

Upper Room Church Great Falls



Bylaws | 2023 Edition

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Preamble

The following Bylaws shall be subject to, and governed by, the Non-Profit Corporation Act of Montana and the Articles of Incorporation of Upper Room Church. In the event of a direct conflict between the herein contained provisions of these Bylaws and the mandatory provisions of the Non-Profit Corporation Act of Montana, said Non-Profit Corporation Act shall be the prevailing controlling law. In the event of a direct conflict between the provisions of these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation of Upper Room church, it shall then be these Bylaws which shall be controlling.

ARTICLE I Name

The name of this church shall be The Upper Room Great Falls, of the state of Montana.

ARTICLE II Vision and Mission

Section 1: Vision

Upper Room Church seeks to emulate the model of the early church, which was established on four pillars: adhering to the teachings of the apostles, regular fellowship amongst believers, communion, and constant in prayer, both individually and in groups (Acts 2:42).

Section 2: Mission

Upper Room Church will implement the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, as per Matthew 28: 18-20, through both spiritual and practical means. These include, but are not limited to, reaching the lost, water baptisms, preaching the gospel, teaching biblical truths, casting out demons, and promoting both the operation and development of spiritual gifts.

ARTICLE III Four Pillars

Upper Room Church shall be built on four core practices that form the basis for daily operations.

1. **Apostolic Teaching.** Upper Room Church will preach the full Word of God and teach how to live it out.

2. **Fellowship.** Upper Room Church will focus on building a community, spiritually and physically, through activities and teachings that support fellowship.
3. **Communion.** Upper Room Church shall observe Holy Communion as outlined in 1 Corinthians 11: 23-30.
4. **Prayer and fasting.** Upper Room Church will meet frequently for prayer and fasting.

ARTICLE IV Statement of Faith

This church accepts the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rules of faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the following statements of faith:

1. The Scriptures Inspired

The Holy Bible is the only authoritative Word of God, serving as the ultimate source for all doctrinal truths. It was inspired, infallible, and inerrant when originally written (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 16:25-26).

2. One True God

There is only one God, who exists in three coequal and coeternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7; Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 3:7-11).

3. The Deity of Christ

- a) Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity and is God the Son. While on earth, Jesus was both fully man and fully God. He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, and died on the cross for mankind, providing atonement for our sins through His blood. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the

right hand of the Father, and will return again in power and glory (John 1:1,14, 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 2:5-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).

- b) Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, in the virgin Mary's womb. Therefore, He is the Son of God (Matthew 1:18, 25; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:27-35).

4. The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright but fell by voluntary transgression. Our only hope of redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21).

5. Regeneration

Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for anyone to know God (John 6:44, 65; Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5).

6. Salvation

Salvation is a gift from God, received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and through belief in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is not the result of any human effort or good works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16, 3:8; Titus 3:5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 9:22).

7. Repentance

Repentance involves turning away from sin in every aspect of one's life and committing to follow Christ. This enables a person to receive Christ's redemption and be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Through repentance, we receive forgiveness of sins and appropriate salvation (Acts 2:21, 3:19; 1 John 1:9).

8. Sanctification

Sanctification is a continuous process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit to develop Christ's character in us. Through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, Christians are empowered to live godly lives (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 5:23; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 6:14-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, Romans 8:29, 12:1-2, Hebrews 2:11).

9. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Upper Room Church believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to the regenerative work of the Spirit of God that takes place at salvation. When a believer is saved, the Spirit of God indwells them.

When a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit, they are filled to an overflow and empowered to be a witness. Upper Room Church believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is supported by Acts 1:8; John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8; Acts 8:12-17; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 11:14-16 and Acts 15:7-9.

10. The Five-Fold Ministry

Upper Room Church believes that when Jesus ascended, He gave us five office gifts to be used to train, unify, edify, strengthen, grow, and mature His Church. All these offices are still functioning today and include: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

11. Jesus' Blood

The Upper Room Church believes that the blood that Jesus shed on the cross was sinless and completely sufficient to cleanse us of all sin. It is, however, still an individual's responsibility to confess and receive the cleansing of sin brought about through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9).

12. The Return of Jesus Christ.

Upper Room Church believes that Jesus Christ will come back one day for His Church and will rule here on earth for 1,000 years. His return will be two-fold; first will be the rapture, then the 1,000-year reign. (Luke 21:25-28; John 14:1-3; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7).

