all that is evil}? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2Cor. 6:14-7:1 NIV)

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness {sexual immorality}, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (Matt. 19:9 NIV)

“To the rest of you I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.” (1Cor. 7:12-15 NIV)

“I hate divorce, says the Lord God of Israel, and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment, says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.” (Malachi 2:16 NIV)

SECTION 8: Rights

Active members, eighteen years of age or over, may vote in all transactions of the church.

Male members, twenty-five years of age or over, having faithfully attended public services of the church for the preceding year, and otherwise eligible may be elected to the church leadership. A person must be a member of the church at least one year before holding any office.

SECTION 9: Restrictions

No person holding membership in an oath-bound secret society shall be eligible for membership in Solomon's Porch.

SECTION 10: Termination of membership/discipline

A. Voluntary termination of membership

If a member desires to withdraw membership, a letter should be written to the Church Clerk so that the Elder Board can officially acknowledge the withdrawal.

B. Discipline

The purpose of all discipline shall be to restore the individual to fellowship and active membership in the church. Such efforts shall be made in the light of the following Scriptures: Gal. 6:1 & 2; 2 Thess. 3:14 & 15; Heb. 10:24 & 25; James 5:19 & 20. Restoration to fellowship shall be granted upon due repentance and by action of the Pastor and Board of Elders.

1. There are three reasons for discipline:

- a. Non-attendance as described in Article VII, Section 3. An annual review of the active membership shall be conducted by the Pastor and the Board of Elders.
- b. Doctrinal deviation or heresy (1 Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 3:10, 11; Romans 16:17, 18)
- c. Immoral conduct (1 Cor. 5:9-13, 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Thess. 3:6)

2. The discipline of this church in doctrinal and moral matters shall be entrusted to the Pastor and the Board of Elders. Any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary shall be in the spirit of love (2 Thess. 3:14, 15; 1 John 4:7) and meekness (Gal. 6:1).

The procedure in any matter of discipline shall be that which is laid down by the Bible (Matt. 18:15-17). No accusation of wrong-doing shall be received by any member of the church until the accuser has himself faced the erring member and done his best to restore him.

If such attempt fails, the problem should be brought to the spiritual leadership of the church (Gal. 6:1), who shall determine the facts in the matter and attempt to restore the one in error. If this is not successful, charges shall be put in writing and placed in the hands of the erring member and he, or she, shall be summoned to meet with the Board of Elders not more than two and not less than one week subsequently. Failure on the part of the erring member to appear before the Board of Elders shall not prevent the board from examining the case and rendering a decision in accord with the testimony received. In the event that the individual being disciplined is not satisfied with the decision of the board, he or she may appeal personally to the congregation as a whole and will have the privilege of having the matter heard by the congregation. A simple majority vote of all the members present at the final hearing will decide the case.

ARTICLE VIII

Officers and Committees

SECTION 1: Church Officers

The officers of the church shall be: the pastors, six or more elders and six or more deacons. The elders will choose an elder chairman and a combined church board chairman from its members to serve for one year. The deacons will choose a deacon chairman from its members to serve for one year. The pastor(s) will not serve as chair of the elders nor of the combined church board.

SECTION 2: Elections

- A. Nominating Committee: A committee consisting of the elder chairman, deacon chairman, combined church board chairman, the senior pastor, and two members-at-large selected by the elders will prepare a list of qualified candidates for approval by the elders. The elders will select a greater number of men than is necessary to fill the positions.

- B. Selection: Each elder shall be ratified by ballots cast by members present at the annual meeting. In the event of a tie, the lot shall be cast to break the tie.

SECTION 3: Pastors

- A. Senior Pastor: A three-fourths majority vote by ballot of all voting members present shall be required to call a pastor. It shall be his duty to preach the Word, to care for the stated services of public worship, to administer the ordinances, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the church and those whom it serves. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. He shall be a voting member of the Board of Elders and of the combined church board. He shall make a report of the year's work at the annual meeting. If at any time his personal belief, preaching, teaching, or manner of life shall not be in full accord with the Scriptures and/or the doctrinal statement of this church, he will be confronted according to biblical process and his service as pastor may be terminated by the elders.

