



# FOOTHILLS FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTION, STATEMENT OF FAITH, AND BY-LAWS



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# FOOTHILLS FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTION, STATEMENT OF FAITH, AND BY-LAWS

October 14, 2009

## PREFACE

This Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-Laws has been prepared by the Board of Elders of Foothills Fellowship and approved by the congregation to guide and direct all aspects of the life and ministry of the church.

Foothills Fellowship is a Christ-ruled, Elder-governed, Deacon-served, and member-engaged church. As such, the primary source for directing the life and ministry of the church is the Bible, especially the documents of the Christian Scriptures (i.e., the New Testament). This document does not unnecessarily restate biblical principles.

The church can be represented as a family of families. According to the teaching of the Apostle Paul concerning the principles that should govern church life, the role of Elders is parallel to that of the father and husband in the well-ordered Christian home. Another important governing principle is that both church leaders and members should be listening to the same voice – that of the Holy Spirit, who imparts the mind of Christ. Therefore, every leader and member should be guided and directed by a spirit of *koinonia* (being of one accord, having things in common, cooperating with one another), brotherly kindness, and self-sacrificing love.

Throughout this document a statement which employs “shall” as the verb is **imperative** – that is, a required action or state of affairs. A statement which employs “should” as the verb is **normative but not imperative** – that is, a desired action or state of affairs.

The Board of Elders of Foothills Fellowship shall be responsible for enforcing, reviewing, and amending this document in accordance with amendment procedure specified therein.

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## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

Believing that the church is the body of Christ to which only believers in Jesus Christ belong, that the local assembly is the visible representation of that body, that all things should be done decently and in order, and that a consistent testimony should be offered to the world, we adopt the following Constitution and By-Laws as members of this local assembly in covenant relationship.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the local assembly is Foothills Fellowship, a tax exempt non-profit corporation, organized in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSES

Foothills Fellowship is organized exclusively for religious, educational, benevolent, and charitable purposes, which include making contributions to and receiving contributions from entities that qualify as tax exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue law). In furtherance and not in limitation of the purposes hereinbefore stated, it is expressly provided that the Foothills Fellowship is organized for the purpose of engaging in any lawful activity with which non-profit corporations may be engaged under the New Mexico Non-Profit Corporation Act.

### ARTICLE III. POWERS

In order to properly perform and carry out its purposes, Foothills Fellowship shall, among other things, have the power to receive and disburse funds; to acquire, purchase, receive, hold, and operate real and personal properties; to establish, build, acquire, or provide a place or places of worship and such other buildings and facilities as are deemed necessary for the accomplishment of its purposes; to borrow money and to issue its notes or bonds or other evidences of indebtedness; to disseminate, publish, and distribute its message by whatever means deemed appropriate; to provide, sponsor, and carry on religious and educational services; to employ Vocational Elders and other functionaries; to have and to exercise all the powers now or hereafter conferred by the laws of the State of New Mexico, pursuant to the New Mexico Non-Profit Corporation Act; and to do each and every act which it may lawfully do under the laws of the State of New Mexico consistent with carrying out its purposes.

## ARTICLE IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH AND MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Section 1: Statement of Faith. Following is the doctrinal position of Foothills Fellowship:

- (a) We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. (II Timothy 3:16-17)
- (b) We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; John 10:30; John 16:12-15; Matthew 28:19)
- (c) We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Luke 1:35; Romans 1:3-4; John 3:16)
- (d) We believe that man, created in the image of God, sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners. (Romans 1:18-20; Romans 3:9-23)
- (e) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified by His shed blood. (Hebrews 9:28; I Peter 1:18-20; I Peter 3:18; Romans 5:12-21)
- (f) We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into heaven, and His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate. (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 7:21, 25)
- (g) We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God. (John 3:3-18; Romans 10:9)
- (h) We believe that the true church is composed of all such persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ in which He is the Head. (I Corinthians 12:12-13)
- (i) We believe in baptism by immersion of a believer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in testimony of his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Christ, and in confession that he is dead to sin and risen in newness of life in Christ Jesus; and that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death "till He come." (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:1-5; I Corinthians 11:23-31)
- (j) We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting punishment. (I Thessalonians 4:15,16,; John 5:28,29; John 14:1-6; Revelation 20:4-6; II Thessalonians 1:8-9)
- (k) We believe in the personal and premillennial coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. (I Corinthians 15:51-57; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I John 3:1-3)

