



# TRUE LIFE

## CHURCH

# **TRUE LIFE CHURCH of MELBOURNE, INC.**

**Constitution and Bylaws**

**Adopted May 2015**

**Amended April 2023**

# Constitution

WHEREAS, it is the express purpose of God our Heavenly Father to call out of the world a saved people who shall become the Body of Christ, built and established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone.

WHEREAS, the members of the Body of Christ are enjoined to assemble themselves together for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God and the work of the ministry, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we recognize ourselves as a body of Christian believers working together for the common purpose of spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that under the laws of the State of Florida we may exercise all the rights and privileges granted to religious bodies.

# Bylaws

## Article I: Name

The name of this corporation shall be True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., and may hereafter be referred to as the “church”, “True Life Church”, “True Life” or “TLC.”

## Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be:

1. To establish and oversee places of worship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Titus 1:5; Ps. 107:3; Acts 2:42, 46, 47; Heb. 10:25).
2. To create departments as may be necessary in order to establish places of worship, to spread the Gospel by all necessary means, and to support other religious activity as deemed necessary by the Trustees/Elders to further these purposes (Matt 28: 19, 20).
3. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, possess, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the fulfillment of its work.

## Article III: Mission

The mission of True Life Church is to guide people to take the next steps in their relationship with Jesus Christ. We shall be focused on glorifying God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:26-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

## Article IV: Statement of Faith

True Life Church affirms the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, inerrant and sufficient, and the only basis for our beliefs. We hold to the ancient faith as introduced in the Hebrew Scriptures, revealed in Jesus, and proclaimed by His first followers in what is known as the New Testament. These essential beliefs include:

### God - Three in One (Trinity)

There is only one true God who exists as one entity in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - all actively operating in complete unity to bring salvation to people and restoration to the world. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29, Isaiah 43:10)

### The Father

The Bible faithfully presents God the Father as Living, Personal, Relational, Good, Just and Loving. Jesus revealed Him as Father and completely worthy of our trust. (Genesis 1:1, 3:22, Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Corinthians 13:14)

### The Son

Jesus, being in nature God, gave up his divine privileges and took on the humble position of a servant to be born a human. He lived a sinless life, died in our sinful place, but rose again in three days to conquer sin and death. (Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-5, John 14:10-30, Hebrews 4:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 1:3-4, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Timothy 6:14-15, Titus 2:13)

### The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's presence within mankind and convicts all people of sin. For believers the Spirit renews the soul, empowers Christ-like living, imparts spiritual gifts and guides into all Truth. (Acts 1:8, John 16:7-13, 14:16-17, Galatians 5:25, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16, Ephesians 1:13, 5:18)

### The Bible

The Bible is God's Word to all people. Through letters and narratives inspired by His Spirit it communicates inherent truth and teachings that reveal who God is, the way of salvation, and how He wants us to live today. (2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Peter 1:23-25, Hebrews 4:12)

## Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We have a choice to either live forever with God through forgiveness and salvation which is found in Jesus Christ, or to be eternally separated from God by sin (hell). God honors each person's choice for forgiveness or separation. (John 3:16, 14-17, Romans 6:23, 8:17-18, Revelations 20:15, 1 Corinthians 2:7-9)

## Sin

People were created in the image of God to have a relationship with Him. Sin disrupts that relationship but God loves each of us so much that he provides a way for our redemption through His Son Jesus. (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8:3-6, Isaiah 53:6, 59:1-2, Romans 3:23)

## Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore scripturally called to defend, protect and value all human life. We believe God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman and Himself. True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, we believe and prescribe that all pastors and staff shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman.

