

1                   **THE AMENDED AND RESTATED CONSTITUTION OF RIDGEWOOD CHURCH**

2  
3                   P.O. Box 874  
4                   Greer, SC 29652

5  
6                   **Preamble**

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8                   The purpose of this Constitution is to assist the church in the task of biblically organizing and  
9                   conducting its ministries, which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be  
10                  readily acknowledged, however, that this document, despite its usefulness and precision, will avail  
11                  nothing apart from the grace of God, Jesus’ work of building His church, and the Spirit’s presence  
12                  in the lives of believers. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great  
13                  God that this Constitution is set forth.

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15                  Ridgewood Church (RC) organizes itself and adopts this Constitution as its articles of governance,  
16                  to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as is revealed  
17                  in the Holy Bible and articulated in the RC Statement of Faith and the RC Church Covenant.

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19                  **Article I**

20                  ***Name***

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22                  The name of this body is Ridgewood Church. The mailing address for the church is P.O. Box 874  
23                  Greer, SC 29652.

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25                  **Article II**

26                  ***Why We Exist***

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28                  Ridgewood Church exists to be a people of the *Great Commission* (Matt. 28:18-20) and the *Great*  
29                  *Commandment* (Matt. 22:34-40)—a people who live to make Jesus known from Greer to the ends  
30                  of the earth (Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:20-21; Col. 1:15-23; Heb. 1:1-4; Rev. 1:12-18).

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32                  **Article III**

33                  ***Statement of Faith***

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35                  The purpose of our Statement of Faith (Appendix 1) is to encourage healthy adherence to the whole  
36                  counsel of the Word of God. We believe that unity in the church is best promoted not by an attempt  
37                  to find a lowest common denominator for doctrinal faithfulness but rather by evaluating, assessing,  
38                  and embracing clear doctrinal positions based on the Word of God. Stated differently, rather than  
39                  arriving at a minimalistic faith that discovers how little one can believe and still be considered a  
40                  Christian, the aim of this church is to develop, teach, and lead people towards a robust faith that  
41                  stabilizes Christians against the prevailing winds of the culture. Such doctrinal fidelity serves to  
42                  strengthen the church in her mission and assists in preserving the unity of the body while  
43                  maintaining a posture of love (Acts 20:27; Eph. 4:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:1; 6:3-5; Tit. 1:1). In  
44                  addition to the doctrinal positions articulated in the Statement of Faith (Appendix 1), this church  
45                  also affirms the “The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000” and is a cooperating member of the  
46                  Southern Baptist Convention.

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1 **Article IV**  
2 ***Affiliation***  
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4 The government of this church is vested completely in the members who compose it (see Article  
5 V). As such, RC is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but recognizes and  
6 embraces the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation that are common among Southern  
7 Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, RC will cooperate with and support local Baptist  
8 associations, the South Carolina Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Pillar  
9 Network, and other like-minded church-planting networks.

10  
11 **Article V**  
12 ***Membership***  
13

14 At the heart of church membership is a desire to preserve and protect the purity of the Bride of  
15 Christ. RC desires to uphold the principles of commitment to Christ and to His church that  
16 Scripture teaches must accompany true membership in the Body of Christ.

17  
18 SECTION 1. *Qualifications for Membership*  
19

20 To qualify for membership at RC, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who shows evidence  
21 of regeneration, who has been baptized as a believer by immersion in obedience to Christ, and who  
22 wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must also  
23 affirm and uphold the Statement of Faith (Appendix 1) and keep the commitments expressed in the  
24 Church Covenant (Appendix 2). The elders shall be responsible for evaluating each person's  
25 qualifications for membership and shall make a recommendation to the congregation on whether or  
26 not to admit a candidate into membership at RC. Nevertheless, while the elders are tasked with  
27 evaluating the qualifications of all potential members, the congregation is ultimately responsible for  
28 determining whether an individual should be welcomed into membership.  
29

30 SECTION 2. *Procedure for Entrance into Membership*  
31

- 32 A. Participate in a Membership Class – Periodically, membership classes shall be offered  
33 to provide teaching on:  
34 1. RC's Mission, Values, and Statement of Faith.  
35 2. The scriptural principles of commitment to the body of Christ.  
36 3. RC's principles of governance and ministry.  
37 B. Agree to and sign the Church Covenant – A signed Church Covenant shall be used as  
38 an instrument to affirm one's desire for membership and to serve as a formal record of  
39 one's commitment to the body at RC. See Appendix 2 of this Constitution for a copy  
40 of the Church Covenant.  
41 C. Complete an Elder Interview – Following completion of a membership class and  
42 indication of a desire to partner with RC by signing the Church Covenant, member  
43 candidates shall be interviewed by one of the elders of RC to assess their personal  
44 testimonies, to determine the integrity of their faith, and to discuss their desire to be  
45 committed to RC.  
46 D. Elder Recommendation – If the elders determine that a member candidate meets the  
47 qualifications for membership and has completed the required steps outlined above, the  
48 elders shall recommend that the congregation vote to welcome the candidate into  
49 membership at RC. This recommendation will normally be made at least ten days prior  
50 to the members' meeting where the congregation will vote on whether or not to  
51 welcome the candidate into membership.

- 1 E. Congregational Vote – Because the government of this church is vested completely in  
2 the body of local believers who compose it (what is often called an elder-led but  
3 congregationally-ruled form of church governance—see Article VII), it is ultimately  
4 the responsibility of the congregation to determine whether or not a candidate should  
5 be welcomed into membership. Accordingly, all member candidates will be voted on  
6 by the congregation, normally at one of the regular members’ meetings.  
7 F. Public Affirmation of New Members Before the Congregation – If the congregation  
8 votes to accept a member candidate into membership at RC, the new member shall be  
9 presented before the church for public affirmation and prayer (normally at a Sunday  
10 morning gathering).