Section 2: Membership Covenant. Members of Foothills Fellowship shall subscribe to the following covenant:

Having been led by the Spirit of God, I have received Jesus as Savior and Lord, and I have publicly confessed my faith by word and in baptism by immersion. I subscribe to the statement of faith of Foothills Fellowship. I will endeavor by the help of our Lord to live a dedicated Christian life, to pray for Foothills Fellowship, to support its pastors and leaders, to give regularly and cheerfully, and to seek out a definite ministry in cooperation with the elders and purposes of Foothills Fellowship.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ARTICLE V. AFFILIATION

Foothills Fellowship shall remain free and independent, but will support, cooperate, and affiliate with other organizations to the extent deemed appropriate and mutually beneficial as determined by the Board of Elders.

#### ARTICLE VI. GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

Foothills Fellowship shall be governed and pastored by a Board of Elders, hereinafter designated **the Board**. The Board shall consist of Vocational Elders and Avocational Elders.

Section 1: Vocational Elders. The Vocational Elders shall serve as the primary pastoral staff of Foothills Fellowship; their membership on the Board shall extend throughout their service at Foothills Fellowship, except as provided for in Article IX, Section 6. One of the Vocational Elders shall be set apart and designated the **Primary Teaching Elder** – that is, the principal messenger of Christ to the church in accordance with Revelation 1:20.

Section 2: Avocational Elders. The term of service of the Avocational Elders shall be limited only as provided for in Article IX, Section 6. The Avocational Elders who are actively serving on the Board at any given time shall have sole authority and responsibility for the corporate and fiscal affairs of Foothills Fellowship. (Refer to Article II, Section 2 of the By-Laws.)

#### ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Eligibility and Acceptance. Any person who has accepted the Covenant of Foothills Fellowship may be considered as a candidate for membership of Foothills Fellowship. Persons shall be accepted into membership by the Board in accordance with Article III, Section 3 of the By-Laws.

Section 2: Reconciliation. Members shall endeavor to reconcile disputes, differences, misunderstandings, and offenses in accordance with Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-18, and Galatians 6:1-2.

Section 3: Dismissal and Restoration. If reconciliation cannot be achieved, the Board, upon hearing all parties and witnesses concerned, may dismiss a member or members from membership. Any dismissed member or members, showing satisfactory evidence of repentance in accordance with II

Corinthians 2:6-8 shall be eligible for restoration to membership. Moreover, a member may be dismissed by the Board for the following reasons: the receipt of a membership transfer letter from another church; the receipt of a letter from the member requesting his or her own dismissal; or prolonged and unjustified absence by the member; or decease of the member.

## ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution, including the Statement of Faith, shall be amended as follows:

- (a) The theological basis and rationale for the proposed amendment shall be developed and presented to the congregation in a suitable teaching venue determined by the Board.
- (b) Upon completion of (a), the proposed amendment shall be formulated by the Board and published in writing. An amendment package shall be prepared which consists of a cover letter that summarizes the theological basis and rationale with the proposed amendment attached. The cover letter shall provide spaces for a member to affirm the amendment without revision, affirm with revision, or reject.
- (c) The amendment package resulting from (b) shall be mailed to all members. In addition, the cover letter and proposed amendment shall be posted on the Foothills Fellowship website.
- (d) Four (4) weeks (i.e., four consecutive Sundays) after the publication of the amendment package resulting from (b) an informational meeting shall be scheduled in which the Elders shall walk through the proposed amendment and answer questions for clarification. This meeting shall be announced at each of the worship services during the four-week period.
- (e) A period of sixteen (16) weeks (i.e., sixteen consecutive Sundays) from the informational meeting of (d) shall be allowed for members to review and evaluate the proposed amendment. Using the amendment package resulting from (b), each member shall respond as follows: affirm without revision; affirm with revision, with the proposed revision marked into the attached copy of the proposed amendment; or reject. In the case of rejection, the rationale for rejection shall be provided in writing or by means of a meeting between the member and two or more of the Elders. Appropriate reminders shall be announced at each of the worship services during the sixteen-week period. During the sixteen week period there shall be at least one congregational meeting to solicit and discuss member feedback.
- (f) At their first regular meeting after the review and evaluation period of (e), the Board shall process and discuss the responses to the proposed amendment. A non-response from a member shall be counted as affirmation without revision. Should the Board recognize the need to revise the proposed amendment in view of the responses received, they shall reformulate the amendment, and the entire process described in (a) through (e) shall be repeated. The cover letter for the revised amendment shall explain the rationale for the revision, including a summarization of the Board's response to member feedback.



