

The Constitution of Lighthouse Christian Fellowship
Sandwich, Massachusetts

Formed June 1999
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**Lighthouse Christian Fellowship
Constitution & By-Laws**

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Constitution and Bylaws

July 4, 1999

PREAMBLE

So that things may be done decently and in order in accordance with the accepted tenets of other churches of like precious faith and that we may more readily help each other in our Christian service, we declare and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I. NAME & LOCATION

A. Name

The name of this church shall be Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, a member of the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God, General Conference.

B. Location

The location of this church is Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

- A. This church is organized exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, chapels, rescue missions and any other ministries that the Church may be led of God to establish.
- B. Specifically, this local church body is dedicated to presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers and empowering them to discover the joy of becoming all that God intends them to be. This involves expressing God's love in practical ways through friendship and community service, the public worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, small support groups for consistent Christian living by its members, and Christian training for personal evangelism, missionary endeavor and community service.

ARTICLE III. BELIEFS

- A. The Bible is our ultimate authority for belief and practice.
- B. The principal beliefs which identify our fellowship are set forth in the Appendix to this document.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. This church acknowledges the New Testament concept of church membership: each person regenerated by the Holy Spirit and responding in repentance and faith toward Jesus Christ is a unique and indispensable part of the organism which is Christ's body and all such persons are members of the universal body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:2)

B. Lighthouse Christian Fellowship as a member of the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God, General Conference, a local expression of the universal body, shall have the following standards for initial and continued membership:

1. Evidence that an individual has repented from sin and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and gives evidence of a true Christian experience, accepting the views of faith and practice.
2. Having been baptized by water or giving evidence of previous baptism as a believer according to the Lord's command (Matt. 28:19-20).
3. Completion of a membership class as established by the elders.
4. Commitment to abide by our Membership Covenant.

C. Reception of members:

1. Persons desiring to become members shall make such desires known to the elders who shall examine the applicant according to the standards for membership.

2. The elders shall render final decision on the reception of a member. All persons who shall have met the membership requirements and have been passed on favorably by the elders shall be received into the church and their names shall be inscribed on the church roster. Only members shall have full voting privilege in all congregational meetings. Only members shall be allowed to teach on a regular basis.

D. Termination of Membership: The name of an individual may be removed from the official church roll under the following circumstances:

1. By death.
2. By member's request for separation.
3. By the desire of the church leadership.

A. Discipline of members shall be the responsibility of the elders of the Church. These persons shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement

of Faith and moral violations as stated in Scripture. If an elder is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as member of the disciplinary committee. He shall be entitled to the same steps as other Church members and be subject to the same discipline. Disciplinary procedures regarding the Senior Pastor shall adhere to the policies and authority of the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God.

- B. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration. If reconciliation is not reached, the person is to be brought before an elder. If no repentance is demonstrated, he is brought before the elder board and subject to expulsion from membership by the entire congregational meeting.
- C. No matter may be heard by the Disciplinary Committee or the Church unless the steps outlined above have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- D. Termination due to inactivity:
 - 1. The membership of any individual member shall be terminated if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the Church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the elders, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the elders.
 - 2. No member of this Church may hold membership in another Church. If any member unites in membership with another Church, that person is automatically terminated from membership in this Church.

ARTICLE V. GOVERNMENT

- A. The leadership responsibilities of the church shall be directed by three groups: The Elders, the Council, and the Staff.
- B. **Elders.** The Elders shall serve as the spiritual and doctrinal leadership of the church. The board of Elders includes the Senior Pastor as an Elder. The elders shall be the directors of the church. Major decisions such as selection of elders, senior pastor, budget, and major capital investments will be brought before the elders, and submitted to the congregation for a 2/3 Majority vote of affirmation. Other issues may be brought before the congregation as deemed necessary by the elders. The pastor shall be considered the chief spiritual leader and the elders shall serve alongside that leadership providing counsel, support, and accountability. The elders shall serve as chief executive officers of the church and shall oversee all of its activities. The number of elders shall be determined by the existing body of Elders. The term of office for an elder shall be for 4 years and shall be renewable upon approval of the elder board and ratification of 2/3 of the voting

congregation. The Senior Pastor and all ordained ministers shall serve under the authority of the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God, General Conference. Lay Delegates shall be selected by the elders, and serve annually for the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God.

