

**Church Covenant,  
Constitution and By-Laws**

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**Risen Church of  
Lincolnton Inc.**

## **Legal Preface**

**On March 26, 2002, “Risen Church of Lincolnton Inc.” was filed and granted status as a new nonprofit corporation with the state of North Carolina. The purpose of filing was to recognize the recent creation of a not-for-profit religious assembly, that would feature membership and a dissolution clause of transferring any assets to another nonprofit organization. Originally named “Hope Baptist Church of Lincolnton Inc.,” our organization underwent a name change that has been effective since the filing date of March 29, 2016.**

**We remain a nonprofit Baptist church, and continue to uphold our duty as an entity separated from the state, but seeking to cooperate with it, and its citizens.**

**What follows is our church constitution and by-laws, whereas our beliefs and structure are spelled out in detail. Along with the Bible, this document supports, secures, and enables us to properly function as a nonprofit organization.**

# **Article I**

## **The Church Covenant**

Risen Church exists because of God's grace, for God's glory, to advance God's Kingdom. We believe that the Church was started by Jesus Christ to create a platform for God and people to connect. The Bible tells us that our God is relational. His Triune nature speaks of this, as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one, and live in harmony. The Church is the means by which God seeks to establish relationship with people. Therefore, we as a church are all about relationships.

Our primary goal is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ, we are lost in sin, prone to a life filled with regrets, and destined for an eternity of judgment. We desire to see people make public professions of their decision to follow Jesus, be baptized into our community, and become apart of the body of Christ. Each person is to be more than just a member, as we are called to participate and partner with one another for the Gospel. The relationships we form with one another are essential for our Church to reach its potential, and for us to remain accountable in our daily lives.

Worship and ministry are the cornerstone features that we offer our community and those who are apart of our Church. We come together to sing, give, and learn so that we may take this same Spirit with us, and as we go, glorify God and make disciples.

# **Article II**

## **Declaration of Faith**

### **Pertaining to the Scriptures:**

We believe the Holy Bible was written by divinely inspired individuals, and is the record of God's complete revelation to humanity. This revelation is life giving, eternal, and, in its original inspiration, without error. It reveals the standards by which humanity is to live, and the principles by which we will be judged; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world. The Scriptures are **the** foundational authority of the Church, preserving the work of the Prophets and Apostles, centered on the work of Christ (Ephesians 2:20).

### **Pertaining to God:**

We believe that there is one, living God, whose name is YHWH, the maker and supreme ruler of Heaven and earth. We believe the LORD God to be infinite in every aspect of His being; He is all knowing, all powerful, and ever present. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. We believe that in the unity of the godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct cooperative offices in the great work of redemption.

### **Pertaining to Jesus Christ:**

We believe Jesus to be the eternal Word of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life all the way to the cross, where He died to pay the sin debt of all mankind. At the cross, Jesus made provision for the redemption of people from sin. We believe Jesus rose from the grave with a glorified body, and ascended to heaven at the right hand of the Father, where He now intercedes on our behalf. We do believe that at the appropriate time that Jesus will return in all power and glory to judge the world, and establish His Kingdom.

### **Pertaining to the Holy Spirit:**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is inspiration behind the Scriptures, as God breathed into the hearts of the Prophets and Apostles. The Holy Spirit exalts Jesus Christ, brings about conviction of sin, fosters Christian character, comforts, and enlightens the believer so as to carry out the will of God. He seals the believer unto the day of redemption, and assures the believer of their eternal standing before God.

### **Pertaining to Humanity:**

We believe humans to have been created by God. In the beginning humanity was innocent of sin, but by way of free choice, humanity gave into Satan's temptation, and sinned against God which brought sin into the human race. By nature, humans cannot keep the law of God. Humanity left to itself is depraved, condemned to eternal ruin, and without defense or excuse.

### **Pertaining to Salvation:**

We believe that salvation of sinners is offered freely to all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation entails immediate justification, progressive sanctification, and eventual glorification, which is accomplished by grace through faith in the finished work of God through Christ Jesus His Son.

