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# **CONSTITUTION OF**

## **NEW COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH**

### PREAMBLE

We accept the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice, and establish this Constitution as a written understanding of how the principles of the New Testament shall be applied to the administration of this congregation.

In reference to the Articles of Incorporation of New Community Baptist Church, Inc., the By-laws of New Community Baptist Church, Inc. are provided for by the Constitution of New Community Baptist Church.

### ARTICLE I: NAME AND PRINCIPAL LOCATION

This local body shall be known as **"THE VINE CHURCH."** The principal address of the corporation, hereinafter referred to as the "Church" shall be as follows: Physical Address: 1003 South John Young Parkway, Kissimmee FL 34741-6355, and the Mailing Address: P.O. Box 421568 Kissimmee, FL 34742-1568.

### ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is to develop productive disciples, fulfilling the mandate of the New Testament, using a simple church model wherein people move through the process of being Planted, Growing and Producing:

People who have begun The Vine Church discipleship process attend worship services.

Benchmarks of the PLANTED:

- \*Confess Christ as Lord.
- \*Identify with Christ's life, death, burial and resurrection through baptism.
- \*Participate in the Lord's Supper.
- \*Become a member of the community of faith.
- \*Grow as a worshiper.

People who are growing in The Vine Church discipleship process attend small group or midweek fellowship.

Benchmarks of the GROWING:

- \*Draw close to Christ by becoming a student of the Word.
- \*Draw close to Christ in prayer.
- \*Draw close to Christ by drawing close to others.
- \*Draw close to Christ in worship

People who are producing in The Vine Church discipleship process choose to serve in the ministries of the Church and actively disciple others.

Benchmarks of the PRODUCING:

- \*Understand and exercise spiritual gifts, talents and desires.

- \*Lead/host a small group or serve in a ministry at the Church
- \*Support local and foreign mission work of the church.
- \*Invite others to Church, small groups, and/or service opportunities.

## ARTICLE III: AFFILIATION

**AUTHORITY:** This Church is an autonomous, free, self-governing Body of Believers subject to the control of no outside authority or power, save God Himself. This Body is the sole authority in determining all Church Policies and the use of its property.

**ASSOCIATION:** This Church recognizes the value of the voluntary association of churches of like faith and practice and will, where possible, work in mutual cooperation with such bodies.

**AFFILIATION:** This Church shall be affiliated with the Greater Orlando Baptist Association and in cooperation with the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention as set forth in the constitutions of these autonomous bodies. This Church shall participate through duly selected messengers in their deliberate assemblies, and shall as appropriate and we are able, support the programs of each.

**ABROGATION OF AFFILIATION:** The calling of a Church Conference for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from affiliation with the Greater Orlando Baptist Association and/or the Florida Baptist Convention and/or the Southern Baptist Convention shall require a written notice to be sent to each active resident member stating the purpose and time of said conference. Action to withdraw must be carried by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

**DENOMINATIONAL MESSENGERS:** Board of Directors and other willing persons selected by the Board of Directors shall serve as duly elected messengers of this Church to any and all deliberate assemblies of the aforementioned affiliations.

## ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

**GENERAL:** Membership in this Church shall consist of all persons who have personally met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership roll.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Persons may qualify for membership into The Vine Church by satisfying all of the following criteria:

- 1.** Giving testimony of a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 2.** Completion of Church membership class.
- 3.** *Commitment to abide by the Membership Covenant.*

A person who has previously trusted Jesus Christ for salvation and has been ***baptized as a believer*** shall not be required to be re-baptized as a qualification for membership.

Such persons shall be received for membership either by statement of faith or by letter from another Church of like faith. Completion of Membership Class and Covenant commitment shall be required.

**DISSENT:** Should there be any dissent to any person seeking membership, such shall be referred to the Elders for investigation and action. Matthew 18:15-17 shall provide direction to this investigation and action.

**MEMBERSHIP ROLL:** The *Elder Body* and those whom they may appoint to aid in this process shall maintain a current Membership Roll which should be reviewed each quarter.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:** Categories of Church Membership are as follows:

**ACTIVE MEMBER:** Active Members are those who are regular in their attendance and/or support and who are abiding by the Membership Commitments as stated in the Constitution. Active members who are at least eighteen (18) years of age have the right and responsibility to vote.

**INACTIVE MEMBER:** Inactive Members are those who have not been regular in their attendance and/or support for an extended time and are not abiding by their Membership Commitments. Efforts, including notification by mail, will be made to inform persons of changes in their membership status. Inactive Members will be encouraged in the steps to become Active Members again. Inactive Members forfeit their right to vote. Persons who have remained on the Inactive Member List for twelve (12) months and do not take steps to become active may be dropped from the Member Roll by decision of the Elder Body.