- C. **Council**. The Council, under the guidance of the Elders, shall be responsible for the provision, safeguard, and maintenance of the church facilities, operating procedures, and shall provide sound financial and business controls within the church. The Council shall present the budget recommendation for elder approval, which shall in turn, be presented to the body for a 2/3 majority vote approval. The term of office for a Council member shall be for 4 years and shall be renewable upon approval of the elder board and ratification of 2/3 of the voting congregation.
- D. **Staff**. The Staff are to direct the day-to-day ministries and sub-ministries of the church. Their primary purpose is equipping people to know and serve Christ in the ministry of their giftedness, desires, and calling. The staff are to submit to the Senior pastor and board of Elders and shall meet the qualifications as outlined in Acts 6:3 and I Tim. 3:8-12.
- E. Elders and Council members shall be nominated by the decision of the elders or a nominating committee. The nominees shall be submitted to the congregation for ratification by two-thirds majority vote of members in attendance. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Should any nominee fail to be approved, the Elders or Nominating Committee shall submit new names for congregational approval. If any person knows of any reason why the candidate should not serve as an elder, solely on the basis of biblical qualification, he shall contact the elders with such reason prior to affirmation by the congregation. Staff shall be hired and approved by the board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI. ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

Any member of this Church or its mission Churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

Ordination procedure:

- A. Upon a conference with the elders and after the elders have approved the candidate for ordination, the elders shall follow the procedures as set by the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God. The candidate shall demonstrate solid Biblical knowledge, ministerial competence, and consistent Christian character.

ARTICLE VII. FINANCES

- A. The church's financial needs will be supported by the tithes and offerings of the congregation.
- B. A treasurer who shall deposit and disperse the funds of the church and keep accurate records of the same shall be appointed by the Elders, and shall serve on the Council. The treasurer shall serve a term of 2 years, renewable by congregational approval.
- C. An annual budget shall be prepared by the Council, approved by the elders, and ratified by a 2/3 majority confirmation of the congregation.

**ARTICLE VIII.
DEDICATION OF ASSETS**

Should this church be dissolved, the elders shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of obligations and liabilities of the church, transfer of all the assets to the Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God.

APPENDIX

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Article 1 – The Bible

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, was given by Divine inspiration and is the authoritative, complete Word of God. (2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; I Thess. 2:13). We believe that it constitutes the only perfect rule and authority in all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice (Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20).

Article 2 – The Godhead

We believe there is only one living and true God, perfect, infinite, and eternal (Matt 5:48; I King 8:27; Psalm 90:2).

Who is unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, love and truth (Mal. 3:6; I Tim 1:17; Gen 17:1; Isa 6:3; Psalm 19:9; Ex. 34:6; John 3:16).

Who is the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe (Gen. 1:1; Heb 11:3; Neh 9:6; Heb 1:2,3; Psalm 103:19; Eph 1:11).

Who exists eternally in three Persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Who are equal in Their Divine perfection and harmonious in the execution of their distinct offices (Matt 28:19; John 5:17; John 14:16,17; John 15:27; Eph 2:18).

Article 3 – Man

(a) **His Creation** – We believe that man was created by a special act of God; that he was created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality and innocency; that he was endowed with power of rational and responsible choice in view of moral ends; and that the purpose of his creation was to glorify God. We believe that God created mankind as man and woman with God-ordained distinctives and roles. (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Acts 17:24-28).

(b) **His Fall** – We believe man was subject to trial in the Garden of Eden, in order to test his loyalty to his Maker (Gen 2:15-17). Under trial, he lost his holy estate, was alienated from God, and became depraved physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, by voluntarily transgressing His positive command and yielding to the enticement of Satan. In consequence of the fact of disobedience, the entire human race became involved in guilt and in corruption so that in every heart there is, by nature, that evil disposition which eventually leads to irresponsible acts of sin and to just condemnation. (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:12, 18; 3:10-12, 23; 1:19-31; Eph. 4:18; I John 1:8-10).

Article 4 – The Son

We believe that, in the fullness of time, the eternally pre-existent Son humbled Himself and assumed man's nature by being born of the Virgin Mary, thus uniting the Divine with the human natures in their completeness in the unique person of Jesus Christ. (Isa 9:6; Matt 1:18-25; John 1:14; I Tim 3:16; Heb. 2:14) We believe that, in the fullness of time, the eternally pre-existent Son humbled Himself and assumed man's nature by being born of the Virgin Mary, thus uniting the Divine with the human natures in their completeness in the unique person of Jesus Christ. (Isa 9:6; Matt 1:18-25; John 1:14; I Tim 3:16; Heb. 2:14).

