

**CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS  
OF “the River” – SBC  
2011**

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas God admonishes his followers to do all things decently and in order, we the members of The River - SBC, declare and establish this constitution and by-laws in order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, carry out the commandments given by Jesus Christ to His church, and provide for the governing of this body in an orderly manner.

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

This body of Christ shall be known as the River Inc

**ARTICLE II: VISION**

The River exists for the purpose of helping thirsty people transform into overflowing Christ followers.

**ARTICLE III: MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of The River - is to experience life-changing encounters with God through a salvation experience, developing an ongoing personal relationship with Christ, and overflowing through dynamic worship.

**ARTICLE IV: STATEMENTS OF OUR FAITH**

1. We believe in one God, creator and ruler of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
(Genesis 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2;)
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary and lived a sinless life. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the scriptures. He arose bodily from the dead after three days to demonstrate his power over sin and death. He ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of God the Father, He is now our high priest and advocate.  
(Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1-5; Acts 1:9; I Corinthians 15:3-4; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 4:14-15)
3. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, convict humans of their sin and need for Jesus, and regenerate those who place their faith in Christ. He indwells every believer to provide understanding of spiritual truths, guidance in doing what is right, and power for godly living. He further gives every believer spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ.  
(John 14-16-17, 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16, 12:1-7; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18)
4. We believe the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God. They were written by human authors under the perfect supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is therefore truth without error and is the complete revelation of God for faith and life.  
(Psalm 19:7-10, 119:1-5; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 40:8; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21)

5. We believe that all people are created in the image of God, but each person has inherited from Adam, the first man, a “sin” nature. This “sin” nature separates every person from God and causes each person to fall short of God’s perfection. The “sin” nature of each person can only be remedied by salvation through a personal faith in Jesus Christ.  
(Genesis 1:27, 3:1-19; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:18-32, 3:23)
6. We believe that salvation and reconciliation to God can only be accomplished through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. All who place their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior and turn away from their life of sin are truly regenerated. Regeneration is an instantaneous act that begins the moment a person consciously receives Jesus by faith.  
(John 1:12, 3:3-21; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 5:1, 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 1:21-22; Titus 3:5)
7. We believe that because God gives eternal life through Jesus Christ, that the true believer is secure in their salvation for all of eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of any person.  
(John 10:29; Ephesians 1:13-14; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10-14; I Peter 1:3-5)
8. We believe that water baptism by immersion, after regeneration, and the Lord’s Supper are the ordinances Christ gave to the church. These ordinances are performed as acts of obedience and as a testimony of the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. They are both symbolic and are not to be regarded as a means of salvation.  
(Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-29)
9. We believe that, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly to judge all persons in righteousness. The dead will be bodily resurrected and those who have received salvation through Christ will live eternally with God in heaven and those who have not received salvation through Christ will live eternally separated from God in Hell. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.  
(Matthew 18:8-9, 25:31-46; John 3:16-18; I Thessalonians 4:14-17; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 20:15)
10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and head of the Church, and each local body of believers has the right, under His leadership, to decide and govern its own affairs. He provides each local church with “overseers” who are to equip, shepherd, and guide the body.  
(Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 2:19-22, 4:11-13; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 3:1-7; I Peter 5:1-4)

#### **ARTICLE V: AFFILIATION**

This church is autonomous and its government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches of like faith and order, this church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its local, state, and national expressions.

## BY LAWS

### ARTICLE I. CORE MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1: General

This church Leadership Team reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2: Qualifications

1. Regeneration through a personal faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Baptism after salvation, as a testimony of salvation.
3. Completion of the church's membership course.
4. Agreement with the church's statements of faith and membership covenant.
5. Willingness to be governed by the church's constitution and by-laws.
6. Willingness to support the church through prayer, financial giving, ministering, and active participation to others.

#### Section 3. Admission Procedure

Any person requesting membership and meeting the qualifications of Article 1, Section 2 of the By-Laws shall be considered a candidate for membership. All such candidates shall meet one of the qualifications below and then presented in written form to the Leadership Team:

1. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ and desiring believer's baptism
2. By promise of letter from another church of like faith and order.
3. Upon statement of prior profession of faith and believer's baptism.

A candidate for membership shall be presented, in written form to the Elder Team for approval with Article II, Section 2 or 3 of the by-laws. A candidate shall be considered a member with a three-fourths majority of the Elder Team of those present and voting.

#### Section 4: Designation Of Membership

Membership privileges are for those actively involved in the life of the church. Therefore, two membership categories shall be maintained.

1. **Active resident members (12 and older):** members who reside within the church's ministry area (driving distance) and are actively participating in the church. Active resident members shall have full privileges as set forth in Article 1, Section 5 of the by-laws.
2. **Inactive members (12 and older):** members who reside in the church's ministry area (driving distance) but are not actively participating in the church's life or any person who has moved out of the church's ministry area and has not joined another church. Inactive members who reside in the church's ministry area shall be contacted and encouraged to become re-involved in the body. If they choose not to reestablish fellowship, a letter shall notify them before being designated as an inactive member. The process by which members are reclassified as inactive shall be outlined in the policy and procedures manual. Inactive members may not exercise any of the membership privileges set forth in Article 1, Section 5 of the by-laws.