## Salvation

Salvation has nothing to do with how good or bad we are. It is a gift from God and cannot be earned through our own efforts. Individual salvation is accessed when people place their faith in the life, death and resurrection of Christ as sufficient payment for their sin. (Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:2, 14:6, Titus 3:5, Galatians 3:26, Romans 5:1, 10:9-10)

## The Church

The church is not a building. It is a universal body of believers as well as a local community of people unified through faith in Christ, commitment to His teachings and dedication to His mission of expressing God's love and salvation to the world. (Acts 2:42-47)

## Communion

In participating in Communion we are remembering Christ and all that He has done for us in his life, death and resurrection. The elements are symbols, representing Christ's body and blood, in remembrance of his enduring sacrifice. (Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:25)

## Baptism

Baptism is symbolic of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Once we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, baptism through immersion is a way for us to publicly declare our new life in Christ. It is also a step of obedience based on God's commands and allows us to follow the example of Jesus, who submitted himself to baptism to "fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:18-20, Acts 2:41, 8:12)

## Practice

As True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., we believe that any form of racism, greed, selfishness and the vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, lesbianism, gay, transgender, bestiality, incest lifestyles or practices, cohabitation, pornography, drunkenness, and drug use for non-medicinal purposes are in direct conflict with the Word of God, the tenets of our faith, and are sinful and offensive to God.

We recognize that all people are sinners and that Christ came to save all sinners. Therefore, all are welcome to take their next steps in their relationship with Jesus Christ here at True Life Church.

The above Statements of Faith does not exhaust the extent of the church's beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of True Life Church of Melbourne Incorporated's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the Pastoral Staff and Elders are the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

# Article V: Government and Accountability

## Section I: Government

True Life Church shall be an Elder-led and congregational-voting church. Voting privileges and purposes are discussed in Article VI. The Lead Pastor shall also function as the head Elder.

## Section II: Elders/Trustees

### a. Powers and Function

There shall be one governing entity, referred to as Elders and/or Trustees. This group shall be in charge of all matters of finance, property, staffing and direction. The Elders/Trustees shall be forthcoming of all church assets, including but not limited to budget and financial reporting, all church property and vendors, property and equipment, staff and leadership development and the hiring/firing of all employees.

The Elders/Trustees shall function as corporate officers with the ability to file annual corporate reports or amendments with the State of Florida. They will be signers of the bank accounts of True Life Church and administrate any fiscal, investment, and any and all real estate documents.

The Elders/Trustees shall consist of the Lead Pastor and other men called by God to shepherd the church family and oversee the spiritual, administrative and financial responsibilities and concerns of True Life Church. The Elders shall be responsible for staffing the church with the exception of the hiring or installment of a Lead Pastor (which requires a congregational church vote).

### b. Qualifications

Elders shall be men who demonstrate a personal faith in Jesus Christ and exhibit a commitment to True Life Church and its Beliefs and Mission. The Elders shall be members of True Life Church (as or when a membership class and criteria exist). There shall be a minimum of three (3) Elders with no set maximum. Elders may be nominated by any church member in good standing. The nomination will be voted on at the next membership meeting and, if approved by 2/3 majority, will go before the Elders for consideration and/or approval. (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)



### c. Termination and Length of Term

Any Elder (exempting the Head Elder/Lead Pastor) shall serve up to a 3-year commitment after their induction. At the end of this term, the Elder must not serve as an Elder for one (1) calendar year. After that year is complete, the individual will be eligible for reconsideration as an Elder according to Article V, Section 2B. At any time before the end of the third year, the Elder may choose to step down for personal or spiritual reasons, and will be removed after a majority vote in favor of this action by the Elders.

An Elder may be removed from leadership by the Lead Pastor and/or Elders for any of the following reasons:

- physically incapacitated
- spiritually or morally unqualified
- failure to fulfill his responsibilities or meet the qualifications for the office
- doctrinally unqualified: fails to agree with the doctrinal statement of the church

If his removal is because of sin and he refuses to repent, he is to be dealt with as outlined under Article VI, Section III: Termination of Membership. Any accusation against an Elder should not be received “except on the basis of two or three witnesses” (1 Timothy 5:19).