11  
12 SECTION 3. *Responsibilities of Members*  
13

14 In accordance with the commitments set forth in the Church Covenant, each member shall be  
15 privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church,  
16 consistent with God’s leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received  
17 from God. Members shall have the following responsibilities:

- 18 A. Upholding the RC Statement of Faith (Appendix 1) and fulfilling the commitments set  
19 forth in the Church Covenant (Appendix 2).  
20 B. Attending regular members’ meetings.  
21 C. Serving in the ministries of the church.<sup>1</sup>  
22 D. Voting<sup>2</sup> on the following items:  
23 1. Accepting candidates into membership  
24 2. Removing members from RC  
25 3. The election of all elders  
26 4. The election of all deacons  
27 5. The annual church budget  
28 6. The acquisition of real property  
29 7. The merger or dissolution of the church  
30 8. Amendments and/or revisions to the Constitution, Church Covenant, Statement  
31 of Faith, or any other appendices to the Constitution  
32 9. Personal property purchases in excess of \$10,000 that are not included in the  
33 church budget  
34 10. Any additional matters on which the elders deem it necessary for the  
35 congregation to vote  
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<sup>1</sup> Only those who are members of RC shall be entitled to lead in the ministries of the church. At the discretion of the elders, non-members may serve the church in limited capacities.

<sup>2</sup> Each member is entitled to only one vote, and members must be physically present in order to vote. On any matter that is brought to a vote, a two-thirds majority of the members present is needed for it to pass (unless this Constitution specifies otherwise). Voting by proxy is prohibited.

1 SECTION 4. *Termination of Membership*

2  
3 Members shall be removed from membership at RC following a congregational vote. Individuals  
4 shall be released from membership either in good standing or under church discipline.

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6 A. Members shall be removed as members in good standing under the following  
7 circumstances:

- 8  
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- 10 1. Transfer of membership to another church.
  - 11 2. By personal request of the member, except when that member is in the process of  
12 church discipline. If it appears to the elders that a member has requested removal to  
13 avoid church discipline, the request may not be honored until the disciplinary process  
14 has been properly concluded (See the Church Restoration Policy (Appendix 3) for more  
15 information).
  - 16 3. Death (no vote is required in the event of a member's death; the membership will  
17 simply recognize the Lord's work in calling the member home).

18 B. Members may also be removed through church discipline under the following  
19 circumstances:<sup>3</sup>

- 20  
21
- 22 1. The member's life and conduct are not in accordance with the Church Covenant or the  
23 RC Statement of Faith.
  - 24 2. The member has otherwise wandered from Christ and is living in unrepentant sin.
  - 25 3. The member's conduct has caused division within the body at RC or has hindered the  
26 ministry influence of the church in the community.
  - 27 4. The member has been absent from body life (e.g., Sunday gatherings) for a period in  
28 excess of six months.
- 29

30 SECTION 5. *Church Discipline and Restoration*

31  
32 Church Discipline consists of two major types: formative discipline and corrective discipline.  
33 Formative discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries of the  
34 church. Indeed, whenever the Word of God is read, taught, or otherwise proclaimed, believers are  
35 called to obedience and repentance. However, when this formative discipline fails to result in lives  
36 that reflect the teachings of Scripture, corrective discipline may become necessary. Corrective  
37 discipline is for the good of the church as well as for the member who has sinned. The goal of  
38 corrective discipline is always restorative; in other words, the goal is always repentance or salvation  
39 for the one being disciplined.

40  
41 Any member consistently neglectful of his or her commitments to Christ and His church or who is  
42 guilty of conduct by which the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and who persists  
43 in such neglect or overt sin, shall be subject to corrective discipline. Corrective discipline can  
44 include admonition by the elders and/or the congregation, suspension from communion, removal  
45 from positions of leadership, and removal from church membership by vote of the congregation.  
46 Corrective discipline shall be conducted according to the instructions and examples set forth in  
47 Scripture and the procedures outlined in the Church Restoration Policy (Appendix 3).

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<sup>3</sup> See the RC Church Restoration Policy (Appendix 3) for the process of church discipline.

1 SECTION 6. *Restoration of Dismissed Members*

2  
3 Members dismissed by the church shall be restored by the elders and the church according to the  
4 spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 and the Church Restoration Policy when their confession and lifestyles  
5 are judged to be in accordance with the Church Covenant and the RC Statement of Faith. If a  
6 member is formally removed from membership by congregational vote, the individual must  
7 complete all the procedures outlined in Article 5, Section 2, in order to be brought back into  
8 membership at RC.  
9

10 SECTION 7. *Membership Status*

11  
12 Individuals who formally commit to membership with RC in the manner outlined in this  
13 Constitution and living in faithfulness to the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith shall be  
14 considered members in good standing.  
15

16 **ARTICLE VI**  
17 ***Meetings***  
18

19 SECTION 1. *Sunday Gatherings*

20  
21 Regular corporate gatherings shall be held once a week on Sundays.  
22

23 SECTION 2. *Members' Meetings*

24  
25 Members' meetings shall be held in the times, in the manner, and with the purposes set forth below:

- 26 A. In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and  
27 loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus  
28 Christ.  
29 B. An annual members' meeting of the church shall be held prior to the start of the fiscal  
30 year (fiscal year for RC begins January 1<sup>st</sup> and ends December 31<sup>st</sup>; see Article VIII,  
31 Section 1) to adopt an annual budget for the following year and to conduct any other  
32 business deemed appropriate by the elders.  
33 C. Regular members' meetings will typically be held on a bi-monthly basis but may be  
34 held more or less frequently should the elders deem it necessary.  
35 D. Special members' meetings may be called at any time by the elders or at the written  
36 request of at least 20 percent of current members. In the event of such written request  
37 from members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of  
38 receipt of the request.  
39 E. Notification of members' meetings shall be provided by one or more of the following  
40 methods:  
41 1. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at Sunday  
42 worship gatherings.  
43 2. Verbal announcement to the congregation at Sunday worship gatherings.  
44 3. First-class letter to members.  
45 4. Electronic communication (e.g., email, social media, etc.).  
46 F. Members shall ordinarily be notified no less than two weeks prior to a members'  
47 meeting; however, in the event of a time-sensitive or urgent need, the elders may call a  
48 members' meeting with less than two-weeks notice.  
49 G. A quorum shall consist of the members present but must include at least 35% of the  
50 current membership of RC. No vote may take place if such quorum is not met.  
51 H. On any matter that is brought to a vote, a two-thirds majority of the members present is  
52 needed for it to pass (unless this Constitution specifies otherwise).