- (g) If the Board determines that broad acceptance of the amendment cannot be achieved, the proposed amendment shall be tabled. If the Board unanimously determines that a consensus of affirmation has been achieved, the amendment resulting from the above process shall be incorporated into the Constitution and Statement of Faith. The revision status of the amended Constitution and Statement of Faith shall be defined by the date of the unanimous Board action. The amended Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-Laws, bearing this revision date, shall be published in sufficient quantity for distribution of one copy to each member household. The availability of copies of the document shall be announced at each of the worship services for two consecutive Sundays after the completion of the amendment process.

ARTICLE IX. BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1: Definition and Title. As set forth in Article VI, Foothills Fellowship shall be governed by a Board of Elders. A candidate for membership on the Board shall be identified and examined by the Board, affirmed by the membership, and installed as prescribed in Section 4 below.

Section 2: Qualifications. A candidate for eldership shall unequivocally and without mental reservation accept the Membership Covenant, and he shall be qualified for the position based on the biblical standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3. These standards are reflected in the Elder Covenant which shall be agreed upon and adhered to by all the Elders.

- (a) **The Elder Covenant.** Elders shall perform an annual assessment against each of the biblical parameters in the ***Elder Qualifications Template***. They shall hold one another accountable against this high standard of moral excellence and spiritual maturity, and they shall affirm their acceptance of the Elder Covenant as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Elder), affirm that I am striving to work out my salvation with fear and trembling with respect to these biblical qualifications for eldership, knowing that it is God who is working in and through me both to will and to work for His good pleasure. I also affirm that I am willing to be held accountable by my fellow Elders against this high standard of moral excellence and spiritual maturity. If, at any time, I am judged by my fellow Elders to be falling short of this standard, then I either will pursue needed development or I will voluntarily resign from my office as Elder.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

### ELDER QUALIFICATIONS TEMPLATE

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS	INITIAL TO SIGNIFY AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE
1. Am I making progress in being filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom? That is, do I demonstrate an experiential knowledge of Christ, a zeal to share my faith with others, and a progression in manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the virtues of Christian character? [Acts 6:3, Galatians 5:22-24, and 2 Peter 1:3-11]	
2. Am I making progress in being “full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” and do I demonstrate a pastor’s heart and a calling to be an elder? [1 Timothy 3:1]	
3. Do I manifest Christian character that is unimpeachable? That is, do I have a good reputation, both within the church and in the surrounding community? [1 Timothy 3:2 & 7]	
4. Am I chaste and virtuous in the sphere of sexual interactions? Am I wholly devoted to my wife? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
5. Do I exercise moderation and self-control in personal habits? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
6. Am I respectable and dignified? That is, do I present myself in a way that elicits respect? Do I represent Foothills Fellowship well with respect to the outside community? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
7. Do I manifest a spirit that is gentle and reasonable and not domineering, stubborn, quarrelsome, or pugnacious? Do I demonstrate the wisdom that is from above rather than that which is from below? [1 Timothy 3:2, James 3:13-18]	
8. Am I habitually guided by practical wisdom that is rooted in Scripture? That is, do I walk in the way of Christ and the apostles, and am I a skilled teacher and mentor in that way? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
9. Am I wholly trustworthy in the management of material assets? Do I manifest a spirit of contentment with my material possessions? [1 Timothy 3:2 & 3]	
10. Am I wholeheartedly submitted to the biblical order in the sphere of the Christian household and in the sphere of the church as the household of God? [Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4 and 1 Timothy 3:4]	

Section 3: Authority and Duties. Foothills Fellowship recognizes that a plurality of leadership in the local church is a biblical principle. The Elders, in a genuine shared ministry, shall preach and teach the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:1-2; Titus 2; Acts 20:28), equip every saint to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:1-16), and shall shepherd God's flock as overseers and administrators (1 Peter 5:2).