**WATCHCARE MEMBER:** A student, tourist, or other person temporarily residing in the Central Florida area who subscribes to the Membership Commitments and Constitution may request to be received under "WATCHCARE" with no letter of transfer requested. Persons may remain under "Watchcare" for no longer than twelve (12) months, and will have all the rights and privileges of membership except that of voting.

**TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:** Termination of Membership shall be effected by any of the following:

1. Death.
2. Request of Church Letter from another Church of like faith.
3. Removal upon their choice to unite with another Church Body.
4. Removal upon personal request by the individual member.
5. Removal of an Inactive Member by decision of the Elder Body as outlined above.
6. Expulsion by decision of the Elder Body when the member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the New Testament values in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community. Procedures for expulsion shall be guided in the process of Church Discipline in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

## ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The purpose of Church Discipline is to exercise the responsibility given the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote its purity and welfare. The ultimate goal of disciplinary action applied to the life of the Church member is to restore the member to fellowship, to equip the person with Scriptural principles necessary to avoid further injury, and to better enable the person to grow to full maturity in Christ. Discipline must be administered in a Christ-like, gentle, and loving manner with a view toward restoration. Scriptural instruction includes: Reprove (Titus 1:13), Admonish (2 Thessalonians 3:15), Reject (Titus 3:10), Disassociate (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:5-6,14), and Deliver over to Satan (1 Timothy 1:18-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

### RESTORATION OF MEMBERS

Members dismissed by the Elder Body may come seeking restoration of the privileges of Membership as the person is led by the Holy Spirit in the will of God to a conviction of Godly grief and repentance. When lifestyles and commitments are deemed to be in accordance with the Membership Commitments, dismissed members may be restored to membership by the Elder Body.

## ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

All members must sign and commit themselves to uphold the Membership Covenant in order to unite with this Church. Upon completion of the Membership Class, prospective members will be given opportunity to request membership by signing and committing to uphold the following Membership Covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to become a member of The Vine Church family, I do commit myself to support the Church with my loyalty, time and means as taught in the New Testament.

I further commit myself in The Vine Church discipleship process;

I will be **PLANTED** in relationship to God and other believers.

The evidence that I have been planted will be:

- ~ I will attend a weekly worship service
- ~ I will confess Christ as Lord.
- ~ I will identify with Christ in baptism.
- ~ I will participate in the Lord's Supper.
- ~ I will become a member of the community of faith.

I will continue **GROWING** in faith and relationships to other believers.

The evidence that I am growing will be:

- ~ I will attend small group or midweek fellowship.
- ~ I will draw close to Christ by becoming a student of the Word.
- ~ I will draw close to Christ in prayer.

~ I will draw close to Christ by drawing close to others.

I will embrace a faith that is **PRODUCING**.

The evidence that I am producing will be:

- ~ I will choose to serve in the ministries of the Church
- ~ I will actively disciple others.
- ~ I will uncover and exercise spiritual gifts, talents and desires.
- ~ I will Lead or Host or invite others to a small group.
- ~ I will invite others to worship
- ~ I will involve others in service opportunities.

I will prayerfully seek, with the grace of God and help of my fellow believers, to be as one PLANTED, GROWING and PRODUCING.

***"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. Jn 15:5***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ARTICLE VII: CHURCH OFFICERS

### A. ELDERS

ELECTION: Candidates for Elder shall submit themselves for examination by this Church and its Elder leadership. The candidate will submit himself for examination by letter addressed to the Elder Body, c/o Pastor of The Vine Church. The candidate must be an active member of the Church for at least one (1) year before the election and will serve for a period of three (3) years, with at least one (1) year between terms of service as an active Elder.

1 The steps of examination shall be reviewed and confirmed with this candidate.

2 List of candidates shall be published in the Worship Program for two (2) consecutive weeks. If a member has a question about the qualifications of a candidate, the member shall submit this question by the designated deadline in writing along with his or her name and phone number in an envelope marked "Confidential to Pastor." This question shall be included in the examination process and the member shall receive a response to his or her question.

3 Candidates shall be examined by the Elder Body in regard to their qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), maturity, and willingness to serve.

4 Candidates that are determined to be both WILLING and QUALIFIED will be ordained and installed to serve in the office of ELDER by The Vine Church Elders in a church-wide service.

**DUTIES:** The Elder Body provides leadership in the fulfillment of the purposes and vision of the Church, oversees and administers the work of the Church, determines the staff needs of the Church, and evaluates the effectiveness of existing ministries and staff. In regard to all paid staff positions, the Elder Body shall be responsible for the hiring, supervising, and, when necessary, terminating of persons in these positions.