- B. Associate Pastors: A three-fourths majority vote by ballot of all voting members present shall be required to call an associate pastor. It shall be his duty to assist the pastor in the ministry of the church, with priority given to his specific area of ministry. He shall be directly responsible to the senior pastor. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. He shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Elders and of the combined church board. He shall make a report of the year's work at the annual meeting. If any time his personal belief, preaching, teaching, or manner of life shall not be in full accord with the Scriptures and/or the doctrinal statement of this church, he will be confronted according to Biblical process and his service as pastor may be terminated by the elders.

- C. Assistant Pastors: A three-fourths majority vote by ballot of all voting members present shall be required to call an assistant pastor. It shall be his duty to assist the pastor in the ministry of the church, with priority given to his specific areas of ministry. He shall be directly responsible to the senior pastor. He shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Elders and of the combined church board. He shall make a report of the year's work at the annual meeting. If at any time his personal belief, preaching, teaching, or manner of life shall not be in full accord with the Scriptures and/or the doctrinal statement of this church, he will be confronted according to biblical process and his service as a pastor may be terminated by the elders.

SECTION 4: Elders

The elders shall be elected for a term of three years; a one-year extension option may be offered pending approval by congregational vote. At the end of the term of service they shall not be eligible for reelection to any church office until one year has expired.

The elders are responsible for the oversight of the flock. The focus of their ministry is to pray for, represent, feed and administrate within the flock [Acts 6:4; 20:17; 1 Timothy 3:4; 5:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:2-3]. The function of the office is primarily pastoral [Acts 20: 28; 1 Peter 5:2], educational [1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17], officiative [James 5:13ff], representative [Acts 20:17], and administrative [1 Timothy 5:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:2-3]. With this biblical mandate, the elders are responsible for the initiation and administration of policy pertaining to the ministry of the church.

The elders shall also serve as the pulpit committee. They shall have charge of the work of supplying the pulpit and arranging for the regular services in the absence of the pastor. Upon the vote of the church, the pulpit search committee, as a function of the board of elders, shall be the means by which a pastor shall be informed of his pending pastoral position.

They shall assist in administering the ordinances of the church.

They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in the constitution for their particular office and the qualifications as outlined in the Word of God [1 Timothy 3:1-7].

SECTION 5: Deacons

Much of the ministry work of the church is carried out through the work of committees. Specific committees, as designated by the Board of Elders, shall have their chair serve in the capacity of Deacon. The Board of deacons shall be comprised of the chairpersons of such designated committees.

While the ordinary term for the position of chair shall be two years, each committee shall have the authority to designate the term to be less if the committee so desires. Should a committee desire, and should the person in the position of chair agree, an existing chairperson may serve multiple terms. Each committee may, at any time, but not in more than two-year intervals, elect a new, or re-elect their existing chairperson.

The Board of Elders has the authority to approve, reject, or remove a deacon at its discretion.

The chair of the Board of Deacons, who sets the agenda for Deacon meetings, and the vice-chair may either be appointed by the Elders or may be elected by the Board of Deacons. The length of term for each position shall be one year; however neither position shall be term limited.

The Board of Deacons shall meet no less than once every other month. The Senior Pastor and Elder Chair, as ex-officio shall be expected to be present and shall serve as information conduits between the Elders and the Deacons. Should a deacon be represented by a substitute at a meeting of the Board of Deacons, the substitute shall represent their appropriate committee, but shall not have the right to vote.

In addition to the business at hand, as set forth by the chair of the Deacons, it is expected that each committee shall have prepared a tangible update on their work, which shall both be shared with the Board of Deacons and be passed to the Board of Elders.

Every committee represented by the Deacon board shall come prepared for every meeting. Preparation expectations include a 3-5 minute presentation of issues pertaining to the specific ministries under each Deacon's oversight. Documentation from each ministry is expected and shall provide a summary of that committee's work at hand. This documentation, along with Senior Pastor and Elder chair comments and notes, serve to provide valuable insight into each of the working ministries on a continuous basis in order for the Board of Elders to conduct oversight and to form overall vision.

In order to prevent potential conflicts of interest, the spouse of an Elder is not eligible to simultaneously serve as a Deacon.

The deacons are to carry out the directives of the elders in the areas of service to the needs of the flock [Acts 6:2-4].

They shall make the necessary preparation for the ordinances of the church. They shall administer the benevolence fund.

They shall endeavor by God's grace, to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this constitution for their particular office, and the qualifications as outlined in the Word of God [1 Timothy 3:8-13].

Each committee/ministry shall submit a report of its activity at least once per quarter to the combined church board.