### Section III: Accountability Board

There shall exist an Accountability Board whose only purpose is to evaluate, reprimand or remove the Lead Pastor if accusations or evidence appears of sexual immorality, infidelity, financial misuse, theft/fraud, consistent lying, or leadership not adhering to the Statement of Faith, Purposes or Core Values of True Life Church. In order to make this Board active, there must be a unanimous vote to do so by the Elders/Trustees. The Elders/Trustees alone may not remove the Lead Pastor. The Accountability Board does not have any authority over True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., and has no right to meet on its own. The Accountability Board can not have any members related, or in a relationship with the Lead Pastor;

likewise the members of the Accountability Board may not be related, or in a relationship with each other. The Lead Pastor is also not allowed to be a member of this board. This board will be made up of all True Life Church Elders/Trustees (regardless of number) and a minimum of two (2) Pastors from local churches, approved by the Elders/Trustees. These Pastors shall function to provide ministerial advice and a spiritual perspective to the Board. All members will receive an equal vote. A vote of 2/3 majority will be required for any decision.

## Article VI: Membership

### Section I: Qualifications and Responsibilities of Membership

A membership in this church shall be available to all people of spiritual maturity who are no less than 16 years of age. It shall consist of all persons who have met the following qualifications for membership:

- A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- Baptism as a testimony of salvation.
- Completion of the church's membership class.
- A written commitment to abide by the membership covenant.
- Tithe their time and finances to the mission & vision of True Life Church under God's direction

The member agrees to adhere to the responsibilities of membership as described in the membership covenant.

True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., shall not knowingly admit into membership any person or persons, who by their own admission or reputable testimony of others, practice any lifestyle that advocates or advances beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's statement of faith and moral teachings stated in these bylaws and there approved policy statements recorded as official documents. This church holds any lifestyles or beliefs inconsistent with the Word of God, the tenets of our faith and the teaching of this body of believers to be offensive to God and grounds for the denial of membership. Members of this church who fall victim to a lifestyle or belief changes inconsistent with the teachings and beliefs of this church - the knowledge of such changes becoming known to the church by their own

admission and/or the reputable testimony of others - shall be dismissed and/or restored in accordance with Sections III and IV of this Article.

## Section II: Voting Rights of Membership

Every active member abiding by the membership covenant shall have the right to vote on the following matters:

- The annual budget of the church
- The nomination of the Trustees/Elders
- the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the church
- the merger or dissolution of the church
- the hiring or installment of a new Lead Pastor
- the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness, as well as the execution of a new lease term on a rented facility used for the church's primary gathering place
- amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws of True Life Church
- any church purchases above %5 of the yearly budget (not including yearly leases/rentals/contracts). However, any unbudgeted purchase between \$1000 and 5% of the yearly budget shall be approved by the elders.

Each member (spiritually mature and no less than 16 years of age) is entitled to one vote.

Voting by proxy is prohibited.

### Section III: Termination of Membership

Members may be removed from the church roll, according to Matthew 18:15-17, for any of the following reasons at the consideration and discretion of the Elders on a non-discriminating and consistent basis:

- a. death
- b. transfer of membership to another church
- c. by personal request of the member
- d. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the membership covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of True Life Church in the community.
- e. lack of attendance for a period of 12 months
- f. lack of regular financial support for a period of 6 months

### Section IV: Restoration of Membership

Members dismissed by the Elders shall be restored by the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lives are in accordance with the membership covenant.

## Article VII: Membership Meetings

### Section I: Place

Meetings of the members shall be held at the principal office of the church (provided one exists) or at such other place(s) within or outside the state of Florida as may be designated by the Elders.

### Section II: General Meetings

General meetings of the members shall be held no less than once a year at such time as determined by the Lead Pastor and/or Elders. The purpose of these meetings is to update the church on reports/circumstances, adopt an annual

budget, nominate Elders/Trustees, hire or install a Lead Pastor and conduct any other proper business.

### Section III: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Lead Pastor and/or Elders for any purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with Section IV of this Article.