13. Rapture

- a) The Upper Room Church holds the belief that the rapture, the event in which the church will be taken up, will occur after the tribulation but before the wrath of God is poured out. While there are different beliefs on the timing of the rapture, the Church derives its belief from scriptural references such as 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Mark 13:1-37; Matthew 24:21-29; and Revelation 7:14.
- b) Upper Room Church also acknowledges that tribulation, which is what the world does to Christians through persecution, is different from the wrath of God. Christians are promised persecution and tribulation (Mark 10:30; John 16:33) but are saved from the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 John 2:2).

14. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Directly following the rapture, Jesus will judge the saints based on their obedience. Each person's works will be on display and tested by fire, as described in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

15. Marriage Supper of the Lamb

During the rapture, while the world is experiencing the wrath of God, those who enter heaven will take part in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as described in

Revelation 19:6-9. This event is significant because it marks the point where Jesus finally tastes the wine He said He would not taste until believers joined Him in heaven (Matthew 26:29).

16. Millennial Reign

After the rapture, Jesus will return and reign on earth for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4). At this time, Satan will be bound and thrown into a pit. After the thousand years, Satan will be released, will gather those whose hearts were not fully loyal to Jesus Christ, and attack the city of Jerusalem where Jesus will be reigning. However, he will be defeated and thrown into the lake of fire, which is the final destination for all unbelievers and demons (Revelations 20:10, 15).

17. The Great White Throne Judgment of God

After the millennial reign takes place and Satan is finally cast into the lake of fire, God the Father will judge all unbelievers. Those who did not accept Jesus will be judged for their evil deeds and cast into the lake of fire for all of eternity (Revelation 20:11-15).

18. Hell

Hell is a temporary prison for those who hated God and never repented. After God judges the world, hell will be thrown into the lake of fire, along with death (Revelation 20:14).

19. The Lake of Fire

The lake of fire is a place of eternal damnation and suffering. It is known as the second death (Revelation 20:14). Contrary to some beliefs, it is not a place of annihilation.

20. Heaven

Heaven is the place where God's throne room resides. The Bible states that there are three heavens, including the sky, the realm of the angels, and the throne room of God. The apostle Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 that he was caught up to the third heaven, where he heard things that cannot be told.

Although believers who have passed away before the end of the world do not go directly to heaven, they go to be with Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). They are resting in the ground but are also in Christ in their spirit, just as Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham before Christ resurrected (Luke 16:19-31). According to Philippians 1:23, Paul believed that he would be united with Christ after his death.

21. New Heaven and New Earth

God will one day create a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). When God establishes this new heaven and new earth, there will be no more tears, no more pain, and no more death (Revelation 21:4). God will dwell with us, and we will be with Him (Revelation 21:3-4).

22. Sacraments

a) Water Baptism

According to the Word of God, a new believer who has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ must be baptized in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 10:47-48). Upper Room Church offers opportunities for water baptism throughout the year.

b) Communion

Communion is a unique time in the presence of God when the elements of bread and grape juice (representing the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) are taken in

remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-25). At Upper Room Church, communion is held every Sunday.

ARTICLE V

Governance

Upper Room Church will be governed first by the Word of God, then by a Lead Elder/Apostle and an appointed Council of Elders and Deacons in accordance with Scripture.

Section 1: The Lead Apostle/Elder

The Lead Apostle/Elder will oversee the administrative operations of the church and is the lead visionary. He or she will also fill the role of Corporate President and be authorized to execute documents on the corporation's behalf. The Lead Apostle/Elder will also preside over the meetings of the Councils.

Section 2: The Elders Council a) Purpose

The Council of Elders must reflect Ephesians 4:11-16, which encompasses:

1. Equipping the saints for the work of ministry
2. Building up the body of Christ to maturity and to avoid deception
3. Speaking the truth in love

b) Appointment

The appointment of elders will be done by the Council of Elders through prayer and fasting (Matthew 9:37-38). In the event of a shortage of elders, the church must not have any less than three elders in the Council of Elders.

c) Operations

- a. Actions taken by the Council of Elders must be done through open vote by elders in attendance and led by the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Elders Council will have one annual meeting (business meeting). Besides this meeting, there will be additional meetings for the purpose of team bonding and vision reinforcement.
- c. Any elder can call a meeting as long the other elders are given a sufficient time to respond. Each elder must attend church services on a regular basis unless extenuating circumstances prevent them from doing so.
- d. For quorums to commence, 60 percent of elders must be present.
- e. The Council of Elders will meet on a regular basis for prayer (1 Timothy 2:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- f. The elders will focus on developing and nurturing the spiritual aspects of the church.