## B. PASTORAL STAFF

**APPOINTMENT:** The Elder body is responsible for the hiring of all Pastoral Staff. When a Pastoral candidate has been selected by the Elder body he or she will be presented to the Board of Directors for examination with the Elder body present. Following initial meeting with the Board of Directors the candidates will be published in the Worship Program for two consecutive weeks. If a member has a question about the qualifications of a candidate, the members shall submit this question by the designated deadline in writing along with his or her name and phone number in an envelope marked "Confidential to Elder Body." This question shall be included in the continuing examination process and the member shall receive a response to his or her question from an Elder.

**DUTIES:** The duties of the Pastoral staff will be to work with the Elder body to carry out the vision statement and Discipleship Process of The Vine Church. Individual job descriptions will be developed and overseen by the Elders as part of the hiring process.

**PRIORITIES:** Pastoral staff shall be responsible to model Scriptural priorities to the congregation. His or her personal priorities should be as follows: (1) Relationship to God (Mark 3:14); (2) Relationship to his or her family (1 Timothy 3:4-5); (3) Relationship to his or her vocation as a Pastor (1 Timothy 3:5).

**RESIGNATION:** If any one of the Pastoral staff should feel led to resign, he or she is requested to give the Church thirty (30) days notice prior to his leaving. Resignations submitted to the Church are automatically accepted. During the interim period prior to the calling of a new Pastor, the Elder Body will be responsible for ensuring that all Pastor responsibilities are assigned and handled. The Elder Body will be responsible for finding and presenting new Pastoral staff.

## C. TRUSTEES

**ELECTION:** There shall be at least three (3) Trustees elected to a rotating term of three (3) years. The Elder Body shall nominate the candidate for the position of Trustee and a 70% vote of the active voting members of the Church shall be required. One year of membership shall be required before being elected to this office. No Trustee, having served a full term shall be elected sooner than one year following his last active service as Trustee.

**DUTIES:** The Trustees are at all times and in all matters subject to the authority of the Church Body. The Trustees shall execute all contracts, deeds, mortgages, or other such instruments, with the physical signatures of at least two (2) of the

Trustees required. The Trustees, with approval of the Church Body, are duly authorized to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of the Church and to cause to be executed and delivered therefore, in the corporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, or other evidences of debt and securities therefore.

The Senior Pastor, Trustee Chairman, or Elder Body may call the Trustees into special session whenever the need for such arises.

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each Trustee regarding the other before self. They will elect a chairman as soon as possible after each term begins.

#### D. TREASURER

There shall be one (1) Treasurer who shall be appointed by the Elders. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to oversee the Church Secretary and Finance committee. The Church Treasurer will be a member of the Church Board. The Church Treasurer represents the Church Board and Church membership in dealings with all banking and lending intuitions. The Church Treasurer will insure transparency with all Church financial records. The Treasurer's books shall always be open for inspection by any member and shall be reviewed by the Trustees at the end of each financial year.

#### E. CHURCH CLERK

The Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Elders. The Clerk shall attend or be represented at all Church business meetings, keep accurate records of all business transacted, prepare the annual associational letter, preserve a true history of the Church, keeping same in a safe place and perform such other duties as pertain to that office.

### ARTICLE VIII: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This church is a non-profit corporation organized under the Laws of the State of Florida, with Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida.

The Board of Directors of the Corporation will consist of the Church Treasurer, the Church Clerk, a the chair of the Elder Board, Trustees and Deacons plus the Senior Pastor. They will meet quarterly to plan and oversee the business of the corporation. In the absence of an Elder Body the Board of Directors will assume their responsibilities until Elders are identified and elected.

### ARTICLE IX: STANDING COMMITTEES

The Elder Body shall establish such committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the various ministries of the Church effectively and efficiently. All Committees shall at all times be ultimately accountable to the Church Body.

## DEACON BODY

The Deacon Body shall consist of as many persons as the Church deems necessary. They shall be nominated by the Church Body and confirmed through a process of examination and election:

- 1 Having prayerfully considered the responsibilities and qualifications of a Deacon, candidates shall be nominated by an active member of the Church for examination by this Church.
- 2 The steps of examination and the qualifications of a Deacon shall be reviewed and confirmed with each nominated candidate. Qualified and willing candidates shall be included in the examination process.
- 3 A list of candidates would be published in the Worship Program for two (2) consecutive weeks. If a member has a question about the qualifications of a candidate, the member shall submit this question by the designated deadline in writing along with his or her name and phone number in an envelope marked "Confidential to Elder Body." This question shall be included in the examination process and the member shall receive a response to his or her question.
- 4 Candidates shall be examined by a Deacon Ordination Council consisting of Deacons and at least one Elder, who shall consider these candidates in relationship to Scriptural Qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 during a period set aside for prayer and fasting.
- 5 Candidates that are determined to be qualified shall be voted upon by the Church membership at a called meeting of the church.
- 6 Candidates receiving at least a 70% "Yes" vote of all "Yes" or "No" votes cast will be ordained or installed by the Elders and Deacons in a Church-wide service. Candidates to this office shall have been a member of this Church for at least one year. Deacons shall be elected to a three-year rotating term of service. No Deacon, having served a full term shall be elected sooner than one year following his last active term of service as Deacon.

