

# ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION PASSAGEWAY CHURCH, BLAIR, NE

## PREAMBLE

Following the New Testament model of believers meeting together as a local church, this flock of believers hereby organizes together having faith that Jesus Christ guides the church as its head. We seek to allow the Holy Spirit to fit us together so that we may mature in the unity of our faith, the knowledge of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the expression of God's love for one another, the community and our world. We establish the following constitution, and voluntarily submit ourselves to its principles that we may seek to serve and glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this local church, registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is River of Life Church d/b/a PassageWay Church. This flock of believers voted on Sunday, October 16, 2016, to rename the church as PassageWay Church.

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our community and world in every way commanded by the Holy Scriptures and by engaging in such religious, missional, educational, charitable and benevolent activities as the Constitution and Bylaws of this organization allow.

## ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

### *God*

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

### *The Bible*

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

### *The Human Condition*

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

### *Jesus Christ*

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

### *The Work of Christ*

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

### *The Holy Spirit*

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

### *The Church*

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace, through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

### *Christian Living*

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

### *Gender, Human Life, Marriage and Sexuality*

9. We believe that all human life is sacred because all human beings bear God's image. People are genetically and immutably conceived as male or female, and from the moment of conception are worthy of being defended, protected and valued.

We believe that marriage, as created by God and commanded by Jesus, is the union of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union for life. Christian marriage is uniquely intended to portray the loving and submissive relationship between Jesus and His bride, the Church. Sexual intimacy should only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. All sexual immorality is sinful and displeasing to God.

### *Christ's Return*

10. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

### *Response and Eternal Destiny*

11. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

## **ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT**

Being autonomous, this church shall remain its own highest authority under God and shall govern its affairs through its business meetings. This church shall have a congregational form of government served by Elders as further defined in the Articles of Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

The church will receive as members those who have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being born again, and who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of the church. This local church is the final human interpreter of this church's beliefs and practices. Members commit themselves to the mission, purposes, and programs of the church. The membership application process is defined in the church Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS**

- A. The corporate officers of this church shall consist of the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The corporate officers shall sign all legal documents pertaining to the corporation. This responsibility shall not extend beyond that established by the church Bylaws.
- B. Other officers may be elected to the governing board of this corporation as set forth in the church Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII – BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The fiscal year for this church shall be October 1st through September 30th. The annual business meeting of this church shall be held during September at a time and place determined by the church Bylaws. At the annual business meeting, the election of officers, approval of the annual budget, and transaction of such business as concerns the work of the church shall take place. Additional regular and special business meetings may be held during the year as allowed and defined by the Bylaws of the church.

## **ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH PROPERTY**

- A. This church shall have the power to acquire, own, maintain and sell real and personal property in its own name as may be required to carry out the stated purpose in Article II of the Constitution.

- B. All church property, real and personal, shall be held, and the debts of the corporation shall be contracted, by the officers of the corporation in the name of the corporation as authorized by the Bylaws of the church. Private property, real and personal, of the church members and corporate officers shall not be subject to payment of the corporate debts.
- C. The church can be dissolved by a vote of the membership, providing three (3) months notice is given to the members before the vote is taken. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, no member shall personally be entitled to any property of the church. Upon the dissolution of the corporation and after paying or making full provision for the payment of all of the debts and liabilities of the corporation, the net assets of the corporation shall be distributed as determined by the corporate officers and remaining members to a nonprofit religious organization or organizations as defined under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and which is in agreement with Article III, Statement of Faith, of this Constitution.

#### **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

- A. The church may make any changes in the Constitution which may seem necessary, except those listed in section B of this Article, through the following process. Such changes must be submitted to the membership in writing at least two weeks prior to a regularly scheduled business meeting. A simple majority vote at this meeting will decide if the proposed amendment shall be presented for a final vote at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Such changes may only be adopted as presented by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present.
- B. ARTICLE II – PURPOSE, ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH, and ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS, Section B may only be amended in the following manner. Such changes must be submitted to the membership in writing at least four weeks prior to a regularly scheduled business meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of the membership at this meeting will decide if the proposed amendment shall be presented for a final vote of the membership at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Such changes may only be adopted as presented by a three-fourths majority vote of the entire membership of the church at the time the vote is taken.

#### **ARTICLE X – BYLAWS**

- A. The church Bylaws will be maintained as a working document for the purpose of clarifying policy and procedures. The church Bylaws may be modified and revised when necessary as the church grows and expands its ministry.
- B. The church Bylaws may be revised at any regularly scheduled business meeting by a simple majority vote of the membership present providing the proposed revisions have been presented to the membership in written form at least two weeks prior to the vote.

**Document History and Version Control (sorted newest to oldest)**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Reason for Change (High-Level Summary)</b>	<b>Date Approved by Congregation</b>
1.0	Initial Version	02/05/2017
2.0	Moved article on Gender, Human Life, Marriage and Sexuality into Article III - Statement of Faith	05/07/2017