### **Pertaining to the Church:**

We believe the New Testament Church is a local body of baptized believers, who by faith, have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and are referred to as the body of Christ within the Scriptures. This body observes the two ordinances of Christ, Baptism and Communion, and is committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in them by His Word, in efforts to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth, which is in fulfillment of the Great Commission. The Church is an autonomous body, operation under a congregational polity which makes all members equally responsible in the decision making process. The only Scriptural officers of the Church are Elders/Pastors and Deacons.

### **Pertaining to Baptism and Communion:**

We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior; the believer's death to sin; the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to a newness of life in Christ.

Communion is a ceremony whereby the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. We believe that the Holy Spirit nourishes us, when by faith, we take these elements and reverently consider the work of Christ.

### **Pertaining to the Christian Sabbath:**

We believe that our rest is found in a person, not a day. Jesus Christ is our Sabbath, and we come together on the Lord's Day to worship Him. We encourage our people to rest on Sunday, not because we have to by Law, but because we can by Grace. We devote Sundays to God, so that He can teach us to depend on Him more. He that gives salvation is able to give unto us all that we need.

### **Pertaining to Civil Government:**

We believe civil government is ordained of God, and it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience to the law of the land, unless the laws of civil government are in direct disobedience to the Word of God. The Church should not resort to or depend upon civil power to carry on the work of the Church. The Church's dependence is to be wholly upon God for the pursuit of its ends. (Romans 13)

### **Pertaining to Eschatology:**

We believe in the promise of Jesus Christ, that He would return to the earth. We believe the earth, as we know today is approaching an end. The day is coming for the lost to be separated from the saved.

### **Pertaining to Marriage:**

We believe that marriage is the first institution ordained by God. In Genesis 2, He created a wife for Adam, by taking a rib from his side, making for him an **equal** partner. Ephesians 5 tells us that marriage is a picture of Christ and His Church, showing that mutual submission based on love is required to have a Biblical marriage. Marriage is a bond between one man and one woman, who become one flesh in the eyes of God. According to the Scriptures and God's sovereign act, marriage can only be a union between a biological man and a biological woman.

# Article III

## Membership

### **Admission to Membership:**

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior may join into our fellowship. A member must have publicly declared their faith through baptism, either in this church or one prior.

### **Church Discipline:**

Any member who is guilty of conduct unbecoming a Christian and/or detrimental to the overall mission of the Church will be scripturally counseled by the Elders and/or Deacons, and if they continue in this conduct, a larger accountability group will be formed to encourage repentance. Upon failure to oblige, said member may be asked to withdraw from fellowship. A 2/3 majority vote of Elders and Deacons serves as sufficient reason to dismiss a member from fellowship. (see Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5)

### **Restoration into Fellowship:**

Any member who has been excluded from the fellowship of this church may be restored if regret is expressed to residing counsel and/or appropriate restitution has been made to offended party. (2 Corinthians 2:1-11; **Matthew 5:23**)

### **Voting of Members:**

On any matter coming before the Church, each active member present will be entitled to one vote, which shall be exercised in person, and not by proxy.

### **Pertaining to Active Membership and roles thereof:**

Members **must** be faithful in attendance and stewardship to maintain an active membership. Active membership is required to serve in a position and to participate in business meetings. Active members **must** attend at least 2/3 of the services each month, excluding excruciating circumstances. Active members **must** also be faithful in tithing/percentage giving, as God requires us to be stewards of what He has given us, and requires that we invest in His Kingdom and His local Church. Jesus taught that, "Where our treasure is, there [our] heart will be also." If we truly value the Church, we **will** invest in it.

## Article IV

# General Church Officers

### Elders/Pastor(s):

Biblically the title Pastor is synonymous with the term Elder or Bishop. Acts 20 and the Pastoral Epistles clearly teach of *multiple* elders leading the local congregations established by the Apostles. We will have one **Lead Elder**, who will maintain the role of a Pastor, as our **Spiritual leader** and **Scriptural teacher**. He will be surrounded and supported by a team of Elders who meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3, and will make executive decisions (concerning doctrine and Spiritual direction) that serve the best interest of the entire church. This board will compliment our deacon board, who will continue to manage business matters, as well as serve the people diligently. Elders are encouraged by our church, tradition, and the Bible to communicate with transparency and conviction to our Deacons and Congregation regarding any initiative or decision that they feel is important for our church to consider. Additional elders are to be appointed by our Pastor and approved by Congregation, and will serve the Church in various leadership and teaching roles.

