



Wakeshma Community Church

CONSTITUTION 2025

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the Old and New Testaments testify that Jesus Christ is Savior and Head of the Church, which is all those who with contrition confess, "You are the Christ; the Son of the Living God," and who sincerely believe, "...that God has raised him from the dead,"

and

WHEREAS Jesus Christ has given his people practical teaching regarding gospel instruction and oversight of the Church's commission,

RESOLVED that we, the members of Wakeshma Community Church, do hereby unite in an autonomous congregation of believers in God and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and agree to be governed by the following Constitution.

Section 1. Name

The name of this corporate body shall be Wakeshma Community Church, as located in the township of Wakeshma, County of Kalamazoo, and State of Michigan. It was incorporated on April 10, 1958.

Section 2. Objective

The principal objective of Wakeshma Community Church is to celebrate and glorify God by worshipping, fellowshiping, evangelizing, and discipling all who embrace His glorious gospel.

Section 3. Prerogatives

A. Corporate Property

The Wakeshma Community Church (Church), a Michigan non-profit corporation, shall have the right to buy, take, or otherwise acquire, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of such property, real, personal, and mixed, tangible, and intangible, of whatever kind as may be useful for the execution of the Church's work. The Church, by an act of public dedication, belongs entirely to God, and all its property, of whatever kind, shall be held in sacred trust.

B. Dissolution and Liquidation of Assets

The assets of the Wakeshma Community Church are irrevocably dedicated to religious and/or charitable purposes. In the event of the liquidation, dissolution, or revocation of its corporate status, after providing for payment of debts and obligations of the Corporation (Church), the remaining assets shall not benefit any person or persons, but all such remaining assets will be distributed to a non-profit organization or Church which is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The recipient of the Church's assets shall be determined by a vote of the members prior to its liquidation, dissolution, or revocation.

Section 4 . Ordination of Ministry Leaders

Wakeshma Community Church assumes the privilege and responsibility to formally recognize and affirm those called to leadership within the Christian faith. As such, the Church may deem it

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appropriate to ordain qualified men to ministries such as Pastor or Elder. Furthermore, the Church may choose to ordain qualified men and/or women to missionary work at home or abroad, to vocational parachurch ministries, and to the local Church office of Deacon for local Church service. Prior to offering any official recommendation, Wakeshma Community Church Elders may employ a variety of metrics, review periods, interviews, or examination boards as deemed suitable for the person and the ministry being sought. Upon successful review, candidates are presented to the larger congregation for validation and affirmation. Individuals receiving ordination from Wakeshma Community Church understand that formal recognition by this faith community carries with it life-time accountability and, therefore, is never conferred as an interminable or irrevocable designation.

Section 5. Government

A. Elder Leadership

Wakeshma Community Church is led by its Elders whose ongoing ministry involves accountability to his fellow Elders and to the family of believers in general. Wakeshma Community Church may determine to employ a uniquely gifted Elder(s) to carry the primary teaching load, engage in certain specialized work, and/or oversee the Church office operations and the overall functions of the ministry. In such cases, this Elder (or, Pastor) may have formal responsibilities and expectations unique to his gifting, but he nevertheless remains an equal member of the Elder Council and has no priority in authority or decision making apart from the Elder Council.

B. Delegating Ministry

Elders may designate men and/or women as Deacons/Deaconesses who will serve on a Board of Deacons. The primary role of Deacons and Deaconesses is caring for the Church property, overseeing Church finances, directing, and implementing ministries, and assisting at services and events as available.

C. General Guidelines

Elders may develop suitable policies and procedures for identifying, vetting, and installing Elders and Deacons, as well as policies for respite. As Christian faithfulness and desire to serve continue, so may any elder or any deacon. Appointments to both offices are ongoing so long as a desire to serve and Christian faithfulness persist. Accountability rests with the other Elders, the Deacons and Deaconesses, and the body of believers in general.

Section 6. Membership

The official membership of this Church shall consist of people 18 years of age or older who accept the Church's Statement of Faith, who agree to be governed by its Constitution, and adhere to the below articles.

A. Request and approval for membership

The person requesting membership in the Wakeshma Community Church shall attend a membership meeting and shall furnish evidence of personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

An Elder shall submit the name(s) of the person(s) requesting membership to the full board.

Following a satisfactory review of each applicant, the Elders will affirm the individual(s) into membership by prayerful consensus.

B. Membership Classification

1. Active Members

All members who agree to consistently give of their time, talents, and treasures for the advancement of the gospel through the mission of the Church, shall be classified as Active members.

2. Heritage Members

Active members who cannot maintain their involvement in the Church due to chronic conditions, but wish to maintain their ties to the Church, shall be placed on the Heritage Member list, if notice of the said member's incapacity has been made known to the Elders. This is a non-voting status.

3. Inactive Members

Members who fail to consistently give of their time, talents, and treasures for a period of six (6) months, shall be classified as Inactive Members, by official action of the Elders. Once classified inactive, the inactive member shall forfeit all rights to vote in the Congregational Meeting or in any Special Congregational Meetings, until his/her membership status is reactivated by official action of the Elders.

The Inactive member shall be allowed to remain on the Membership Roll for one (1) year from the date following inactive classification by the Elders. After one (1) year of continued inactivity, the Elders shall send due notice of impending removal from the Membership Roll not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of official removal of their name(s). Upon termination of the one-year period, the person's name shall be removed from the Membership Roll and an official letter to serve such notice be mailed to the address listed in the Church register.

C. Resignation of Membership

Membership resignation may occur through prolonged inactivity, a written letter to the Church, or verbal intent made to a Church Elder.