Section 3: The Deacons Council

a) Purpose

The Deacons Council will serve alongside the Elders Council. They must reflect Acts 6: 1-6, which states that they are to be persons of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

b) Appointment

- a. The Elders Council will appoint deacons who are of good repute, full of faith, led by the Holy Spirit, and full of wisdom.
- b. The Deacons Council will focus on serving the church body and the community. To represent the community, the deacons must know its needs.

c) Operations

- a. The deacons will focus on developing and nurturing the physical aspects of the church.
- b. Deacons manage the finances, with one being the financial overseer in the deacon council. This deacon will not be making the decisions about finances, but they are to report on the use of finances by the church, bring and discuss requests for spending as it relates to serving the church, and recognizing and meeting its needs. All final decisions, as they relate to finances, will be made by the Elders Council.
- c. The Deacons Council will consist of no less than three members.
- d. The Lead Deacons will meet when the Elders Council meets (unless a special circumstance occurs) and share the needs of the church and community. Afterwards, they will be free to leave unless they have further reason to meet.
- e. When the Elders Council meets to pray, the Deacons Council will be present as well.
- f. Besides meeting with the Elders Council, deacons will meet on their own to strategize and review curriculum for discipleship purposes.
- g. Deacons must submit any new ministry idea to the Elders Council, who will prayerfully accept or reject the idea.

Section 4: Covering

As a non-denominational church, we are submitted to the leadership of the Healing Center Community Church in Pennsylvania and the counsel of Antioch Church in Great Falls. Upper Room Church will also seek such counsel when appointing a new Lead Apostle/Elder and when in need of wise counsel.

ARTICLE VI Appointment to Office

New elders will be appointed to the Elders Council by the majority decision of the currently presiding council after fasting and prayer (Matthew 9:37-38).

The Deacons Council will be appointed and removed by the Elders Council, only after fasting, praying, and coming to a majority vote.

ARTICLE VII Terms of Office

Section 1: Elders

Elders will be re-evaluated every three years and may be appointed at any time. Elders who are looking to step down must give six months' notice before stepping down. During these six months, as courtesy, we ask for them to search for candidates to take their place and bring these names to the team of elders, who will prayerfully consider the candidates.

Elders may be removed from the Council of Elders if they are continually not living according to the biblical mandate for an elder. A meeting must be set up with the council where grievances are brought in the open. A majority of the votes will help settle the dispute.

For the elder to be removed, there must be a majority consensus. The Word of God will be the deciding factor in all matters and will clearly portray whether the elder is in alignment with the Scriptures or not. If all elders need to be removed due to lack of submission to the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and our oversight, then the Healing Community Center Church shall be contacted and brought in to evaluate the situation and make the judgment on removing one or all the elders.

Section 2: Deacons

Each member of the Deacons Council will have a one-year term. During this term, a deacon may step down if he or she feels the Lord is leading him or her to do so. As a courtesy, deacons should at least give the team six months warning and begin the process of finding someone who can fill their place. At the end of the one-year term, the deacon will be re-evaluated by the Elders Council.

ARTICLE VIII

Qualifications for Elders & Deacons

Those who desire to be elders or deacons can only do so if they meet the standards laid out in Scripture.

We believe that women can hold places of leadership (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4-5; Psalm 68:11; 2 Chronicles 34; Romans 16:1, 5, 7:1; 1 Corinthians 1:11; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2; Acts 21: 8-9, 9:36).

Section 1. Elders

- a) Elders are to serve the church and act in advisory capacity with the Lead Apostle/Elder in all matters pertaining to the church in its spiritual life and in the ministry of its ordinances (Acts 20:28).
- b) Elders must be an example to the flock and refrain from domineering or leading for shameful gain (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- c) According to Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3: 3-7, elders must:
 - a. Have only one spouse
 - b. Be above reproach
 - c. Not be arrogant or quick-tempered
 - d. Be self-controlled, disciplined, and a lover of good things

- e. Hold firmly to the truths in the Word of God
- f. Be able to manage his or her own household well
- g. Not be greedy for gain or a lover of money
- h. Be able to both instruct and rebuke
- i. Have a good reputation

Section 2: Deacons

a) According to 1 Timothy 3: 8-13, deacons must:

- a. Not be greedy for dishonest gain
- b. Not be addicted to alcoholic substances
- c. Not be double-tongued
- d. Have only one spouse
- e. Manage their households well
- f. Be tested
- g. Hold firmly to the truths in the Word of God

ARTICLE IX Duties of Elders and Deacons

According to Acts 6:1-6, elders and deacons help lead the body of Christ so that the church may grow into maturity. While each of these roles works together, Upper Room Church distinguishes their function.

