

**CONSTITUTION**  
**Tree of Life Christian Fellowship**  
**Kansas City, Kansas — Adopted 10 Nov 2024**

**Preamble**

It is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that his followers gather together as the Body of Christ (Matt 18:20; 1 Cor 12—13) to be witnesses for the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 10:7-8; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8) and to make disciples of all ethnic groups (ourselves included), by baptizing them in the name of our Creator God (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit) and teaching them to obey everything Jesus taught (Matt 28:18-20). In order that this mission from our Lord Jesus Christ might be carried out and to maintain good order (1 Cor 14:40), we, a number of Christians living in and near Kansas City, Kansas, accept the following constitution, with which all affairs of our church shall be governed.

**Article I: Name**

The name of this church is Tree of Life Christian Fellowship, incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Kansas. We can also do business using the name of Saint Luke Lutheran Church of Kansas City, Kansas.

**Article II: Confession**

This church confesses the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth, as testified to in the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke (& Acts), and John (& Revelation), as the image & Son of our heavenly Father, the eternal Lamb & Word of God made flesh, the giver of the Holy Spirit, the only Lord to be listened to and obeyed, and the only Savior of all creation. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Gospel accounts, is the only rightful lens, interpreter, and fulfiller of the Holy Scriptures (Old & New Testaments). Through our Lord Jesus Christ, we accept all the prophetic and apostolic books of the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and as the only rule and norm of all faith and practice (2 Tim 3:16-17). No teaching or practice in conflict with the above will be tolerated in this church.

**Article III: Way of Life**

This church pursues and follows the Way of Life that our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed through his own example and teachings that are found in the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke (& Acts), and John (& Revelation). No Way of Life that is in conflict with the example and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ will be accepted in this church. Our Lord Jesus Christ summarized his own example by humbly washing his disciples' feet (John 13) and summarized his own teachings in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5—7). The Apostle Paul summarized the example and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Way of Faith, Hope, & Love (1 Cor 13:13). Our Creator God daily sustains this church in following Jesus's Way of Faith, Hope, & Love through the sacraments of Baptism, Repentance (Confession/Absolution), & Communion.

<b>The Way of Faith — Baptism</b>	<b>The Way of Hope — Repentance</b>	<b>The Way of Love — Communion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Surrendering to the Creator</li><li>● Listening to the Creator</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Confronting Our Past</li><li>● Waiting on the Creator's Future</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sharing with the Church</li><li>● Caring for All Creation</li></ul>

**Article IV: Church Members**

This church is composed of Church Members—those who are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, who publicly adhere to the Confession (Article II), and actively pursue the Way of Life (Article III). Church Members must continually demonstrate faithful and regular participation in the worship, prayer, and study life of this church, submission to the pastoral leadership, teaching, and admonition of this church, and the sharing of time and resources with this church (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; Rom 12:1-21).

The Church Council (see Article VI below), under the leadership of the Pastor, determines who qualifies for and maintains Church Membership and is responsible for overseeing their faithful walk and growth in the Way of Life. Those who deviate from the path of following our Lord Jesus Christ will be rebuked and corrected by the Church Council. Those who refuse to repent, despite the continued and loving corrections of this church, will be publicly removed from Church Membership (Matt 18:15-20). However, no matter the gravity of the error, genuine repentance and transformation of life will always allow for full forgiveness and reinstatement into this church.

## **Article V: Church Assembly**

This church administers its authority through the assembled Church Members, which is referred to as the Church Assembly. The Church Assembly is the governing body of this church. Only the Church Assembly may

- call/remove the Pastor or appoint Stewards (see Article VI below)
- encumber, purchase, or sell land (including buildings)
- adopt the annual financial budget of this church or incur non-budgeted (emergency) expenses
- join or leave a Christian denomination, synod, network, or organization (see Article VII below)
- dissolve this church
- change and amend this constitution (see Article VIII below).

However, the Church Assembly delegates responsibility for oversight and leadership to the Pastor, Stewards, and Deacons of the Church Council (see Article VI below). Therefore, the Church Assembly should trust and follow the advice and wisdom of these chosen leaders as long as these leaders are faithfully following our Lord Jesus Christ.

All decision making in the Church Assembly must strive toward consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Church Council has the option of calling for a two-thirds majority vote to decide an issue (Church Members in good standing that are at least 18 years old may vote). The Pastor or a Steward will facilitate discussion and consensus-building. The Church Members who attend a properly called meeting constitute a quorum.

The Church Members shall have a Church Assembly at least once per year. The Pastor, Stewards, and Deacons shall report on and update the Church Assembly on their activities and vision for the coming year and ask for approval of their annual financial budget and any other needed items. Steward appointments take place during the Church Assembly, with nominations being accepted during the prior months. Church Assembly meetings may be called by the Church Council or at the request of ten Church Members. The date, time, and purpose of the Church Assembly meeting must be communicated at least 7 days beforehand.