D. Letter of Transfer

If a member requests a letter of transfer, the Elders will facilitate the request.

E. Discipline

The Elders of the Church shall be responsible for the spiritual discipline of the Church, according to fundamental biblical principles.

1. Dismissal

Any member who becomes, by an act of self-will, an offense to the Church and to the local community, whether by reason of un-Christian conduct and/or a radical departure from the Christian doctrine, and who disregards the private counsel of the Elders, shall be recommended for dismissal. The name of any member so dismissed shall be removed from the membership roll by prayerful consensus of the Elders.

2. Discipline

The prayerful consensus of the Elders shall be considered final as long as the judgment rendered is in accordance with fundamental Christian principles given in the following New Testament references: Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17,18; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 6:3-5,20,21; Titus 3:1-11; 2 Peter 2:1-22; and 1 John 2:11.

3. Reinstatement

Any person who is dismissed from the Church shall not be considered irredeemable or beyond the aid of the grace of God in Christ. If any such person should give clear evidence of genuine repentance through a transformed character and a renewed standard of conduct and/or Christian doctrine, he/she shall be fully reconciled to the Church in an act of mutual love and humility, and proper procedures initiated toward reinstatement of membership.

Following a careful review by the Elders of the dismissed person's written request for reinstatement, and in addition to their character and behavior during time of dismissal, individuals may be welcomed back as a member of the Church.

Section 7. Meetings

A. Regular Worship Services

The primary purpose of regular assembly is the worship of God through:

- The reading of Scripture,
- Breaking of bread,
- Instruction in faith and doctrine,
- Encouragement and accountability in faith,
- Prayer,
- Singing praises for God and His work,
- Serving each other with our various gifts,

B. Business

Church business is generally managed by the Elders and Deacons and those they may appoint to fill specific roles.

C. Family Meetings

As a body with many members, family meetings may be called quarterly to offer status reports, discuss budgets, ministry goals, personnel matters, service opportunities, offer thanksgiving to God, celebrate communion, address concerns, and to pray.

Section 8. Officers

The authority delegated to the Church by Jesus Christ is exercised by its Elders with accountability to one another and to the body of Christ. This authority is expressed through preaching, teaching, shepherding, and administration with a view to caring for the souls within the Church's jurisdiction.

A. Elders

1. Definition

Elders work together in Council as the principal leaders of the Church. They are shepherds of the flock and servant leaders who oversee general congregational care through:

- Exhortation and encouragement,
- General oversight of Church business,
- Ensuring regular worship services,
- Upholding sound doctrine,
- Providing faithful teaching and preaching,
- Disciplining when necessary,
- Caring for Church members/family and their needs
- Monitoring official member rolls
- Cultivating a climate of spiritual growth

2. Qualifications

The men identified, trained, and affirmed in the office of Elder shall not be less than thirty (30) years of age and shall display unmistakable evidence of having consistently lived a Biblically grounded, Christ-like lifestyle for not less than five (5) years. They will have been an active member of this Church and in attendance for not less than two (2) years. Prospects must be known to the Church for their biblical insights, fear of the LORD, their godly disposition and men of prayer who delight to shepherd God's people as servant leaders. Each must measure up to the collective requirements of Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Acts 20:17-38.

3. Appointment

Candidates for Elder leadership are prayerfully considered and Holy Spirit lead. Qualified men may be added to the Elder Council as the Council deems fitting. Prospective Elders are affirmed by the congregation and appointed by the Elder Council.

B. Deacons

1. Definition

Under the leadership of the Elders, the Deacons' and Deaconesses (hereafter referred to as Deacons) primary function is official service to the body of Christ in manners of practicality which help fulfill the ministry objectives of the Church. This includes financial oversight, facility/Church property maintenance, and legal matters of the Church. Deacons shall take leadership among themselves for conducting orderly business, documenting their meetings, appointing a Church treasurer, and managing employment arrangements and contracts.

2. Qualifications

Men and women appointed as Deacons shall be not less than twenty-one (21) years of age and shall have been an active member of this Church for not less than one (1) year. They shall be trustworthy, of good reputation within the Church and the community, and must give unmistakable evidence of having lived consistently as a Christian for not less than three (3) years. Deacons shall provide clear experience and knowledge of moral and ethical business and ministerial practices. They must comply with biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

3. Appointment

Elders shall vet and appoint Deacons as ministry needs necessitate. Deacons installed to serve shall become part of the Deacon Board that meets regularly to coordinate their various ministry functions. Length of service is individual, based on continuity of Christian character, willingness to serve, availability, and value added.

Section 9. Employees and Contracts

The Elder council may determine the Church would be better served by employing pastors, office staff, custodial or otherwise specialized personnel with particular gifts/skills to serve Wakeshma Community Church or to augment areas of member deficiencies. All employment determinations are made in conjunction with active members of the Deacon board. Proposed staff roles should have a clear job description outlining duties and wages. All employment arrangements are at-will and can be terminated at any time and for any reason.

Section 10. Indemnification

The Church shall indemnify and hold harmless any trustee, officer, employee, or agent of the Church from any liability, expense (including attorney's fees), judgment, fine, or settlement incurred in connection with any action, suit, or proceeding—civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative—arising out of service on behalf of the Church, provided they acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Church, and, with respect to criminal matters, had no reasonable cause to believe their conduct was unlawful. This indemnification applies to the fullest extent permitted by law, and these protections extend to their family and estate.

Section 11. Political Limitations

Any private petition or lobby initiated by any member of the Church shall in no way include the name of the Church, nor the Pastor(s), in seeking public endorsement of the cause or issue in question.