SECTION 6: Finance Committee

The finance committee shall be appointed by the combined church board and shall consist of at least one elder, one deacon, the treasurer, the financial secretary, and potential at-large members. The finance committee is directly responsible to the combined church board.

The finance committee shall ordinarily meet monthly to administrate the finances of the church. They can allocate expenditures of up to fifteen hundred dollars [\$1,500] beyond the approved budget without approval of the elders. Expenditures of three thousand dollars [\$3,000] beyond the approved budget or more must be submitted to the church for approval. The finance committee shall have charge of collecting and counting the finances of the church and shall appoint an auditor who shall examine the treasurer's records and make a report at the annual meeting.

SECTION 7: Clerk

The clerk shall be chosen annually by the elders from the Elder Board. He shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church and of all leadership meetings. He shall also keep a register of the members of the church, with date of their reception and removal, record baptisms, marriages and deaths, and make a full report to the church at the annual meeting. He shall remain in office until his successor is appointed.

SECTION 8: Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a member of Solomon's Porch Community Church. He/she shall be chosen by and be directly responsible to the Board. The treasurer shall keep a systematic accounting of all accounts of all monies received and disbursed for the support, benevolent interests, and organizations of the church. The treasurer shall make a report at the monthly finance committee meeting, at which time

he/she shall present vouchers for all disbursements, and at other times as requested. Financial reports shall be made available quarterly. The treasurer shall remain in office until a successor is appointed.

SECTION 9: Youth Ministry Deacons

The Youth Ministry Deacons shall be approved by the elders.

SECTION 10: Officer Requirement

All officers of the church, officers in sub-organizations and Youth Ministry leaders shall be members of this church.

SECTION 11: Committees

The Chair of all ministries (missions, music, sound, congregational care, etc.) must be approved by the board of elders. Oversight of each committee/ministry shall be conducted by the combined church board.

The missions committee shall include at least one elder and at least one deacon. Members-at-large and/or sub-committees may be appointed by the missions committee.

ARTICLE IX Organizations

All organizations and ministry groups are regarded as integral parts of the church and shall be under the general oversight of the church leadership, and, specifically, under the oversight of the elders.

ARTICLE X Meetings

Public services shall ordinarily be held each week on Sunday.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed frequently but not less than 4 times per year.

Special congregational meetings of the church in which voting will take place, may be called by the senior pastor or by a majority vote of the eldership. Notice of the meeting will be published and/or announced at least two Sundays preceding the day scheduled for the meeting.

The annual meeting shall be held no later than the first quarter to hear the yearly reports of officers, organizations and departments, to select officers, to approve the budget for the upcoming year.

Quarterly reports will be made available to the congregation.

A regular meeting of the elder board shall ordinarily be held during the same week of each month. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members.

A quorum at any meeting of the church shall consist of a least twenty-five percent of eligible voting members of the church.

A majority vote of the members present shall ordinarily be decisive. Absentee ballots will be subject to elder approval. In the event more than one ballot is required, absentee ballots shall be valid on the first ballot only.

Robert's Rules of Order shall ordinarily govern the conduct of a business meeting.

ARTICLE XI
Church Staff

When the services of paid personnel, other than a pastor, are needed in the operation of the church, the church shall hear the recommendation of the eldership, and the church, by voting, shall authorize the creation of the position and the salary. The church eldership shall then select the person to be employed in the position created.

It is also understood that all paid personnel, acting in a pastoral capacity, shall be members of Solomon's Porch Community Church and be directly responsible to the elder board in the performance of their duties. Loyalty to the church and its leadership will be expected and each staff member shall understand that the continuance of his or her ministry shall be subject to the eldership.

It is also understood that the employment or dismissal of a staff member is subject to the vote of the Board of Elders and is not subject to church action. The church votes only on the creation of the position and not on the person.

ARTICLE XII
Property

The right to any property that may be acquired by this church shall be and remain vested in that body of believers who shall remain faithful to standards of faith and doctrine contained in the constitution as adopted.

ARTICLE XIII
Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present. Voting shall take place at a congregational meeting of the church, provided that the proposed amendment is published a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XIV
Enacting Clause

These by-laws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the church.

ARTICLE XV
General Operations

An operations manual will be maintained by the leadership to govern policy, procedures, and operation within the structure of the church. This document is subject to the elders' approval, amendment and oversight.