- 1 I. A leader appointed by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of  
2 the church (an elder may also fill this role).  
3

4 **Article VII**  
5 ***Church Government***  
6

7 Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of RC. Underneath the headship of Christ, Scripture indicates  
8 that there are two offices for the church: elders (pastors) and deacons. The responsibility for  
9 shepherding and leading the church under Jesus Christ belongs to the elders, and the responsibility  
10 for service to the church and its members belongs to the deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Phil. 1:1).  
11

12 The ultimate authority of the church is vested in the membership of the congregation and is  
13 expressed by a congregational vote on the most significant matters related to the life and health of  
14 the church. The elders are charged with shepherding the congregation in accordance with the RC  
15 Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant. Consequently, RC could most accurately be defined  
16 as a church that is elder-led and congregationally ruled.  
17

18 The congregational governance of the church shall be carried out in substantial prayer, both  
19 individually and corporately. It shall also express the spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving  
20 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
21

22 **Elders (Pastors)**  
23

24 SECTION 1. *Elder Qualifications*  
25

26 The words elder, pastor, overseer, and bishop are used interchangeably in Scripture (Acts 20:17, 28;  
27 Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:1; Phil. 1:1). RC most commonly refers to those holding this  
28 position as an elder or pastor. An elder shall meet the qualifications and standards of the Word of  
29 God prescribed for his office and must endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity  
30 to the standards found in Scripture and articulated in the Statement of Faith and the Church  
31 Covenant (John 21:16; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 13:17; and 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Only men may serve  
32 as elders (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2).  
33

34 SECTION 2. *Elder Responsibilities*  
35

- 36 A. He will be responsible to manage or administrate the local church before Almighty God  
37 (1 Tim. 3:4-5).  
38 B. He will be responsible to be a guardian of the truth and to care for the welfare of the  
39 members of the local church in every area (1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:7).  
40 C. He is to exercise leadership and authority in the local church as a member of the team  
41 of elders in a way that promotes the engagement of the church in the mission of God in  
42 the world (Eph. 4:11-16).  
43 D. He will be required to hold fast to Scripture in order to instruct in sound doctrine and  
44 apply it to the lives of the members (Acts 20; 2 Tim. 2:14-19; Tit. 1:9).  
45 E. He will be required to reprove, rebuke, and exhort according to the principles of  
46 Scripture (Tit. 1:9, 13; 2 Tim. 3:16).  
47 F. He will be required to feed the flock by ministering the Word of God, whether publicly  
48 or privately, and by overseeing the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism in  
49 the church (1 Tim. 3:2, 1 Pet. 5:2-3; Acts 20:28).  
50 G. He will be an example to the membership of the church as he lives out the  
51 commitments set forth in the Church Covenant (1 Pet. 5:3).

- 1 H. He will shepherd the members of the local church through prayer, teaching, and  
2 counseling (Acts 20:28).  
3 I. He will adhere to and uphold the RC Statement of Faith and will always teach in a  
4 manner that is consistent with the doctrinal commitments set forth in the Statement of  
5 Faith.  
6

7 SECTION 3: *Types of Elders*  
8

9 RC will have elders who serve vocationally as elders through the work of the church as well as  
10 those who serve as elders while serving vocationally in other fields. Elders receiving compensation  
11 from the church will be known as “staff elders,” and those elders not receiving compensation from  
12 the church shall be called “lay elders.” Biblically and functionally there is no difference between  
13 these types of elders; moreover, both lay and staff elders have equal authority over the church.  
14

15 SECTION 4. *Elder Leadership Team*  
16

- 17 A. The elders shall normally be comprised of no less than two men who satisfy the  
18 qualifications of elders.  
19 B. Only men may serve as elders (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2).  
20 C. No elder may hold the office of deacon during his tenure as elder.  
21 D. Two-thirds of the elders must agree before submitting matters to a congregational vote.  
22 E. The elders may establish paid and non-paid ministry positions and teams to assist them  
23 in fulfilling their responsibilities.  
24 F. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and  
25 evaluation of staff members. The exercise of this responsibility may, on a case-by-case  
26 basis, be delegated to deacons or other staff members.  
27 G. Should a member desire to add an item to the agenda of an Elders’ Meeting, he or she  
28 shall make that request in writing at least one week in advance.  
29

30 SECTION 5. *The Election of Elders*  
31

- 32 A. The current elders shall provide the congregation with biblical teaching concerning the  
33 tasks and qualifications of elders.  
34 B. The congregation shall submit names to the elders of those who they believe meet the  
35 biblical qualifications for such an office.  
36 C. The nominees shall perform extensive self-evaluation based upon the scriptural  
37 teaching concerning elders.  
38 D. The elders shall interview those nominees who remain in the process following the  
39 self-evaluation.  
40 E. The nominees shall complete a doctrinal evaluation and interview with the current  
41 elders.  
42 F. The elders shall recommend to the congregation the nominees that they feel best fulfill  
43 the biblical requirements for elders.  
44 G. The congregation shall then evaluate the recommended nominees. Any concerns shall  
45 be taken up first with the nominee in question and then with the current elders.  
46 H. Following the congregational evaluation, a vote shall be held at a duly called  
47 members’ meeting. Nominees must receive a three-quarter vote in order to be elected.  
48 I. Upon congregational approval, the nominee(s) will be commissioned to the office of  
49 elder through prayer and the laying on of hands.  
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1 SECTION 6. *Tenure of Elders*  
2

3 The process for the dismissal of an elder shall be as follows:

- 4 A. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. Any member  
5 with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed due to disqualifying sin or  
6 failure to live and teach in accordance with the RC Statement of Faith should express  
7 such concern to the remaining elders and, if need be (and only afterwards), to the  
8 congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instruction of Matt.  
9 18:15-17 and 1 Tim. 5:17-21.
- 10 B. If concern about an elder's faith, conduct, and/or teaching persists after the concerns  
11 are presented to the remaining elders, the remaining elders shall relay these concerns to  
12 the body at a duly called members' meeting.
- 13 C. After all the evidence has been presented to the congregation, a congregational vote  
14 shall be taken at a duly called members' meeting. The dismissal of an elder requires a  
15 three-fourth's majority vote in order for the elder to be dismissed.  
16