Deacons shall serve in the spirit of Acts 6:1-7 with a prayerful eye toward those who may have special needs.

The Senior Pastor, Elder Body, or Deacon Chairman may call the Deacons into special session whenever the need arises.

## MINISTRY DIRECTOR TEAM

The Ministry Director Team shall consist of as many members as deemed necessary by the Elder Board and Pastoral staff and will include a minimum of the following:

1. Technical Director
2. Parking Director
3. Janitorial Director
4. Children's Director
5. Follow-Up Director
6. Outreach Director
7. Small Group Director
8. Fellowship Director
9. Missions Director

APPOINTMENT: Directorship of the above ministries is tantamount to appointment to the Team. Because of the unique skills involved with each ministry, and the need to coordinate efforts in the Discipleship Process of the Church, Directors shall be selected and ratified by the Pastoral staff and Elder Board with the exception of any paid position which shall also meet the criteria of Article VII, B.

DUTIES: The duties of the Ministry Director Team, which shall meet monthly will be to oversee and coordinate operations aimed at fulfilling the vision statement and Discipleship Process of The Vine Church.

## ARTICLE X: CHURCH CONFERENCES

The Church shall be called into Conference by the Board of Directors as a business meeting of the members of the Church. Every active member of the church eighteen (18) years of age or older is entitled to vote on all business matters properly submitted to the Moderator at least five (5) days prior to the Church Conference. The Board of Directors will establish the agenda for the Church Conference. The Chairman of the Elders shall serve as Moderator. In his absence, a designated *Elder* or member of the Board will serve as Moderator. A QUORUM shall exist when at least 20% of the resident active members eighteen (18) years of age or older are present and voting. Every active member eighteen (18) years of age or older shall have the right to vote on the following matters: the Annual Budget; election of Trustees and Deacons; the acquisition of real property and incurring indebtedness; the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church; the merger or dissolution of the Church; amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitution of the Church; and actions relating to Affiliations.

### ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

An annual Church Conference shall be held on the second Sunday in November for the purpose of adopting an annual budget, electing Trustees, and conducting any other business deemed necessary.

### QUARTERLY CHURCH CONFERENCES

Quarterly Church Conferences shall be held on the third Sunday of every calendar quarter (January, April, July, October) for the purpose of providing ministry update, adopting year-to-date financial statements, promoting ministry and training opportunities, and conducting any other business deemed necessary.

### SPECIAL BUSINESS CONFERENCES

A special business meeting may be called by the *Elder Body*, Board of Directors or Trustees at any time. Notification of members for special business meetings must be given by any one of the following methods: (1) Oral announcement from the pulpit or written announcement in the Worship Program at a Sunday worship service of the

Church; (2) Distribution of written announcement by First Class mail; or, (3) Announcement of the meeting in the Church newsletter.

## ARTICLE XI: CHURCH FINANCES

**FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year shall be January 1 through the end of December.

**ANNUAL BUDGET:** The Annual Budget shall be prepared by the Pastor, Staff, and Ministry Leaders, reviewed by the Elders, Trustees, and Treasurer and then be submitted to the Church for final approval. Any expenditure not provided for in this Constitution or the Annual Budget shall be referred to the Trustees for consideration and action.

**OFFERINGS:** Special Offerings may be taken with the approval of the Senior Pastor and/or the Elder Body.

## ARTICLE XII: DISSOLUTION

If this church should ever be dissolved, after the payment of all liabilities against the Church, all assets shall be distributed to such organization or organizations selected by the Church that are organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes as shall qualify as an exempt corporation or organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, (or by the corresponding section of any future Revenue Code of the United States Internal Revenue Law). Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas 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 consistent with Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

No part of the property, buildings, monies, or assets of this Church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, officer of this Church, or any individual.

## ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS

These Articles may be amended or repealed and new Articles adopted at any called Church Conference by a 70% majority vote of the active voting members present, provided that the proposed action has been submitted in writing and announced at least two (2) weeks prior to the said meeting.