Section 4: Call and Affirmation. To be considered as a candidate for eldership, a man must be known to be biblically qualified in accordance with Section 2 and recognized as being called by God to the position. The Board shall appoint Elders in accordance with the process specified in Article VII, Section 1 of the By-Laws.

Section 5: Composition. As set forth in Article VI, the Board shall be composed of Vocational Elders and Avocational Elders. In terms of number, no arbitrary upper bound shall apply to either group. There shall be at least one Vocational Elder – that is, the Primary Teaching Elder – and there shall be at least three Avocational Elders. A majority of Board members shall be Avocational Elders. Should the office of Primary Teaching Elder become vacant for any of the reasons specified in Section 6 below, an Interim Primary Teaching Elder shall be appointed by the Board.

Section 6: Term. An Elder shall serve for an indefinite term unless other arrangements are worked out by mutual agreement. Elders may take a sabbatical from active service for a period of time determined by the Board. The term of service for an Elder shall be governed by the following principles:

- (a) **Termination for personal reasons**. An Elder may terminate his service by resignation for personal reasons after review and discussion with the Board.
- (b) **Termination by the other Elders**. Each Elder shall undergo an annual assessment of accountability by the other Elders in accordance with the Elder Covenant [Section 2, Paragraph (a)]. By means of the Elder Covenant, Elders shall hold themselves accountable to their fellow Elders for a lifelong pursuit of this high standard of moral excellence and spiritual maturity. If, at any time, an Elder is judged to be seriously falling short of this standard by his fellow Elders, either he shall submit to admonition, corrective action, and needed development, or he shall voluntarily resign from the Board. Moreover, an Elder shall be terminated from service if at least a two-thirds majority of the other Elders actively serving on the Board agree that he no longer fulfills the requirements set forth in Section 2 and expressed in the Elder Covenant.
- (c) **Termination on account of congregational concerns**. One or more members of Foothills Fellowship may present to the Board an issue concerning one or more of the Elders that relates to the biblical qualifications specified in the Elder Qualifications Template. Such a concern shall be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19. If it is proven that an Elder has fallen short, he shall, in a spirit of brotherly love, be admonished by the other Elders in accordance with Galatians 6:1-2. If this does not have the desired effect, his service shall be terminated as specified in paragraph (b) above.
- (d) **Notification of termination**. If an Elder is terminated from the Board, the congregation shall be notified within two weeks of the effective date of the termination.

ARTICLE X. VOCATIONAL ELDERS

Section 1: Qualifications of Vocational Elders. In addition to the qualifications set forth in Article IX, Section 2, a Vocational Elder of Foothills Fellowship shall be duly ordained or licensed, approved and called by the Board, affirmed by the members of Foothills Fellowship, and installed by due process.

Section 2: Responsibilities of Vocational Elders. A Vocational Elder is an employee of the Foothills Fellowship, and he shall serve as a member of the pastoral staff in accordance with a job description formulated and approved by the Board. He may be engaged in pastoral ministry either full time or part time.

Section 3: Term of Employment of Vocational Elders. Vocational Elders shall be employed for an indefinite period unless other arrangements are worked out by mutual agreement. Termination of the employment of a Vocational Elder shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, Section 6 above.

ARTICLE XI. DEACONS

Section 1. Responsibilities of Deacons. Each Deacon shall serve as a ministry team leader in accordance with a job description defined and approved by the Board. Ministry team member candidates shall be selected by the Deacon and approved by the Board.