17 **Deacons**  
18

19 SECTION 7. *Deacon Qualifications*  
20

21 The office of deacon is described in the Scriptures in 1 Tim. 3:8-13. Deacons function as the  
22 needs-meeting organism within the body. The church shall recognize those who are giving of  
23 themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of ministry, and who are called to further  
24 service and care for the church's members. Men and women can be elected to serve in a formal,  
25 ordained office of the church known as deacon and deaconess (hereafter referred to simply as  
26 deacon). Deacons shall meet the qualifications and standards of the Word of God prescribed for  
27 their office, and they must endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity to the  
28 standards found in Scripture and articulated in the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant.  
29

30 SECTION 8. *Deacon Responsibilities*  
31

- 32 A. Organize meals and arrange for other needs of new families, the sick, bereaved,  
33 hospitalized, and otherwise disadvantaged members of RC.
- 34 B. Process and evaluate benevolence requests with an aim always towards making  
35 disciples of those outside the church who request assistance. The benevolence process  
36 is approached first and foremost as an opportunity to make disciples.  
37

38 SECTION 9. *Deacon Service*  
39

- 40 A. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the church and the call and  
41 qualification of church members (there is no minimum or maximum number of  
42 deacons).
- 43 B. Servant teams may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of  
44 the church.
- 45 C. Deacons are directly overseen by the elders.  
46

47 SECTION 10. *Deacon Selection*  
48

49 The deacon selection process shall be as follows:

- 50 A. The elders shall make known to the church the need for deacons and ask for applicants  
51 and recommendations.



- 1 B. The congregation (including the elders) shall recommend candidates for the office of  
2 deacon.
- 3 C. The nominees shall perform extensive self-evaluation based upon the scriptural  
4 teaching concerning deacons.
- 5 D. The elders shall interview those nominees who remain in the process following self-  
6 evaluation.
- 7 E. The elders shall select the nominees they feel best fulfill the biblical requirements of  
8 deacons and who are best equipped to care for the needs of the church.
- 9 F. The elders will present these men and/or women to the congregation and will instruct  
10 the congregation to prayerfully assess whether the nominees are biblically qualified for  
11 the office of deacon.
- 12 G. Following this congregational evaluation, a vote shall be held at a duly called  
13 members' meeting. Nominees must receive a three-fourths majority vote in order to be  
14 elected.
- 15 H. Upon congregational approval, these men and/or women will be commissioned to the  
16 office of deacon through prayer and the laying on of hands.

17  
18 SECTION 11. *Deacon Tenure*

- 19
- 20 A. Deacons do not have term limits but may serve for as long as they are needed (or until  
21 they resign or are removed).
- 22 B. Should the elders or the congregation find reason to believe that a deacon no longer  
23 meets the biblical qualifications for the office of deacon, he or she may be removed  
24 from office by a three-fourths majority vote at a duly called members' meeting.
- 25 C. Should a deacon be dismissed because of unrepentant sin, the process of church  
26 discipline would be pursued in keeping with the process outlined in this Constitution  
27 (see Article V, Section 5).
- 28 D. Any members with reasons to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express  
29 such concern first to the elders and, if need be, and only afterward, to the congregation.  
30 Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instruction of Matt. 18:15-17 and  
31 other relevant biblical texts.

32  
33 **Staff**

34  
35 SECTION 12. *Staff Purpose*

36  
37 God calls certain individuals to serve in important roles within the church, some of which may be  
38 paid staff positions. Staff members are servant leaders who are essential to the health and well-  
39 being of the body; however, their roles are distinct from the offices of elder and deacon.

40  
41 SECTION 13. *Staff Positions*

42  
43 The elders may establish paid and/or volunteer ministry positions and teams to assist them in  
44 fulfilling their responsibilities. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff positions  
45 shall reside in the hands of the elders or of those to whom the elders have delegated hiring authority  
46 for these positions.

47  
48 SECTION 14. *Staff Qualifications*

49  
50 All staff shall meet the biblical qualification for deacons (See Article VII, Section 7 above).

51  
52

1 SECTION 15. *Staff Supervision*

2  
3 The elders shall have ultimate responsibility for the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and dismissal of  
4 all staff positions, though these responsibilities may be delegated by the elders to other qualified  
5 persons. Action to hire or dismiss a staff member shall require a three-fourths vote of the elders.  
6

7 **Additional Roles**

8  
9 SECTION 16. *Treasurer*

10  
11 The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder or a paid church staff member, shall ensure that all  
12 funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks or financial institutions as  
13 designated by the church. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts  
14 and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church and that adequate controls are  
15 implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any  
16 officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders an account of the  
17 financial condition of the church whenever they may require it. The treasurer shall also be  
18 responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the  
19 church at regular members' meetings. The treasurer shall be appointed by the elders and  
20 recognized by the church; moreover, the treasurer must have been a member in good standing for at  
21 least one year before being eligible to serve in this role.  
22

23 SECTION 17. *Financial Team*

24  
25 The financial team shall serve the church as the official representatives of the church in terms of  
26 business contracts and other legal matters. The financial team, under the direction of the elders and  
27 upon congregational approval, may borrow money and incur indebtedness on behalf of the church  
28 and cause to be executed and redelivered for the church's purposes and in the church's name  
29 promissory notes and other evidence of debt and securities. Finally, the financial team will work  
30 with the elders on the development of the annual church budget and will recommend, in  
31 conjunction with the lay elders, adjustments to the compensation of staff elders. The financial team  
32 shall be appointed by the elders and recognized by the church; moreover, members of the financial  
33 team must have been members in good standing for at least one year before being eligible to serve  
34 in this role.  
35

36 **Article VIII**  
37 ***Fiscal Responsibilities***

38  
39 SECTION 1: *Fiscal Year*

40  
41 The fiscal year shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> and end December 31<sup>st</sup>.  
42

43 SECTION 2: *Budget Management*

44  
45 The budget is to be managed by the elders and various staff persons according to their area of  
46 responsibility. While the budget is voted on and approved by the congregation (see Article V,  
47 Section 3) and should serve as the normative guide for the financial operation of the church, the  
48 elders may reallocate resources in the event of extenuating circumstances. Any reallocation by the  
49 elders that exceeds \$10,000 must be submitted to the congregation for a vote.  
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1 **Article IX**  
2 ***Amendments***

3  
4 This Constitution, the Statement of Faith, the Church Covenant, and any other appendices may be  
5 amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation at a duly called members' meeting.  
6

7 The Constitution should be reviewed at least annually by the elder team. Any amendments,  
8 modifications, or proposed changes must be approved by a three-fourths majority of the elders  
9 before being submitted to the body for a congregational vote.