Section 1. The Elders Council and Deacons Council must not operate secretly

According to 2 Corinthians 4:2, we are not a secret society and we will not operate in secrecy. Every year, an open meeting will be conducted for the entire church. During this meeting, the church will go over the state of the church.

Section 2: Both the Elders and Deacons Council are expected to honor prophecy

In 1 Timothy 1:18-20, Paul urged Timothy to hold faith and a good conscience and wage warfare by the prophecies previously given to him. Prophetic words will be taken

into prayer by the Lead Apostle/Elder and the Elders Council, and if found to be in agreement with the direction the church is going and what God is wanting to do in Upper Room Church, the prophetic word will be honored and upheld.

Section 3: Handling offenses against elders

If there is an offense against an elder or deacon, it should be handled prior to the meeting in conjunction with Matthew 18: 15-17 and with these Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2. Offended persons are expected to first approach the offender before approaching the Lead Apostle/Elder or another elder or deacon.

If someone neglects following these steps, and brings a charge to the elders or deacons, the charge will be forfeited. If the offense is an accusation (the person feels or is speaking on the behalf of someone else and does not have ample evidence), then the accusation will be dealt with as 1 Timothy 5:19 deals with this specific situation. Paul writes, “Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses.”

If someone has been offended by the entire elders and deacons' leadership, and the offense can be proven to be against the Word of God, the offended party should bring their offense to the leadership prior to the state of the church meeting. If the leadership does not listen, they should bring two or three other witnesses with them. If the leadership does not listen, then the issue should be brought up in front of the entire church, and the Lead Apostle/Elder should be present. If the entire council refuses to repent, or anyone on the council refuses to repent, then the Healing Center Community Church has the right to replace any unrepentant individuals.

ARTICLE X Discipleship

Upper Room Church's model of church function is discipleship-based and does not follow a membership model.

- a) When lay persons coming into the church decide to pursue their relationship with Christ further, they may notify one of the elders that they seek to be discipled.
- b) The elder will take them through the discipleship process, which will include an interview where the Statements of Faith are reviewed. If the disciple agrees with these statements, they will continue the process.
- c) Once the discipleship process is completed, the disciple will be evaluated and will have the opportunity to become an elder or deacon.
- d) Once a person enters discipleship, regular attendance to church services is expected. If more than three months pass without attendance, the discipleship process must start over again.

ARTICLE XI Christian Marriage and Family

Section 1. Christian Marriage

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18, 21-15) and confirmed by Jesus Christ to be a permanent relationship between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). Because marriage is not only a commitment to a spouse, but also to God (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:9; Ephesians 5:31), a believer should marry only another believer (2 Corinthians 6:14). Christian marriage is a reflection of the love, purity, and permanence between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5: 22-23).

Even though some marriages may fall short of the biblical ideal, husbands and wives who devote themselves to God (Ephesians 5:21) and find nurture and instruction in the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:25) can realize the strength and blessing of God in their relationship.

Section 2. Children

Children are a “heritage from the Lord”: therefore, rearing them is to be treated as a sacred trust. God’s strength and wisdom are available on a daily basis in order to bring up children to love and obey God (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6: 4).

ARTICLE XII Doctrines and Practices Disapproved

In accord with its prerogatives, Upper Room Church has declared itself pertaining to disapproval of certain matters as follows:

Section 1: Unconditional Security

In view of the biblical teaching that the security of the believer depends on a living relationship with Christ (John 15: 6); in view of the Bible’s call to a life of holiness (1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14); in view of the clear teaching that a man may have his part taken out of the book of Life (Revelation 22:19); and in view of the fact that one who believes for a while can fall away (Luke 8:13); Upper Room Church disapproves of the unconditional security position which holds that it is impossible for a person once saved to be lost.

Section 2: Legalism

- a) **Matters of conscience.** Upper Room Church strongly affirms that the Scriptures teach a life of “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). However, sincere commitment to holy living sometimes results in sharp differences of opinion among believers on debatable matters of personal conscience upon others (Romans 14: 1-4).
- b) **Adding conditions to salvation.** Upper Room Church strongly affirms that salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ (Ephesians 2: 8-9). Therefore, Upper Room Church disapproves any teaching or practice that seems to add conditions to salvation (Galatians 3: 1-5).