#### Section 5: Membership Privileges

Every active resident member, age 12 and above, shall have the right to vote at all elections on matters submitted to the church in business meetings. Any active resident member is eligible to serve in any elected church position.

### **Section 6: Discipline Of CORE Members**

It shall be the practice of this church to be redemptive and loving toward all members. If a member's life and conduct are not in accordance with God's Word in such a way that it hinders the general welfare of the church and/or the ministry influence of the church in the community, that member may be removed from the church roll and fellowship with the body withdrawn. The process of discipline shall be in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. If the discipline requires removal from the membership roll and withdrawal of fellowship, a three-fourths vote of the Elder Team present and voting in a meeting is required. A dismissed member may be restored at his/her request upon repentance and evidence of change as determined by the Elder Team. The vote to restore a member shall require a three-fourths majority of the Elder Team present and voting.

### **Section 7: Termination Of Membership**

Members shall be removed from the church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Joining another church.
3. By personal written request of the member.
4. By verbal request of the member to the Staff.
5. By disciplinary action according to the conditions of Article 1, Section 6 of the by-laws.
6. By being designated as an "inactive member" according to Article 1, Section 4, No. 2 of the by-laws for a continuous period of two years.

## **ARTICLE II: MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

Christian love and unity shall govern the conduct of each church business session. In cases where an impasse is evident, the decision shall be tabled for prayer and seeking the Lord's guidance. The decision may then be brought before the business session again. This process may continue until the impasse is resolved.

### **Section 1: Quorum And Majority Vote**

Unless otherwise specified in this document, a quorum shall consist of those voting members that are present in the active resident membership roll and all actions shall pass by a simple 51% majority.

### **Section 2: Regular Business Meetings**

The church shall hold meetings to conduct necessary business at the discretion of the Elder Team. Each regular business meeting shall be announced verbally in a worship service or in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

### **Section 3: Special Business Meetings**

Special business meetings can be called by the Lead Minister, the Elder Team, or by written request to the moderator by 20% or more of the active members. A special business meeting shall be announced in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE III: CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section 1: Elder Team**

The Elder Team, who are the pillars of example for upholding the mission of The River, will oversee matters of interpreting Biblical doctrine, financial endeavors (including but not limited to property interests), staff discipline, and church member discipline. They will hold the Lead Minister accountable for living out the mission of The River. They will oversee, in accordance with Article III Section 1: E, the hiring and termination of staff upon recommendation from the Lead Minister and appropriate supervisor. They will be involved with any and all legal matters, including but not limited to the interpretation and periodic revision of the Statements of Faith and Philosophy of Ministry.

#### **Section 1 A: Disputes**

Disputes concerning Biblical concerns or purity issues within the Staff Team can be brought before the Elder Team. All complaints must have fulfilled the chain of authority before they are brought before the Elder Team for consideration and decision.

#### **Section 1 B: Legal**

All legally binding documents require a signature from two of the Elder Team members and the Lead Minister; this shall legally bind the church upon approval by a three-fourth majority vote of the Elder Team.

#### **Section 1 C: Requirements**

Elder Team must meet all requirements as laid out in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-20, Titus 1:5-9). Elder Team members are recommended by the Lead Minister based on spiritual giftedness, character, chemistry, and competency and are then approved or disapproved by the Elder Team. Their term of office is open-ended. However, they can serve two years on and one year off for spiritual, emotional, and physical refreshment.

#### **Section 1 D: Removal From Office**

A member of the Elder Team can only be removed from their position by his or her request or by a three-fourths majority vote of the Elder Team, and only for the reason of not fulfilling the requirements as laid out in Article III Section 1 C.

#### **Section 1 E: Staff Hiring & Termination**

Directors and support staff at The River are determined by the recommendation of the Lead Minister and approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the Elder Team. The Lead Minister does not have the ability to hire and fire, only make the recommendation. The Elder Team does not have the power to recommend someone to be hired or fired except in the case of the Lead Minister. However, they do have the ability to take the recommendation and

determine whether that person will be hired or fired. The staff person will be hired on the unanimous vote of the Elder Team. The staff person will be fired on a unanimous vote of the Elder Team. The Lead Minister or the Leader of the Elder Team will excuse any member of the Elder Team that has a possible conflict of interest due to staff position or relationship. Conflicts among staff will be worked out between the individual staff and the appropriate supervisor if needed. (Consult Personnel Manual for specific issues that may be brought to the Elder Team) The Lead Minister can only be hired on the unanimous vote of the Elder Team and a 75% vote of the active church members present at the special called business meeting. The Lead Minister shall be replaced by a unanimous vote by the Elder Team and a 75% vote of the active church members present at the special called business meeting. If the Lead Minister resigns and the office is vacant or for whatever reason the office is vacant, then the Elder Team has the responsibility of replacing the Lead Minister on a unanimous vote by the Elder Team and a 75% approval vote by the church body. This person will be presented to the Church by the Elder Team

### **Section 2: Moderator**

The moderator shall be elected by the Elder Team by a three-fourths majority vote and preside over the business sessions of the church. In the absence of the moderator, the Lead Minister or the Team Leader of the Elder Team shall act as moderator. The moderator's term of service is one year.