10  
11 **Article X**  
12 ***Dissolution***

13  
14 If RC should ever cease to be a body of believers and be dissolved, all of its assets remaining (after  
15 payment of all outstanding debts, obligations, costs, and expenses of such dissolution) shall first be  
16 distributed to Christ Fellowship Cherrydale, located in Greenville, South Carolina. If any assets  
17 remain after this distribution, they shall then be distributed to the South Carolina Baptist  
18 Convention. No assets of the church shall be distributed to any member, officer, or staff member of  
19 this church.  
20

21 **Article XI**  
22 ***Indemnification***

23 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an  
24 officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church may provide indemnification against liability  
25 and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in  
26 good faith, (b) with the care an ordinary prudent person in a similar position would exercise under  
27 similar circumstances, (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of  
28 the church, and (d) with no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The  
29 church shall purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities. At the discretion of  
30 the elders, the church may also indemnify any person who acted in good faith and who reasonably  
31 believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful. If a quorum  
32 (three-fourths of the elder team) of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination  
33 because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made  
34 by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

1 **Appendix 1**

2 **RIDGEWOOD CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH**

3  
4 **1. THE SCRIPTURES**

5 The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; as a result, all  
6 Scripture is authoritative, infallible, and inerrant, and as such is wholly true in everything it affirms.  
7 The Scriptures are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice (Ps. 19:7;  
8 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

9  
10 **2. THE TRINITY**

11 The Scriptures reveal that the one God eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the  
12 Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or  
13 being (Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

14  
15 **3. GOD THE FATHER**

16 There is but one God, the Maker, Preserver, and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself all  
17 perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence,  
18 and obedience that springs from faith (Deut. 6:4; Ps. 145:3; John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17).

19  
20 **4. JESUS CHRIST THE SON**

21 Jesus, the Messiah (i.e., the Christ), is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father, fully God  
22 and yet also fully human. Jesus lived a sinless human life and gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice  
23 for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate  
24 His power and His authority over sin, death, and the devil. He ascended to His Father, at whose  
25 right hand He is seated, and He lives forever to make intercession for His people. He will return  
26 again visibly and bodily. He is the only Mediator, the True Prophet, the Great High Priest, the  
27 Bridegroom of the Church, and the Sovereign King of the universe (Isa. 53:10-12; John 1:1, 14;  
28 Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 3:21-26, 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:1-3).

29  
30 **5. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

31 God the Holy Spirit, co-equal with the Father and the Son, applies the work of Christ to believers  
32 and distributes spiritual gifts to every believer according to His sovereign good pleasure, for the  
33 purpose of building up the body of Christ and bringing glory to the Father and the Son. He is the  
34 Comforter, the Spirit of Adoption, the Seal of our Salvation, and the Guarantor of our inheritance in  
35 Christ (John 14:16-17, 16:14; Acts 5:3; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:13-14).

36  
37 **6. PROVIDENCE**

38 From eternity, God decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and He perpetually upholds,  
39 directs, and governs all creatures and all events. Even so, His sovereign governance does not in any  
40 way make Him to be the author or approver of sin, nor does His sovereignty destroy the free agency  
41 and responsibility of human beings (Prov. 16:33; Isa. 46:9-11; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Jas. 1:13-15).

42  
43 **7. MAN**

44 Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. God created them male and female as  
45 the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was free from sin. The sacredness of  
46 humanity is evident in that God created man in His own image; therefore, every person of every  
47 ethnicity possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love, including pre-born  
48 babies, the aged, the physically or mentally disabled, and every other stage or condition from  
49 conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human  
50 life (Gen. 1:26-30; Ps. 139).

1 **8. GENDER, SEXUALITY, & MARRIAGE**

2 The gift of gender as male and female is part of the goodness of God’s created order, is the  
3 fundamental and universal biological distinction of the human race, and is not determined by one’s  
4 self-perception. As embodied souls, gender is a part of the essence of human nature. As a result, it  
5 is therefore not possible to sever the connection between one’s gender and one’s biological sex at  
6 birth.

7

8 Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman in an exclusive, lifelong, public covenant.

9 Sexual intimacy is a good gift from God to be enjoyed only within the confines of marriage. Any  
10 form of sexual intimacy outside the marriage covenant constitutes immorality. Sexual immorality  
11 includes (but is not limited to) lust, pornography, adultery, polygamy, fornication, homosexuality,  
12 same-sex marriage, bestiality, incest, cohabitation, and disagreement with and attempts to change  
13 one’s biological gender (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 15:18-20; Mark 7:21-22; Rom. 1:21-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10;  
14 6:18; 7:2-5; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; Heb. 13:4; Jude 7).

15

16 **9. SIN**

17 Through the temptation of Satan, Adam transgressed the command of God and fell from his  
18 original holiness and righteousness. As a result, his posterity—the entire human race—inherits a  
19 nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law. Consequently, all human beings are under  
20 condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become actual transgressors  
21 (Gen. 1:26-27, 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3).

22

23 **10. ELECTION**

24 Election is the gracious purpose of God by which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies  
25 sinners; moreover, election is the glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness that is infinitely  
26 wise, holy, and unchangeable. Even so, election is not inconsistent with the free agency of human  
27 beings but serves to exclude boasting and to promote humility (Gen. 12:1-3; Matt. 24:22, 31; Luke  
28 1:68-79; John 6:44-45, 65; Acts 20:32; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Eph. 1:4-23; Col. 1:12-14).

