

# Constitution and By-Laws

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TRUE VINE CHURCH INC.  
March 2009, July 2012

## Constitution

### 1 Name

The name of this church shall be: TRUE VINE CHURCH INC.

### 2 Foundation, Object and Priorities of Ministry

- 2.1 The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).
- 2.2 The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- 2.3 The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26 ; II Peter 3:18 ), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15 ; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16 ).

### 2.4 Affirmation of Our Faith

#### *The Word of God*

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

#### *The Trinity*

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

#### *God the Father*

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

#### *Jesus Christ*

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:3; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

#### *The Holy Spirit*

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, convict the world of righteousness, and convict the world of judgment; and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. We hold that all believers should ardently expect and diligently (earnestly and continuously) seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26; Acts 1:8, 2:4, 4:23-31; Matthew 3:11

#### *Regeneration*

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are

born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10;14,15; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

#### *The Church*

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

#### *Christian Conduct*

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10

#### *The Ordinances*

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26

#### *Religious Liberty*

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9,12

#### *Church Cooperation*

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4,10,11.

This church is affiliated with the Pentecostal Church of God, and may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

#### *The Last Things*

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

### 2.5 Our Church Covenant

- 2.5.1 Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.
- 2.5.2 We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elders of the church, seeking to grow toward Biblical unity in the truth; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
- 2.5.3 We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in

our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

2.5.4 We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

2.5.5 We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

2.5.6 We acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the Relational Commitments that have been officially adopted by the church and that address peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, marriage and divorce, counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children.

### 3 Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have been baptized by immersion and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

### 4 Leadership and Organization

4.1 Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By- Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

4.1.1 Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll;

4.1.2 Elect officers of the Church;

4.1.3 Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;

4.1.4 Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;

4.1.5 Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;

4.1.6 Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;

4.1.7 Approve the call, job description and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.

4.2 The offices of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

4.3 The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church.

4.4 Included in the Council of Elders shall be the Pastor for Vision and Preaching (hereafter called "the pastor").

4.5 Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

### 5 The Church Property

5.1 In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Pentecostal Church of God Oklahoma District, and their decision shall be final.

5.2 Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to the Pentecostal Church of God or its successor.

5.3 Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

## 6 Revisions, Additions, and Amendments

6.1 Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:

6.1.1 at the annual meeting; and

6.1.2 by a majority vote of the membership, or a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and

6.1.3 after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting; and

6.1.4 if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.

6.2 Articles 2.1 and 6.2 of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

## By-Laws

### 1 Membership

#### 1.1 General Procedure

1.1.1 All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches. Reception of members may, without special notice, be acted on by groups, within the Church, more limited than the full membership of the Church, using procedures specifically authorized by vote of the Church at a regular business meeting upon recommendation of the Council of Elders.

#### 1.2 Admission by Conversion or Restoration

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, having made public confession through baptism by immersion in water, giving evidence of a changed heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, may be received into membership upon recommendation of the Council of Elders.

#### 1.3 Admission by Letter

Members from other churches holding like faith may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant. If such credentials be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

#### 1.4 Instruction to New Members

1.5 All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth above shall previously, by the Council of Elders, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Affirmation of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

#### 1.6 Dismissal of Members

1.6.1 Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, and who desire to unite with another church, shall, upon request, receive a certificate of character and be dismissed.

1.6.2 Members will be deemed inactive when they; absent themselves from church for six weeks, do not support the finances of the church, cause division or strife in the church, or live ungodly lives with unrepentant sin. Any of these instances will also be cause for dismissal from church office.

Unless otherwise stated, when the word "member" is used in the Constitution and ByLaws, it means "active member". Therefore, the privileges and opportunities described in this Constitution and Bylaws as pertaining to members (holding church office, voting, etc.) pertain to active members only.

### 2 Church Government

#### 2.1 General Statement

2.1.1 Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be a Council of Elders and the Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in 2.2 and 2.3 of these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. Except as provided in paragraphs 2.1.2 below, the Council of Elders, the Pastor for Vision and Preaching, and the Deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.

2.1.2 Committees and Appointees. The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Council of Elders also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. (For example, such committees and positions may include a Missions Committee and a Christian Education Committee, among others.)

## 2.2 Vocational Pastors and Ministers

2.2.1 Definition. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational priority to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their priority vocation. Both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

2.2.2 Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in 2.4 and 2.5 below, Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation. The church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Eldership of the church. Therefore Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Council of Elders and have all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder. Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called to the Eldership, but as assisting partners in the ministry. Vocational Ministers may, when appropriate, be called by the church to the Council of Elders.

### 2.2.3 Vocational Call by the Church.

The members shall call the pastor (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next three successive Sundays preceding the meeting. The pastor shall stand for reaffirmation one year after the initial call and not later than the third annual meeting following the previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation of the pastor shall be by simple majority of those members present and voting at the meeting.

The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for other Vocational Pastors and Ministers.

The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as Vocational Pastors or Ministers to the congregation at the annual meeting. The Council of Elders may also nominate candidates for election to office at any quarterly or special meeting, provided that the written ballot of nominees is available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the meeting - and is announced publicly to the congregation in the Sunday morning worship at least ten days in advance of the meeting.

Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be by simple majority of those members present and voting at the meeting.

### 2.2.4 Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

2.2.4.1 By resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Minister's resignation.

2.2.4.2 Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Minister, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in article 2 of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Minister may be terminated. The vocational call of the Pastor for Vision and Preaching (the pastor) may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a two-thirds majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on three successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. The vocational call of any other Pastor or Minister may be terminated by the Council of Elders when supported by majority of the Council during a specially-called meeting with more than half of both the vocational and lay Eldership voting and all of the Council of Elders having received due notice for participation.

2.2.4.3 Lack of reaffirmation. If a Vocational Pastor or Minister fails to be reaffirmed to the office of Elder or Deacon as provided in 2.2.3 above, a special business meeting shall be called to consider the question of terminating the vocational call with that Pastor or Minister. The vocational call shall be

terminated only if supported by closed ballot of a two-thirds majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church present. Public notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given on three successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Removal from office and termination of the vocational call by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

## 2.3 Lay Officers

2.3.1 Definition. Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Deacons of the Church.

2.3.2 Duties. Lay Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in 2.4 and 2.5 below.

2.3.3 Calling. The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder and Deacon. The Council shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Council as candidates for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion.

The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as Elders or Deacons to the congregation at the annual meeting. The Council of Elders may also nominate candidates for election to office at any quarterly or special meeting, provided that the written ballot of nominees is available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the meeting and is announced publicly to the congregation in the Sunday morning worship at least ten days in advance of the meeting.

Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of a lay Elder or Deacons shall be by simple majority of those members present and voting at the meeting.

### 2.3.4 Removal.

2.3.4.1 Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2.3.4.2 Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in 2.1 and 2.2 of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on three successive Sundays next preceding the meeting.

2.3.4.3 Lack of reaffirmation. If a Lay Elder or Deacon stands for reaffirmation and fails to be reaffirmed, the Elder or Deacon shall be removed from office. Removal from office by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

## 2.4 Council of Elders

2.4.1 Composition, Term, and Calling. The Council of Elders shall be composed of both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The Council of Elders shall be composed with the number of Elders at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of members in the church, but by definition must minimally include the Pastor for Vision and Preaching (the pastor). There should be at least twice as many Lay Elders as Vocational Elders. Each Elder shall be called to a term of three years except as explicitly-described by the district By-Laws that the pastor be elected (initially) to a one-year term and as necessary to ensure that no more than one third of the council have terms ending in the same fiscal year. That call and any reaffirmation(s) shall be conducted as provided in 2.2 and 2.3 of these By-Laws.

2.4.2 Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.

2.4.3 Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of

God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

2.4.4 Organization. The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. This organization shall include the Pastor for Vision and Preaching (the pastor). The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Once elected and for the duration of his tenure in office, the pastor shall serve as general supervisor, director, and manager over all undertakings and operations of the organization. He shall or may as the occasion requires, serve as chairman at all general or executive meetings, and shall be ex-officio member of all standing committees. He shall be a Vocational Pastor. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Elders plus at least one-half of the Vocational Elders, except for matters on which only Lay Elders are entitled to vote in which case a majority of the Lay Elders shall constitute a quorum. The pastor is the Chairman of the Council. The Council shall annually select its Vice-Chairman from among its Lay Elders.

## 2.5 Deacons

2.5.1 Composition, Term, and Calling. The Deacons may be both Vocational and Lay Deacons. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call, qualification, and availability of church members. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call and any reaffirmation shall be conducted as provided in 2.2 and 2.3 of these By-Laws.

2.5.2 Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12.

2.5.3 Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

2.5.3.1 administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;

2.5.3.2 overseeing specific ministries of the church;

2.5.3.3 assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;

2.5.3.4 assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;

2.5.3.5 caring for and maintaining the Church properties;

2.5.3.6 administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.

2.5.4 Organization. The Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons.

## 3 Church Employees

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Ministers, the church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

## 4 Church Finances

### 4.1 In General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall be processed according to policy established by the Council of Elders in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The Deacons shall provide assistance in accounting for funds donated.

#### 4.2 Contributions

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

#### 4.3 Financial Planning

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

#### 4.4 Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding 10% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and approved by the church.

#### 4.5 Authority to Bind the Church

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

### 5 Meetings

#### 5.1 For Worship

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

#### 5.2 For Business

5.2.1 The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held some time during the last month of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

5.2.2 Quarterly Meetings. Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year.

5.2.3 Special Meetings. The Council of Elders or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.

5.2.4 Quorum. Any number of members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

5.2.5 Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

### 6 Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with article 2 of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of True Vine Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with article 2 of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church, or other regular attendees of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

### 7 Discipline

Church discipline shall be carried out by the Council of Elders in accord with the Constitution and By-Laws and as explained in our Relational Commitments and the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Council of

Elders and approved and consented to by the members.

#### 8 Relational Commitments

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled "Relational Commitments," which is incorporated into these Bylaws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, preserving marriages, biblical counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children. These Commitments shall apply to members of our church, and may be amended in the same way that these By-Laws may be amended.

#### 9 Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.