Section 2: Appointment of Deacons. Pursuant to their governing capacity as overseers of Foothills Fellowship, the Board may select, appoint, and commission Deacons for specified ministry leadership responsibilities in accordance with the process specified in Article VIII of the By-Laws. Deacons shall unequivocally and without mental reservation accept the Membership Covenant set forth in Article IV and the Deacon Covenant set forth below:

- (a) **The Deacon Covenant**. The Board shall perform an annual assessment of each Deacon against each of the biblical parameters in the ***Deacon Qualifications Template***. They shall hold the Deacons accountable against this high standard of moral excellence and spiritual maturity. Deacons shall affirm their acceptance of the Deacon Covenant as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Deacon), affirm that I am striving to work out my salvation with fear and trembling with respect to these biblical qualifications for serving as a Deacon, knowing that it is God who is working in and through me both to will and to practice His good pleasure. I also affirm that I am willing to be held accountable by the Elders and my fellow Deacons against this high standard of moral excellence and spiritual maturity. If, at any time, I am judged by the Elders or my fellow Deacons to be falling short of this standard, then I either will pursue needed development or I will voluntarily resign from my office as Deacon.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

### DEACON QUALIFICATIONS TEMPLATE

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS	INITIAL TO SIGNIFY AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE
1. Am I making progress in being filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom? That is, do I demonstrate an experiential knowledge of Christ, a zeal to share my faith with others, and a progression in manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the virtues of Christian character? [Acts 6:3, Galatians 5:22-24, and 2 Peter 1:3-11]	
2. Am I making progress in being “full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” and do I demonstrate a calling to be a servant leader? [1 Timothy 3:1]	
3. Do I manifest Christian character that is unimpeachable? That is, do I have a good reputation, both within the church and in the surrounding community? [1 Timothy 3:2 & 7]	
4. Am I chaste and virtuous in the sphere of sexual interactions? Am I wholly devoted to my marriage partner? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
5. Do I exercise moderation and self-control in personal habits? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
6. Am I respectable and dignified? That is, do I present myself in a way that elicits respect? Do I represent Foothills Fellowship well with respect to the outside community? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
7. Do I manifest a spirit that is gentle and reasonable and not domineering, stubborn, quarrelsome, or pugnacious? Do I demonstrate the wisdom that is from above rather than that which is from below? [1 Timothy 3:2, James 3:13-18]	
8. Am I habitually guided by practical wisdom that is rooted in Scripture? That is, do I walk in the way of Christ and the apostles, and am I a skilled mentor in that way? [1 Timothy 3:2]	
9. Am I wholly trustworthy in the management of material assets? Do I manifest a spirit of contentment with my material possessions? [1 Timothy 3:2 & 3]	
10. Am I wholeheartedly submitted to the biblical order in the sphere of the Christian household and in the sphere of the church as the household of God? [Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4 and 1 Timothy 3:4]	

## ARTICLE XII. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

The following order of precedence shall be observed:

- (a) The Bible, and governing principles derived directly from Scripture by application of correct hermeneutical procedure.
- (b) This Constitution, including the Statement of Faith.
- (c) The By-Laws, together with subordinate documents referred to in either the Constitution or By-Law, such as the *Foothills Parliamentary Procedures Manual* and the *Foothills Financial Policies & Procedures Manual*.
- (d) Applicable laws of the United States of America and the State of New Mexico.

## BY-LAWS

### PREAMBLE

These By-Laws of Foothills Fellowship address procedural issues not addressed in the Constitution. They also address corporate and fiscal affairs of the church in relation to the City of Albuquerque, the State of New Mexico, and the Federal Internal Revenue Code that are not addressed in the Constitution.

### ARTICLE I. NAME OF THE CORPORATION

The name of the corporation is Foothills Fellowship, a tax exempt non-profit corporation, organized in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico.

### ARTICLE II. GOVERNMENT OF THE CORPORATION

Section 1: Board of Directors. In its corporate identity, Foothills Fellowship shall be governed by the Avocational members of the Board, who shall serve as the Board of Directors of the corporation. The Avocational Elders shall be members of Foothills Fellowship who are at least eighteen (18) years of age. The Avocational Elders who are actively serving on the Board at any given time shall have sole authority and responsibility for the corporate and fiscal affairs of Foothills Fellowship. (Refer to Article VI of the Constitution.)