29

30 **11. REGENERATION**

31 Regeneration is a change of heart, brought about by the Holy Spirit, who gives life to those dead in  
32 trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and bringing them to a saving  
33 understanding of the Word of God. Moreover, regeneration is a work of God’s free and special  
34 grace alone whereby He renews sinners’ whole nature so that they love and practice holiness (Eph.  
2:1-6; Tit. 3:5; 1 John 5:1).

35

36 **12. REPENTANCE**

37 Repentance is a gift of God whereby the Holy Spirit convicts people of the manifold evil of their  
38 sin, resulting in godly sorrow that leads to turning from their wicked ways to pursue a life of  
holiness (Acts 2:37-38, 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:10-11).

39

40 **13. FAITH**

41 Saving faith is the belief, on God’s authority, of whatever is revealed in His Word concerning  
42 Christ, accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the  
43 heart by the Holy Spirit, is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness  
(Rom. 3:27-28, 4:1-5, 17-25, 10:14, 17; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29; Jas. 2:14-26).

44

45 **14. JUSTIFICATION**

46 Justification is God’s gracious and full acquittal of sinners who believe in Christ, through the  
47 propitiation that Christ has made, not because of anything done by them but because of the  
48 obedience and righteousness of Christ that is imputed to them by faith (Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:21-  
49 26, 8:34, 10:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

1 **15. SANCTIFICATION**

2 Those who have been regenerated and justified are also sanctified by God's Word and the Spirit  
3 dwelling in them. Sanctification is the process by which all believers are gradually conformed more  
4 and more to the image of Christ through the power and work of the Holy Spirit, who enables them  
5 to pursue a life of joyful obedience to all of Christ's commands (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:25-27;  
6 Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:13-24; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

7

8 **16. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**

9 All those whom God has regenerated will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace  
10 but will most certainly persevere to the end. Though they may fall into sin through neglect and  
11 temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the  
12 church, and invoke temporal judgments on themselves, they nevertheless shall be renewed again  
13 unto repentance and will ultimately be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (John  
14 6:37-40, 10:28-29; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 1 John 2:19).

15 **17. THE CHURCH**

16 The Lord Jesus is the head of the church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is  
17 invested supremely all power for its governance. According to His commandment, Christians are to  
18 associate themselves into particular local churches, and to each of these churches He has given  
19 authority for administering the order, discipline, and worship that He has appointed. The regular  
20 offices of a local church are Elders (Pastors) and Deacons. The mission of the church is to engage  
21 in God's mission of redeeming people from all the peoples of the world (Matt. 28:18-20; John  
22 10:16; Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 1:22, 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-13, 5:17-18; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:25).

23 **18. BAPTISM**

24 Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed  
25 in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the  
26 death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God to  
27 live and walk in newness of life. It is also a prerequisite to membership in the local church (Matt.  
28 28:19; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

29 **19. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

30 The Lord's Supper is the divinely given act of communing with Christ and each other and of  
31 commemorating Christ's death by partaking of bread and the cup, which strengthens the believer's  
32 faith, renews his or her commitment to Christ and His people, marks the church off from the world  
33 as one body, and anticipates the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 10:16-17,  
34 11:23-34).

35 **20. THE LORD'S DAY**

36 The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance wherein believers should engage in  
37 exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev.  
38 1:10).

39 **21. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE**

40 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments  
41 of men that are in any way contrary to His Word or not contained therein. Even so, Christians  
42 should submit to the laws of the authorities who have been ordained by God so long as these laws  
43 do not contradict the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 15:9; Rom. 13:1-7, 14:4; Acts 5:29;  
44 Col. 2:20-23).

1 **22. THE RESURRECTION**

2 After death, the bodies of human beings return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God—  
3 the righteous to rest with Him, but the wicked to be reserved under darkness until the final  
4 judgment. The bodies of all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will be raised at the last  
5 day. The wicked will be raised to judgment, but the righteous will be raised to dwell forever with  
6 Christ in bodies resurrected in the same manner as Christ (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:12-28; 2 Cor.  
7 5:1-10; Phil. 1:23).

8 **23. THE JUDGMENT**

9 God has appointed a day where He will judge the world through Jesus Christ, every person  
10 according to his deeds. The wicked—those who have not trusted in Christ—will suffer eternal,  
11 conscious punishment, but the righteous—those who have trusted in Christ—will receive the  
12 promised eternal inheritance of everlasting life and will live with Christ forever in the new heavens  
13 and the new earth (Matt. 25:46; John 5:22, 27-29; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:6-11; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 1:11-  
14 14; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 7:13-17, 14:9-11, 21:1-8).

15

1  
2  
3 **Appendix 2**

4 **RIDGEWOOD CHURCH CHURCH COVENANT**

5 *Having been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we now,*  
6 *depending upon the Holy Spirit, establish this covenant with one another as members of Ridgewood*  
7 *Church.*

- 8 • In all we do, we will aim to glorify and enjoy the God of our salvation, from whom and  
9 through whom and to whom are all things: to Him be all glory forever! (1 Cor. 10:31; Rom.  
10 11:36)  
11  
12 • We will eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by walking together in  
13 love and in the Spirit and by putting away all bitterness, anger, and injurious speech. (Eph.  
14 4:3; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 4:29, 31)  
15  
16 • With humility and gentleness, patience and love, we will be kind to one another,  
17 tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. (Eph.  
18 4:1-2; Luke 17:3; Col. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Pet. 1:22)  
19  
20 • We will carry each other's burdens, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with  
21 those who weep. (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 12:15)  
22  
23 • We will train our children in the instruction of the Lord, seeking to walk in a way that  
24 adorns the gospel of Christ before our family, friends, and neighbors (Prov. 22:6; Eph.  
25 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:1).  
26  
27 • We will strive to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, as we wait  
28 for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.  
29 (Gal. 5:22-24; Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:14)  
30  
31 • We will not neglect to gather together, but will support and treasure the biblical preaching  
32 of the whole counsel of God, the faithful observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and  
33 the loving exercise of church discipline. (Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor.  
34 11:26; Matt 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13)  
35  
36 • We will contribute cheerfully and generously to the expenses of the church, the relief of the  
37 poor, and the advancement of the gospel both to our neighbors and the nations. (Matt.  
38 28:19; Luke 12:33; 2 Cor. 9:7)  
39  
40 • We will, when we move from this place, unite as soon as possible with some other church  
41 where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.  
42