Section 3: Membership in Secret Orders

Ours is a last-day message in preparation of the coming of the Lord (Matthew 24:14), leaving us no alternative but wholehearted devotion to the cause of spreading the gospel (Luke 9:62); and it is well-known that the various secret orders require much valuable time and interest, thus diverting the servant of the Lord out of the way (Ephesians 5:16).

The nature of such organizations demands secrecy (John 18:20; Acts 26:26) reinforced by religious oaths (Matthew 5:34) and strong attachment by binding obligations to persons who are for the most part unregenerated.

Confidence in these secret orders and their teachings has always led people to embrace a false hope of salvation through good works and improved moral service (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In consideration of the foregoing, all elders and deacons affiliated with Upper Room Church should refrain from identifying themselves with any of the secret orders that Upper Room Church recognizes as essentially of the world (worldly) and to sever their connections with them (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Section 4: Worldliness

In view of the alarming erosion of national moral standards, we reaffirm our intention of holding Bible standards against all forms of worldliness. We urge all believers to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...For all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

In its teaching regarding worldliness, the Scriptures warn against participation in activity that defiles the body, or corrupts the mind and spirit; the inordinate love of or preoccupation with pleasures, position, or possessions; which lead to their misuse;

manifestation of extreme behavior, unbecoming speech, or inappropriate appearance; any fascination or association which lessens one's affection for spiritual things (Luke 21: 34-35; Romans 8: 5-8, 12: 1-2; 2 Corinthians 6: 14-18; Ephesians 5: 11; James 4:4).

Section 5: Violations of Ministerial Courtesy

All discourteous conduct is disapproved, and all ministers are advised against interfering with the Lead Apostle/Elder, the Elders Council, and the Deacons Council, whether it be by going in upon their work without consent or by such correspondence with members of the assembly as will hurt the influence of these leaders. All correspondence which concerns the whole assembly shall be addressed to the one in charge and not to individual members. Any person who so offends shall be subject to discipline.

Section 6: Seeking Artificial Intelligence as a Counselor

Seeking biblical help and counsel from artificial intelligence sites such as ChatGPT is discouraged. The Bible instructs us to ask God for wisdom (James 1:5).

Section 7: Divine Healing and Professional Medicines

Upper Room Church disapproves of the Lead Apostle/Elder and of any member of the Elders Council or Deacons Council leading a believer to exclude medical advice and/or treatment when seeking prayer for physical healing. Upper Room Church ministers shall not represent medical advice and/or treatment as a lack of faith in God's healing power.

Section 8: Substance Usage

Upper Room Church disapproves of the use of substances, such as but not limited to alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs that are harmful to the body or mind, or that detract from a Christian's testimony, or that are a cause of stumbling to others, or that impair good judgment.

Section 9: Homosexuality and Sexual Identity a) Sexual Immorality

Upper Room Church believes that sexual acts outside of marriage are prohibited as sinful. These acts include but are not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, or same-sex acts (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18: 7-23; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5: 27-28; Romans 1: 26-27; Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5).

Upper Room Church does not condone any inappropriate sexual relationships with artificial intelligence, including asking for sexual advice, having sexual conversations, and general relationship advice. The Word of God is the believer's basis for guidance regarding all matters of life (2 Timothy 3:16).

b) Sexual Identity

Upper Room Church believes that God created humankind in His image; male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Upper Room Church discourages any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex-including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or nonbinary "genderqueer" acts of conduct (Genesis 1: 26-27; Romans 1: 26-32; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11).

c) Sexual Orientation

Upper Room Church affirms the sexual complementarity of a woman and a man and teaches that any and all same-sex attractions are to be resisted. Believers are expected to refrain from any and all same-sex acts of conduct (Matthew 19: 4-6; Mark 10: 5-9).

ARTICLE XII

Discipline

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible. The aim of discipline is that God would be honored, that the purity and welfare of the ministry be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration (Galatians 6:1).

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of the believer, while fully providing for the protection and welfare of Upper Room Church. Biblical discipline is redemptive in nature and is to be exercised under the dispensation of mercy.