### Section IV: Notice Requirements for Membership Meetings

#### General Requirements

Whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a Special Meeting, notice shall be given to members no less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting. Notification of membership meetings may be given in any of the following manners:

- a. distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a worship service
- b. announcement of the meeting in a church newsletter, email or social media tool or other electronic medium
- c. oral announcement to the congregation at a worship service
- d. delivery by US mail to each member identified as active on the membership roll

#### Notice of Certain Agenda Items

Approval by the members of any of the following proposals, other than by unanimous approval by those members entitled to vote is valid only if the notice or waiver of notice specifies the general nature of the proposal:

- a. amending the Articles of Incorporation or Constitution
- b. adopting, amending or repealing the Bylaws
- c. disposing of all or substantially all of the church's assets
- d. adopting or amending a merger agreement
- e. approving the election to dissolve the church

- f. approving the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness

### Section V: Quorum

Those members present and voting at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

## Article VIII: Records and Reports

The church shall maintain the following records and reports:

- a. adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records)
- b. financial reports of the church at regular times throughout the year
- c. written minutes of the proceedings of its meetings
- d. a record of the membership of the church, complete with contact information
- e. contribution statements for financial givers to True Life Church

## Article IX: Amendments to the Bylaws

These Bylaws or any provision of them may be altered, amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any special or regular membership meeting.

## Article X: Leadership

### Section I: Pastors

Pastors are to be called and elected by the church (according to Article VI, Section II). The call of a Pastor shall be for an unlimited period, if or until such an event occurs to activate the Accountability Board (according to Article V, Section III). At the time of his installation, the Pastor enters an agreement to uphold the beliefs

and practices set forth in these bylaws and membership requirements. This agreement shall not include restrictions preventing the Pastor to conduct, perform or participate in ceremonies inside or outside the church involving weddings between a biological man and a biological woman; however, it shall include restrictions to prevent the Pastor from participating in or performing wedding ceremonies involving a non-biological man and/or a non-biological woman, or ceremonies where both partners are biological men, or ceremonies where both partners are biological women. Violation of this agreement shall result in a recommendation for removal and the Accountability Board will immediately be activated.

## Section II: Employment

It shall be a standing policy of this church to not employ or place in a leadership position any person or persons, in any capacity, who by their own admission and/or the reputable testimony of others practice a lifestyle or embrace or advocate beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's statement of faith, moral teachings stated in these bylaws or other policy statements recorded as official documents of this church. All employees shall read and affirm in writing they agree with the statement of faith contained in these bylaws (Article IV). Violations of the statement of faith will constitute good cause for termination.

## Article XI: Church Facilities

### Section I: Use Policy

The church's facilities were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. They are to be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although our facilities are not generally open to the public, they may be used, when available, to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and a demonstration of the hope of Christ in practice.

### Section II: Use Restrictions

- a. Church facilities will not be used by persons or groups holding, advancing or advocating beliefs, lifestyles or practices that conflict with the church's statement of faith or moral teachings, which are stated in these bylaws and/ or other approved policy statements recorded as official documents of this

church body. Any activities that contradict or are inconsistent with the church's faith or moral teachings are prohibited. The Lead Pastor and/or Elders will review and determine the validity of each request. The Lead Pastor and/or Elders shall have the final approval of each request.

- b. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property or within any facilities. All church-owned or leased facilities are also "smoke free" zones.
- c. Other organizations or groups may be approved for short term or extended use of church facilities. By agreeing to use church facilities, the organization or group must not have beliefs, lifestyles or practices that disagree with this church's statement of beliefs. Organizations or groups, who by their own admission or confirmed by competent knowledge change their principle beliefs or alter their stance on faith or moral standards in violation of these bylaws will be terminated from further use of church facilities.
- d. All property and equipment, whether donated or purchased, stored within the premises of church-owned or leased facilities is the legal property of True Life Church of Melbourne, Inc., and shall not be removed, loaned or disposed of for any reason without proper authority.
- e. No church property shall be used to facilitate or host any illegal activity.