43 *In all these things, we rely on our God who has made a new and everlasting covenant with us,*  
44 *saying:*

45 *"They shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they*  
46 *may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. . . . I will not*  
47 *turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not*  
48 *turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good . . . with all my heart and all my soul."* (Jer. 32:38-  
49 41)



1 *In and because of Jesus we pray, Amen.*

2 By signing my name below, I affirm that I have read this Church Covenant and that I will strive by  
3 God's grace and the power of the Spirit to live out these commitments, to the glory of God and for  
4 the good of the church.

5  
6 Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

8  
9 In addition to signing this Church Covenant, all members must read and initial beside the following  
10 statements related to our other foundational documents.

11  
12 (1) I have fully read and agree with the RC Statement of Faith, and I will strive to live a life that is  
13 consistent with these doctrinal commitments.

14  
15 \_\_\_\_\_

16  
17 (2) I have fully read and agree with the RC Church Constitution, including all appendices, and I  
18 understand and support how this church is governed.

19  
20 \_\_\_\_\_

21  
22 (3) I have fully read and agree to the RC Church Restoration policy, and I entreat the elders and the  
23 body at RC to pursue after me should I neglect the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant  
24 or if I otherwise wander away from Christ.

25  
26 \_\_\_\_\_

27  
28

## Appendix 3

### RIDGEWOOD CHURCH RESTORATION POLICY

Church discipline at RC is founded upon the holiness and the love of God, the Lordship of Jesus Christ who is the head of the Church, and an understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4-5; Col. 1:9-29*).

Discipline is a courageous and compassionate act of love, desiring only **good** for the person caught in sin. Its aim is **rescue, restoration, and reconciliation**. Just as discipline is a mark of a healthy family, church discipline is a mark of a healthy church. The context and prerequisite for church discipline is authentic Christian community (*Prov. 3:11-12; 1 Cor. 5:5, 11:32; 1 Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 3:19*).

The primary teaching and hopeful desire of the elders at RC is for believers to develop self-discipline so that they may lead godly lives characterized by obedient faith. We believe that love for God, the first and greatest command by our Lord Jesus Christ, is manifested primarily through diligent obedience to the Word of God and love for other believers (*Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:5-10; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 3:12-15, 12:14-17; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; Rev. 3:14*).

Church discipline has five purposes:

- 1) For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual(s) disciplined.
- 2) For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them.
- 3) For the purity of the church as a whole.
- 4) For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians.
- 5) For the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

(*Heb. 12:1-11; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1, 1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2; Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14; Deut. 5:11; John 15:8; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:12*).

We believe that church discipline should be exercised in every case of substantiated, habitual, willful, unrepentant sin when the erring party is unwilling to take adequate steps to walk in repentance. Though not an exhaustive list, the following sins are addressed by the New Testament church: divisiveness (*2 Thess. 3:11; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17-20*), irresponsible and undisciplined living (*1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6-15*), sexual immorality (*1 Cor. 5:1-13*), and doctrinal heresy (*1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 2 John 1:10-11; Rev. 2:14-16*).

The actions and heart attitude of the church, particularly the elders, are to be characterized by humility, compassion, mercy, gentleness, and fairness (*Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; 2 Thess. 3:15; 1 Cor. 5:2; 2 Cor. 2:4-8; Micah 6:8*). Elders and deacons are held to an even higher standard of accountability (*1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17-22; James 3:1*).

We believe that church discipline is applicable to all members of RC. Withdrawal of membership or fellowship does not necessarily negate the process of church discipline, particularly where it appears that a person has done so to avoid church discipline. Such requests to withdraw may not be honored until the disciplinary process has been concluded.

If a believer fails to discipline himself and demonstrates no evidence of repentance, the Scriptures clearly indicate that loving confrontation is the responsibility of the Church. Church discipline is a biblical process that is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, justly, and only after individual attempts at correction have been attempted and have failed.

1 The ordinary stages of church discipline, according to Matthew 18:15-20, are as follows:  
2

3 **FIRST:** If a Christian fails to discipline himself and is trapped in unrepentant sin, Christ says to  
4 “[g]o and tell him his fault, between you and him alone” (Matt. 18:15). In this first step, the  
5 individual who is aware of the sin should go to this brother or sister in private to lovingly  
6 confront, counsel, and encourage repentance.  
7

8 **SECOND:** If the unrepentant person will not listen to the admonition of one person, especially  
9 after several attempts, and if there is no evidence of repentance, Christ commands the person  
10 confronting the sin to “take one or two others along with you” (Matt. 18:16a) to further address the  
11 matter and to continue to encourage repentance. As Jesus explains, taking one or two others along  
12 with you ensures “that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses”  
13 (Matt 18:16b). Moreover, others being involved will serve to ensure clear communication, will  
14 convey the seriousness of continued unrepentance, and will enable others to pray for the person  
15 caught in sin.  
16

17 **THIRD:** If these first two steps fail to bring about repentance, Jesus says to “tell it to the church”  
18 (Matt. 18:17a). Jesus’s command to “tell it to the church” necessarily involves bringing the elders  
19 into the process and requesting their direct assistance in resolving the problem, if they were not  
20 involved in the previous steps. In some cases, one or more elders may repeat the previous steps and  
21 try to persuade the offender to repent. The elders, after confirming the facts of the situation and the  
22 individual’s continued refusal to repent, may then inform the church when it is assembled  
23 (ordinarily at a duly called member’s meeting).  
24