Section 2: Financial Policies & Procedures. The corporate and fiscal affairs of Foothills Fellowship shall be administered in accordance with the *Foothills Financial Policies & Procedures Manual*.

Section 3: Mission. The mission of Foothills Fellowship is to be the church where we are, build the church where it is weak, and become the church where it is not. (Refer to the *Introduction to Foothills Fellowship* slide show for a summary of each of the three components of this mission statement.)

Section 4: Affiliation. Foothills Fellowship shall be affiliated with the Conservative Baptist Association in ways and to the extent deemed appropriate and mutually beneficial by the Board.

### ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Eligibility for Membership. Membership shall be limited to the standards set forth in Article VII of the Constitution.

Section 2: Responsibilities. The members of Foothills Fellowship shall carry out the work of the ministry under the supervision of the Deacons and oversight of the Elders.

Section 3: Membership Induction Process. Individuals shall be accepted into membership according to the following process:

- (a) **Introduction to Foothills Fellowship.** One or more of the Elders shall meet with prospective members individually or in groups in order to present the *Introduction to Foothills Fellowship* slide show. By this means all new members will become familiar with the history, mission, doctrinal position, and ministry philosophy of Foothills Fellowship.
- (b) **Application.** A member candidate shall fill out an application for membership which solicits information concerning his or her conversion experience, baptism, faith journey, past church affiliations, and ministry identity. As part of the application, the candidate shall subscribe to the Membership Covenant in accordance with Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution.
- (c) **Interview.** A pair of Elders shall meet with each member candidate to walk through his or her application, including affirmation of the Membership Covenant.
- (d) **Baptism or transfer letter.** A transfer letter from another church of like faith and order shall be accepted in lieu of baptism. Member candidates who have not been baptized shall submit to baptism by immersion during a worship service at Foothills Fellowship.
- (e) **Acceptance by the Board.** Formal acceptance into membership shall be by unanimous decision of the Board.
- (f) **Public affirmation.** The Board shall publically present each new member to the congregation during a worship service. Members of Foothills Fellowship shall signify their affirmation of the new member by standing.

#### ARTICLE IV. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be from January 1 through December 31.

#### ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1: Meetings for Worship. The members of Foothills Fellowship shall meet weekly for worship. They shall also meet regularly for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and other activities in furtherance and not in limitation of the purposes set forth in Article II of the Constitution.

Section 2: Annual Congregational Meeting. The **Annual Congregational Meeting** shall be held in January. The date, time, and location of this meeting shall be determined by the Board in accordance with Article VI of the Constitution. This meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during the worship service for at least two Sundays preceding the meeting. Matters to be considered at the Annual Congregational Meeting shall include, but not limited to the following:

1. Reading and approval of the minutes for the previous congregational meeting.
2. Presentation of the annual financial report.
3. Presentation and affirmation of the budget for the new fiscal year.



4. Casting of vision and future ministry objectives of Foothills Fellowship.
5. Ministry reports.

Section 3: Special Congregational Meetings. **Special Congregational Meetings** shall be called by the Board in accordance with Article VI of the Constitution. Any member or group of members may present a request to the Board that a Special Congregational Meeting be called. Under normal circumstances, the date, time, location, and subject of each Special Congregational Meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during the worship service for at least two Sundays preceding the meeting. However, should an urgent matter suddenly arise, the Board may dispense with this notification requirement provided a reasonable effort is put forth to notify every member household by telephone or other electronic means of the date, time, and location of a Special Congregational Meeting. Only the announced subject shall be considered at a Special Congregational Meeting.

Section 4: Moderator and Order. The moderator for every congregational meeting shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or the Vice Chairman in the event the Chairman is absent or incapacitated. Any parliamentary issue encountered in the conduct of meetings shall be decided in accordance with the *Foothills Parliamentary Procedures Manual*.

#### ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

The By-Laws shall be amended as follows:

- (a) The theological basis and rationale for the proposed amendment shall be developed and presented to the congregation in a suitable teaching venue determined by the Board.
- (b) Upon completion of (a), the proposed amendment shall be formulated by the Board and published in writing. An amendment package shall be prepared which consists of a cover letter that summarizes the theological basis and rationale with the proposed amendment attached. The cover letter shall provide spaces for a member to affirm the amendment without revision, affirm with revision, or reject.
- (c) The amendment package resulting from (b) shall be mailed to all members. In addition, the cover letter and proposed amendment shall be posted on the Foothills Fellowship website.
- (d) Four (4) weeks (i.e., four consecutive Sundays) after the publication of the amendment package resulting from (b) an informational meeting shall be scheduled in which the Elders shall walk through the proposed amendment and answer questions for clarification. This meeting shall be announced at each of the worship services during the four-week period.
- (e) A period of six (6) weeks (i.e., six consecutive Sundays) from the informational meeting of (d) shall be allowed for members to review and evaluate the proposed amendment. Using the amendment package resulting from (b), each member shall respond as follows: affirm without revision; affirm with revision, with the proposed revision marked into the attached copy of the proposed amendment; or reject. In the case of rejection, the rationale for rejection shall be provided in writing or by means of a meeting between the member and two or more of the Elders. Appropriate reminders shall be announced at each of the worship services during the six-week period. During the six week period there shall be at least one congregational meeting to solicit and discuss member feedback.

- (f) At their first regular meeting after the review and evaluation period of (e), the Board shall process and discuss the responses to the proposed amendment. A non-response from a member shall be counted as affirmation without revision. Should the Board recognize the need to revise the proposed amendment in view of the responses received, they shall reformulate the amendment, and the entire process described in (a) through (e) shall be repeated. The cover letter for the revised amendment shall explain the rationale for the revision, including a summarization of the Board's response to member feedback.
- (g) If the Board determines that broad acceptance of the amendment cannot be achieved, the proposed amendment shall be tabled. If the Board unanimously determines that a consensus of affirmation has been achieved, the amendment resulting from the above process shall be incorporated into the By-Laws. The revision status of the amended By-Laws shall be defined by the date of the unanimous Board action. The amended Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-Laws, bearing this revision date, shall be published in sufficient quantity for distribution of one copy to each member household. The availability of copies of the document shall be announced at each of the worship services for two consecutive Sundays after the completion of the amendment process.

## ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1: Elder Appointment Process. The steps listed below shall apply to both the appointment of Avocational Elders from within the membership of Foothills Fellowship and the calling of Vocational Elders. Because of the seriousness of elder selection, the entire process shall be supported by fervent prayer on the part of both the Board and the membership of Foothills Fellowship. Following are the steps for appointing Elders:

- (a) **Candidacy.** The Board shall assemble a list of candidates.
- (b) **Evaluation.** The Board shall evaluate the spiritual and moral qualifications of each candidate against the Elder Qualifications Template. (Refer to Article IX, Section 2, of the Constitution.) Additionally, in the case of a Vocational Elder, his ability to fulfill the job description for his position shall be considered.
- (c) **Selection of qualified candidates.** By unanimous agreement, the Board shall select the candidates for eldership who they deem to be qualified.
- (d) **Self-assessment by candidates.** Each of the selected candidates shall be personally contacted by an Elder, and he shall be asked to perform a self-assessment using the Elder Qualifications Template. Moreover, a Vocational Elder candidate shall be asked to supply a list of references who are able to attest to his spiritual, moral, and vocational qualifications. According to the job description of a prospective Vocational Elder, he will be asked by the Board to provide recorded and / or written evidence of his competence.
- (e) **Interviews.** A pair of Elders shall conduct an interview of each candidate and his wife, either individually or as a couple. This interview shall include walking through and discussing the candidate's self-assessment. Moreover, in the case of each candidate, one or more of the Elders shall interview individuals in his network, including family members, neighbors, employers, and work associates. Additionally, in the case of a Vocational Elder candidate, one

or more of the Elders shall interview the individuals in the list of references provided by the candidate.