We believe that God has provided redemption for mankind through the mediatorial work of Christ, Who voluntarily offered Himself on the cross as a perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for

the unjust, bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man. (Matt. 20:28; Heb 9:11,12; I Pet 3:18; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; I Tim 2:5,6).

We believe that on the third day He rose from the dead in the body which had been laid in the tomb. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he performs the ministry of intercession. He shall come again, personally, and visibly, to complete His saving work and to consummate the eternal plan of God.

Article 5 – The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26); His ministry, since His advent at Pentecost, is to reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-11). He is to instruct, comfort, and guide God's children (John 14:16-18, 26; 16:13). He is to bear witness of the truth (Acts 5:30-32). He is to regenerate those who repent of their sins and exercise faith in Christ (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). He is to give gifts and empower for life and service (Rom 8:2; Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:16; I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4). Every born again believer has the presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19; Rom 8:9).

We believe that the Holy Spirit purposes not only to gain entrance into the believer's life, but also to move mightily upon him, filling him with His love and power. The Christian life is two dimensional, involving both position and experience. Positionally, in Jesus Christ we lack nothing. Nevertheless, there must be the day by day faith appropriation of all that Jesus is. The Holy Spirit seeks control of the believer's life in order to reproduce the character and ministry of Jesus through the believer.

Article 6 – Salvation

We believe that the results of mankind's sin is death, and that only the substitutionary death of Jesus as the perfect sacrifice can pay for, or atone, for the sins of man. (Rom 3:25). This salvation is only by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5), and not of works. This salvation is appropriated by faith, as an active surrender and decision to believe (John 1:12). In justification, the believer is absolved of his guilt and declared righteous in the sight of God (Rom 5:1, 9; 4:4, 5; Acts 13:39). In adoption he is constituted a member of God's household (Rom 8). In regeneration the principle of a new life is implanted in his heart (John 3:3; Titus 2:14). In sanctification, the principle of the ongoing work of a new life is being strengthened and developed increasingly (Rom 6:8). In glorification, this work will come to its perfect culmination in an ultimate and complete renewal of human nature, though not on this earth (1 Cor. 13:1; John :11-13). Repentance and faith are essential attitudes to be found in any one person who rightly claims the blessing of salvation. They emphasize the fact that it is not through human merit of any kind, but the grace of God that redemption is achieved.

Article 7 – The Church

We believe that the church invisible and universal is an organism composed of the redeemed of all ages. We believe that the church is manifest locally and visibly through companies of believers in Christ, voluntarily joined together and meeting at stated times for worship and to observe the ordinances (Acts 2:46, 47; 20:7; I Cor 16:2; Acts 6:1-6; 14:23). The duty of the church is to give the Gospel as a witness to all men in word and deed (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 John 3:18). The church is to build itself up in the most holy faith (Jude 20, 21; Eph 4:11-12, 16; Acts 20:32). Ultimately, the church is to glorify God (1 Pet 4:11).

Article 8 – Church Practices

- (a) **Baptism** – We believe that baptism by water is the public confession of Christ as Savior and Lord. It is a symbol of one's union, by faith, with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, and, therefore, is to be administered to those who have given evidence of faith in Christ as their person Savior (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-41; Rom 6:3-5; Col 2:12; Acts 8:36-39). It serves as a symbol and does not impute salvation, but testifies to God's redemptive work in a believer's life.
- (b) **The Lord's Supper** – We believe that the Lord's Supper should be observed by all believers in obedience to the command: "Do this in remembrance of Me." It consists in partaking of the emblems of bread and wine; and symbolizes the death of Christ for the remission of sins and our continual dependence upon Him for our sustenance. It witnesses that mystical union of the believer with Christ (John 15). The union of believers around the Lord's table should be open to all who are in right relationship with each other, and the Lord. (Matt 26:26-30; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 10:23-26).
- (c) **Feetwashing** – We believe Christ gave us a wonderful and tangible example of humility and service by washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:3-17). We practice feetwashing as a reminder of the incarnation and humility of Christ, and as an encouragement to follow his example of humility and service.

Article 9 – The Last Things

We believe that at the end of this age, Christ will descend from Heaven, the dead shall be raised bodily, that they shall be judged by God, and that those redeemed will enter into full possession of eternal bliss in the presence of God, and the wicked shall be condemned to eternal death. (1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor 7:29-32; Heb 1:10-12; Acts 1:11; 24:15; Matt 25:31-46).