25 “Telling it to the church” means that the congregation will ordinarily be informed about the *general*  
26 *nature*<sup>4</sup> of the sin, given a general description of the process that has taken place, and be made  
27 aware of the refusal to repent. The congregation will be asked to pray for and plead with the  
28 offender to repent, and they will be instructed to pursue the person for the purpose of restoration.  
29 Personal visits, telephone calls, and letters are examples of what it means to “pursue” the  
30 unrepentant member. During the entire process of church discipline, the church is to continue  
31 loving the unrepentant member in the ultimate hope of restoration to the body.  
32

33 **FOURTH:** In the event the offender refuses to submit to the caring admonition of the church and  
34 continues to persist in unrepentant sin, Jesus gives the following command: “[I]f he refuses to listen  
35 even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile or tax collector” (Matt. 18:17b). In this final step  
36 of church discipline, the person is publicly dismissed from the church with the hope of future  
37 repentance and reconciliation. If discipline reaches this final stage, the elders will send a letter by  
38 registered mail warning the individual that the congregation will vote to remove him from  
39 membership if significant evidence of repentance is not shown by a specific date. If there is no  
40 significant evidence of repentance by the date set forth in the letter, the congregation shall vote at a  
41 duly called members’ meeting whether to remove the offender from membership (see Article V,  
42 Section 3.D.2). If the congregation votes to remove the offender, the offender will be denied  
43 Christian fellowship,<sup>5</sup> treated as an unbeliever, and delivered over to Satan in the hope that his soul  
44 will be saved (*Romans 16:17; 2 Thess. 1:20, 3:6, 14; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 3:10*).

---

<sup>4</sup> If failing to inform the body of more specific details concerning an offense could result in harm to any member of the body or to any other person, the elders may disclose additional details to ensure the safety of others. The elders may also disclose additional information beyond the general nature of the sin if failing to make details known would result in harm to the body as a whole, whether because of damage to the church’s reputation within the community or some other reason.

<sup>5</sup> “Denial of Christian fellowship” means, at a minimum, that the offender is prohibited from participating in the Lord’s Supper. So long as the offender does not pose any risk of harm to the

1 If at any point during the process of church discipline the offender demonstrates repentance, then  
2 notice to that effect will also be made public so that the church may rejoice and gently and  
3 judiciously restore the repentant believer to the fellowship of the church.

4  
5 NOTE: While the four stages outlined above set forth the ordinary process of church discipline, the  
6 elders of the church, after prayer and consultation with one another and the Holy Scriptures, may  
7 eliminate, compress, contract, or combine any one of these stages. Elders are commanded to  
8 protect the body, and some forms of sinful conduct that are deemed harmful to the body may  
9 require immediate action (*Acts 20:28-31; Titus 3:10; 1 Cor. 5:1-5*).<sup>6</sup>  
10

---

congregation or others, the offender may continue to attend Sunday gatherings; however, if the elders believe that allowing the offender to attend Sunday gatherings or any other gatherings of the body would be harmful in any way to the body or to any of its members, the elders may take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the body is protected.

<sup>6</sup> For example, if a member's conduct poses a threat to the life or safety of another member or to anyone else, the elders may move to immediately remove the offender and may take any other steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of the body. Moreover, if an offender's conduct would bring reproach to the name of Christ and so harm the body's reputation in the community if allowed to continue through the normal steps of church discipline, any of the four ordinary stages may be compressed, contracted, combined, or eliminated. These scenarios are only two examples where the ordinary process of church discipline may be suspended.

1 **Appendix 4**

2  
3 **RIDGEWOOD CHURCH MARRIAGE AND WEDDING POLICY**

4 God established marriage as a sacred covenant between one man and one woman to reflect Christ’s  
5 relationship with His Church (Eph. 5:21-23). In keeping with biblical teaching, Ridgewood Church  
6 requires the following for any couple seeking to celebrate a marriage at the Church:

7 *Faith* – Both bride and groom must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 6:14). In  
8 addition, the ceremony and any other use of Church facilities must not conflict with any part of  
9 Ridgewood Church Statement of Faith.

10 *Celibacy* – The engaged couple must live separately before their wedding day. Sexual intimacy is to  
11 be celebrated exclusively within marriage (1 Thess. 4:3).

12 *Man / Woman Monogamy* – Marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman. Ridgewood  
13 Church does not recognize, nor will it take part in, any ceremony that does not meet this basic  
14 criteria (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-5; see also Section 8 of the RC Statement of Faith).

15 *Premarital Counseling* – The engaged couple must participate in a premarital counseling program  
16 approved by the elders prior to the wedding ceremony. Premarital counseling ordinarily consists of  
17 six to eight sessions that are typically scheduled on a bi-weekly basis.

18 *Church Membership/Attendance* – In most cases, either the bride or groom (or their parents) must be  
19 members of the Church. Exceptions to this requirement may be made for members in good standing  
20 of Pillar Network churches located within 75 miles of Ridgewood Church. The elders of RC must  
21 unanimously agree to such an exception.

22 Because the Church believes that marriage is designed to be a life-long union, the Church does not  
23 take part in remarriages except under the following circumstances:

24 *Death* – The former spouse is deceased (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39).

25 *Marital Unfaithfulness* – The former spouse committed adultery against the spouse seeking  
26 remarriage (Matt. 5: 32, 19:3-9).

27 *Desertion* – The spouse seeking remarriage was deserted by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:15).

28  
29 Finally, for any weddings celebrated outside the Church, the elders and staff of Ridgewood Church  
30 shall only officiate weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.  
31 Moreover, elders and staff of Ridgewood Church may only officiate or otherwise participate in  
32 weddings that in no way conflict with the RC Statement of Faith.

33  
34 Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

35 Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_

36 Individual(s) with Membership at Ridgewood Church:

37 \_\_\_\_\_  
38 \_\_\_\_\_

39 Premarital Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

40 Is this a remarriage for either party? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix 5**

**RIDGEWOOD CHURCH STATEMENT ON MEDIATION**

Members of Ridgewood Church agree to submit any legal dispute with the Church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the Church and are contrary to biblical and Church teaching. Mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor. 6:1-7).

Mediation will be governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC *Rules*), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC *Rules*, mediator(s) will attempt to assist in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected, and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.