Section 1: Causes of Disciplinary Action

Violations of Upper Room Church principles as stated in these bylaws may give a cause for disciplinary action. Among such causes for actions shall be:

- a) Moral failure involving sexual misconduct
- b) Moral failure involving pornography
- c) Any other moral or ethical failure
- d) A contentious, divisive, or non-cooperative spirit
- e) Any openly declared change in doctrinal views
- f) Immoral, unethical, or illegal practices related to personal, church, or ministry finances
- g) A marriage in violation of biblical marriage standards
- h) Violations of ministerial courtesy
- i) An improper attitude toward those who have left or been dismissed from Upper Room Church

Section 2: Investigation of Alleged Violations

Reports of complaints of alleged violations or confessions of violations will be investigated. The Lead Apostle/Elder and the Elders Council will conduct the investigation to determine their source and validity.

- a) In alignment with Matthew 18: 15-17, all persons are discouraged from bringing a complaint to the Lead Apostle/Elder or a council member without first speaking directly to the offender.
- b) If a conversation has taken place and a solution has not been reached, the offended party may contact the Lead Apostle/Elder and/or a member of the Elders Council and set up a meeting.
- c) A complaint form must be filled out and kept on file.
- d) Conditions for continuing ministry during the investigation may be subject to restriction during the time of investigation at the discretion of the Lead Apostle/Elder and a majority of the Elders Council.

Section 3: Restoration

Recognizing that the underlying principle involved in discipline is redemptive, and that man's conscience frequently brings him to confession, and that justice is often best served with mercy, an effort should be made to lead the offending minister through a program of restoration, administered in love and kindness. The following provisions for restoration shall apply:

a) Basis

Those found to have violated any of Upper Room Church's principles may request a program of restoration as an alternative to dismissal from the congregation.

Restoration is a privilege granted out of mercy and not a right to be expected or demanded. The primary purpose is to restore a person to God, spouse, and family, with the results leading to possible restoration to ministry. Granting such request shall be at the discretion of the Lead Apostle/Elder and the Elders Council.

b) Procedure and requirements

The following procedure shall be used for determining the specific requirements for restoration:

- a. If the offense is committed by a member of the Council of Elders, the Council of Deacons, or the Lead Apostle/Elder, he or she will be considered to be under suspension during the entire period of restoration.
- b. The program for restoration shall be no less than six months' time, during which time the believer is expected to read through The Bondage Breaker by Neil T. Anderson
- c. The minister must submit a report weekly to the Lead Apostle/Elder containing summaries from his or her reading.
- d. When the restoration program has been satisfactorily completed, the suspension shall be lifted and the leader/lay person shall be restored to good standing.

ARTICLE XIV Church Arbitration Agreement

Inasmuch as the scriptures require Christians to take their disputes to the saints and not to the civil courts (1 Corinthians 6: 1-8), if efforts to mediate and conciliate the disputes have failed, both parties, be they elders, deacons, disciples or lay persons, shall resolve a dispute by arbitration, who in this case would be the senior pastor of Healing Center Community Church.

Offenders are highly discouraged from taking legal matters to court without first attempting to resolve the issue using the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. However, there are certain instances when legal reporting is necessary, such as when a child is being molested or abused. In such a case, calling CPS is required.

If a person is unsure whether he or she should take a situation to court, he or she is encouraged to seek counsel from the Lead Apostle/Elder.

ARTICLE XV Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Lead Apostle/Pastor/Elder upon such notice as may seem fitting in the circumstances. Notice may be given by telephone and will state the purpose of the meeting. Special meetings may also be called by the concurrence of a majority of the Council of Elders or Deacons with the same requirements of notice. A church attendee who serves regularly may also send a letter to the Council to request a special meeting to deal with an offense or share an idea for the church.

ARTICLE XVI Order of Business

The regular order of business for the annual special meeting of the church shall be as follows:

1. Prayer
2. Devotional
3. Review of previous minutes
4. Report of the treasurer
5. Unfinished business
6. New business
7. Adjournment

Article XVII Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended by unanimous consensus of the entire Elders Council, or by a majority of individuals being disciplined. A special meeting would be called to change the bylaws at an open quorum after praying and fasting.

For this change to occur, church attendees who serve regularly must prove that the bylaws are unscriptural and the elders must still approve of the change. Both the changes being made by the Elders Council and the disciples must be approved by the Lead Apostle/Elder and Healing Center Community Church.

I, _____, certify the above bylaws as adopted on _____ by the board of directors of RichPluss, and that they have not been amended or modified since the date above.