### **Election:**

If the role of Lead Elder/Pastor is vacated, remaining elders and deacons will assume the role of pastor search committee, and will seek a candidate to nominate for this position. Elders must receive 2/3 majority congregational vote to be officially called to serve.

### **Qualifications:**

For a man to serve as an elder for Risen Church, he must meet and maintain the requirements given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Also, see 1 Timothy 5:17-25.

### **Duties for Pastor/Lead Elder:**

- A) Preach the Gospel, and lead others to do the same.
- B) Care for members of the Church.
- C) Provide Spiritual leadership.
- D) Cooperate with deacons.
- E) Serve as ex-officio member of all committees.
- G) Moderate business meetings.
- E) **Appoint** people to fill vital roles and positions, in collaboration with elders and deacons.

**All elders are called by God, and this church, to do two primary things: Teach and Lead.**



## **Deacons:**

### **Election:**

Deacon-Candidates are to be appointed by the Pastor, with consent of elders and present deacons.

### **Qualifications:**

See Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13

### **Duties:**

The word deacon is from the Greek word diakonos, which means servant. As a servant of Christ, a deacon serves in whatever areas of need a church assigns. The deacons are to assist elders in whatever capacity that is needed to minister to the needs of the congregation. Whereas an Elders primary roles are to teach and lead, a deacon's primary role is to serve. Deacons are Scripturally charged to maintain any matters within the Church that could distract an Elder from doing his primary ministerial goals. Any congregational issue that **can** be met by the Deacons, should be met by the Deacons. A member of the Church who has issue with another member, a decision that's been made, or otherwise, should first approach a Deacon, who will then see fit that the Elder(s) is informed.

Likewise, in dealing with outside vendors or contractors, concerning sales, lending, and maintenance services for the Church, the Deacons should represent and negotiate for the Church, **not** the Elders.

### **Number:**

The number of deacons serving our church at any time will be relative to size of Church and the digression of our Pastor.

**The Elders and Deacons are entrusted with authority and responsibility to lead the Church in a biblical and upstanding way. Transparency is important, and decisions made in private must be disclosed to the congregation. Decisions that impact the church in significant ways, such as financially or structurally, will be put before the congregation for an approving vote. A 2/3 majority is required for an initiative to be passed.**

## **Trustees:**

Trustees are legal representatives for the Church when in the process of borrowing money, buying properties, building facilities, etc. They serve as financial advisors to the Elders and Deacons.

If in the need of a new trustee, the Elder(s) will appoint someone of good repute.

## **The Church Clerk:**

The Church Clerk has the responsibility for keeping accurate records of all church business transactions approved in church business meetings. These records/minutes may be copied and distributed and/or read in regular business meetings when deemed necessary by the church. The Church Clerk is to be nominated by the Elders and Deacons, and evaluated yearly, and subject for change if deemed needful. **Above all, transparency matters.**

## **The Church Treasurer:**

The Church Treasurer is responsible for proper receipt, accounting, and disbursement of church funds within proper policies established by the church for adequate financial management. Financial reports will be copied and distributed and/or read in regular meetings with Elders and Deacons, and if necessary, to the church. The Church Treasurer is to be nominated by the Elders and Deacons, and evaluated yearly, and subject to change if deemed needful. **Above all, transparency matters.**

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# **Article V** **Church Committees**

## **The Finance/Stewardship Committee:**

This committee is to developing a yearly budget to the Church, as well as guide the church in all areas of financing. This committee will include the Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Church Treasurer, and one to two other individuals agreed upon by the aforementioned representatives.

## **The Activity, Outreach, Ministry Committee(s):**

This committee is to organize, plan, and oversee all church events. The elders and deacons will see fit that those on this committee well represent the congregation.

**Other committees can be formed by Pastor and Deacons, permanently or temporarily, as seem needful.**