### **Section 3: Church Clerk**

The church clerk shall be elected by the Elder team by a three-fourths majority vote, keep a suitable record of all the church business meetings proceedings, and provide minutes of all the sessions. The Church Clerks' term of service is one year.

### **Section 4: Church Administration Team**

The church Administrator shall be responsible for receiving and disbursing all church funds. The Administrator shall designate a treasurer by a three-fourths majority vote of the Elder team. The term of service is one year. The Administrator shall oversee that the church has adequate financial records and provide a monthly financial report to the Elder Team.

### **Section 5: Election and Term of Office**

The election of Moderator and Church Clerk shall be in accordance with Article III Section 1-4. The moderator & church clerk shall not serve consecutive terms.

### **Section 6: Removal From Office**

The Moderator and Church Clerk may be removed from office, without cause, with a three-fourths vote of the Elder Team.

## **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH STAFF**

### **Section 1: Lead Minister**

The Lead Minister:

- Holds the Staff & Elder Team accountable for making decisions consistent with the vision of The River.
- Serves on the Elder Team, with all the privileges given to a member of equal proportion.
- Ministers to the Staff and Elder Team and their families.
- Leads by providing vision for the church through strategic planning processes.
- Leads the Staff and Elder Team in matters of personal purity, living out the vision of The River, and performing in their jobs in a manner consistent with their job description and worthy of their calling.
- Addresses the congregation for the purpose of living out his calling to preach and teach.
- Personally lives out the vision of The River by being in the lives of people, both with and without a REAL relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **Section 2: Directorial Staff**

The Directors:

- Holds their Staff accountable in making decisions consistent with the vision of The River.
- Shepherds their Staff and their families.
- Leads their Staff in matters of personal purity, for living out the vision of The River, and for performing in their jobs in a manner consistent with their job description and worthy of their calling.
- Personally lives out the vision of The River by being in the lives of people, both with and without a REAL relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Makes recommendations to the Lead Minister & the Elder Team concerning possible promotions and job reshaping, hiring, and firing through a personal review process.

Responsibilities of Lead Minister/Directors/Administrative Staff (see handbook and individual job descriptions).

### **Section 3: Support Staff**

Upon recommendation of the Lead Minister and the approval of the Elder Team, support staff positions may be created, modified, or deleted. The hiring and releasing of support staff shall be under the supervision of the Elder Team. However, they may designate the Lead Minister or a Director to carry out these functions.

## **ARTICLE V: Team Players**

### **Section 1: Teams**

Team Player Responsibilities:

- Help make decisions pertaining to their particular ministry.

- Members meet all requirements of deacons and deaconesses as laid out in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Romans 16:2) and meet The Rivers' requirements for being a Team Player. Team Players must possess the spiritual giftedness of the team they are on.
- Directly overseen by a staff member or a member of the team designated by the staff member.
- Carry out the mission of The River through the ministerial purpose of their team.

## **ARTICLE VI: PROPERTY AND ASSETS**

### **Section 1: Selling And Transferring Real Property**

The selling or transferring of any real property shall require a three-fourths majority vote of the active members eligible to vote. If the River no longer exists as a church seeking to fulfill the vision of helping thirsty people transform into an overflowing relationship with Jesus Christ, it is our desire that the Pikes Peak Baptist Association assume possession of all property, assets, and liabilities.

### **Section 2: Buying, Mortgaging, And Indebting**

The buying, mortgaging, or indebting of any property, real or paper, shall require a three-fourths majority vote of the active members eligible to vote.

### **Section 3: Disposal Of Personal Property**

Personal property \$5000.00 or less in value may be disposed of at the discretion of the Elder Team with a three-fourths majority vote. The disposal of personal property valued greater than \$5000.00 shall require a vote of the church by a three-fourths majority vote.

### **Section 4: Yearly Budget Adjustments**

The Elder Team will vote on a yearly budget that is approved by a three-fourths majority vote. The Elder Team may make budget adjustments up or down within a 10% variance by a three-fourths approval vote of the Elder Team.

## **ARTICLE VII: POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

The Elder Team shall adopt a policy and procedures manual to use in the operation of the church as an organization. Specific operational procedures and policies not included in this constitution and by-laws shall be contained in the manual.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution and by laws may be amended or revised by a three-fourths majority vote in a regular or special business meeting. The quorum for voting on any amendment or revision shall be 50% of those active members present. The proposed amendment must be presented to the Elder Team and then upon approval from the Elder Team by a three-fourths majority vote, then it may be brought before the church for discussion, at least one month prior to the vote. Notice of the proposed amendment shall be given in writing to the membership at least two weeks prior to the presentation of the amendment.