In the event that this church dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final Church Assembly meeting for the payment of debts and all just claims against this church. Any and all surplus items, and all rights connected to the remaining property shall be dispersed by the Church Council to another 501(c)(3).

## **Article VI: Church Council**

The Church Council is the leadership group of this church. The Church Council meets monthly (or as needed) and all its decisions must be by consensus. The Church Council has two main tasks:

- 1) Serve as spiritual leaders of this church and as gatekeepers for the Church Members.
- 2) Discern the Jesus-centered, faithful management, use, and distribution of this church's resources (including the annual budget) for the care of, first, the Church Members and then those outside this church.

The decision-making members of the Church Council are the Pastor (who is the leader of the Church Council) and the Stewards. The Deacons are advisory members who offer input and insight while receiving direction and guidance.

### **A. Pastor**

The Pastor is the leader of this church and is called by the Church Assembly to represent the voice and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in this church. The Pastor's leadership must start with his own example of learning from Jesus and following Jesus as a humble servant of all—lowering himself to lift others up and putting the interests of others above his own (Matt 23:8-12; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 14:1-11; Phil 2:1-8; 1 Pet 5:1-7). The Pastor must be able to say, along with the Apostle Paul, "Imitate me, as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

The Pastor's main responsibility is to lead and organize the worship, liturgy, preaching, teaching, and serving of this church in a way that faithfully helps the Church Members mature as disciples of Jesus. The Pastor is the "overseer" of the Church Members, the Stewards, the Deacons, and any other workers. As long as the Pastor is staying faithful to Jesus's example and teachings, then the Church Members, Church Assembly, and Church Council are to follow where the Pastor leads.

The Pastor may only be removed from office by the Church Assembly for one of the following causes: 1) persistent adherence to false teaching, 2) a scandalous life that does not reflect Jesus's teachings, or 3) inability to perform or willful neglect of the responsibilities of the office. In the absence of adequate cause for dismissal, the tenure of the Pastor is the remainder of his active life or until our Lord Jesus Christ calls him to another field of service.

The calling of a new Pastor must be carried out at a special meeting of the Church Assembly. At that meeting the Church Assembly will prayerfully choose one of the nominees by consensus or by prayerfully casting lots. This church will only call a Pastor who is adequately trained and also pledges faithful adherence to the Confession (Article II) and Way of Life (Article III) of this church.

#### **B. Stewards**

The Stewards support the Pastor in leading and guiding the Church Members in their faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ—always by example first. This involves two tasks specific to the Stewards:

- 1) Hold the Pastor accountable in teaching and life to Jesus's standard.
- 2) Build relationships with the Church Members in order to help identify any physical and spiritual needs.

The Church Assembly must appoint between four to six Church Members to be Stewards. Each Steward serves a two year term before possible reappointment. Any decisions between equally qualified candidates will be decided by prayerfully casting lots. To qualify for appointment as a Steward, a Church Member must demonstrate a faithful life, Scriptural knowledge, and passion for following Jesus, while regularly and faithfully participating in the worship and study life of this church. The Stewards must also submit to Scriptural training with the Pastor as he sees fit.

The Church Council must appoint a Steward to serve as Head Steward (President), who will help the Pastor lead the meetings of the Church Assembly and Church Council, and a Steward to serve as Secretarial Steward (Secretary), who will keep records of all Church Assembly and Church Council meetings.

#### **C. Deacons**

The Deacons are appointed by the Church Council from among the Church Members in order to assist in carrying out the ministry of this church. Each Deacon is chosen based on a giftedness to fill a specific role. Each Deacon serves a two year term before possible reappointment by the Church Council. The only required Deacon is the Financial Deacon (Treasurer). Otherwise, the Church Council may add or remove any Deacon position as they see fit. Here are the suggested Deacons:

- 1) Financial Deacon (Treasurer): Spearheads the accounting of all receipts and disbursements as well as the submitting of records for audit. Oversees those who count the worship offering.
- 2) Property Deacon: Spearheads the care and upkeep of the buildings and properties.
- 3) Outreach Deacon: Spearheads the service, outreach, and work of the church in our neighborhoods and city.
- 4) Hospitality Deacon: Spearheads coordination and execution of all communal meals.

### **Article VII: Church Affiliation**

This church is not currently affiliated with or part of any denomination, synod, network, or larger church organization.

This church will only join and maintain membership in a denomination, synod, network, or larger church organization that adheres to the Confession (Article II) and Way of Life (Article III) of this constitution. When this church is not affiliated with or part of any denomination, synod, network, or larger church organization, then the Church Council will seek to find a denomination, synod, network, or larger church organization to join, so that this church can be connected in ministry and mutual support with other Christian churches.

### **Article VIII: Amendments**

This constitution may be changed or amended by the Church Assembly, provided that the intention to amend the constitution and the wording of the changes proposed will be read to the church gathered for worship at least 28 days before the amendment is presented for action.