- (f) **Approval by the Board.** The Board shall prayerfully evaluate and discuss all of the information gathered from the above interview step. They shall unanimously approve the list of candidates to be presented to the members of Foothills Fellowship for affirmation. In the case of a Vocational Elder, a single qualified candidate shall be selected and approved by the Board.
- (g) **Presentation to the congregation.** The Board shall present to the congregation of Foothills Fellowship each of the candidates for eldership they have approved in accordance with the foregoing steps. In the case of an Avocational Elder candidate, one or more of the Elders shall publicly affirm the candidate's qualifications for eldership, and the candidate himself shall present public testimony concerning his call to eldership. Additionally, in the case of a Vocational Elder, the Board shall arrange for the candidate to meet with the congregation in venues appropriate to his job description.
- (h) **Evaluation by members.** The Board shall allow at least four (4) weeks after their formal presentation of an Elder candidate to the congregation. During this time members of Foothills Fellowship shall respond to the Board with either affirmation of the candidate or the expression of biblically-based concerns over his spiritual, moral, leadership, or vocational qualifications. Members may respond to the Board in writing or by meeting with one or more of the Elders. Weekly reminders will be presented during the four intervening worship services as to the suspense date for congregational feedback. During the four week period there shall be at least one congregational meeting to solicit and discuss member feedback.
- (i) **Acceptance by the Board.** At their first regular meeting after the membership evaluation period, the Board shall prayerfully evaluate and discuss the feedback received for each of the Elder candidates. By unanimous vote, the Board shall decide to either accept or table each of the candidates. A tabled candidate can be reconsidered at some future time; should this occur, he will be processed through all of the foregoing steps.
- (j) **Public affirmation.** Each Elder candidate that is accepted shall be formally and publically commissioned by the Board before the congregation. Normally this would be done in a Sunday morning worship service.
- (k) **Preparing to lead.** Each new Elder shall attend a training seminar for all Foothills Fellowship leaders. After completing this seminar, he shall begin to serve as an Elder.

Section 2: Appointment of Committees. Pursuant to their governing capacity as overseers of Foothills Fellowship, the Board may select and appoint committees to perform specified functions.

- (a) **Qualification of committee members.** In general, members of committees should meet the same parameters of morality and spiritual maturity as Deacons. Committee members should attend the training seminar for leaders.
- (b) **Functions and responsibilities.** In general, a committee shall serve in a specified advisory capacity in support of the Board. Accordingly, a committee function is *ad hoc* and its term of service limited to the performance of that prescribed function.

Section 3: Meetings of the Board. The Board shall meet at least quarterly at a time and place established by the Board. A quorum of the Board shall be a majority of the number of Elders. The Board shall keep a clear record of its proceedings. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairman according to his discretion.

Section 4: Officers and Their Duties. Each officer of the Board shall be an Avocational Elder and shall be selected by the Elders for a term of one year. The officers of the Elders and their duties shall be as follows:

- (a) **Chairman**. The Chairman shall convene meetings of the Board. He shall preside at all Board meetings and at all congregational meetings. He shall ensure that all policies, programs, and other enactments of the Board are implemented in the manner prescribed.
- (b) **Vice Chairman**. Should the Chairman be absent or incapacitated for any reason, the Vice Chairman shall fully assume the authority and responsibility of the office of Chairman. Moreover, he shall perform such other duties and functions as the Board may prescribe.
- (c) **Secretary**. The Secretary shall be responsible for recording and keeping accurate minutes of all Board meetings and all congregational meetings. In his absence, the Chairman may appoint another Elder to record the minutes for that meeting. In the case of Board meetings, the Secretary shall present for approval at each meeting the minutes of the preceding meeting. In the case of congregational meetings, the Secretary shall read the minutes of the previous congregational meeting and the Chairman shall call for a motion to approve.
- (d) **Treasurer**. The Treasurer shall oversee the ledger of all financial activities of Foothills Fellowship in accordance with the *Financial Policies and Procedures Manual*. He shall present a financial report at selected Board meetings and congregational meetings. He shall be responsible for safeguarding all corporate documents.

Section 5: Annual Budget. In accordance with the *Financial Policies & Procedures Manual* of Foothills Fellowship, the Board shall formulate an annual budget for presentation to the members of Foothills Fellowship at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The steps in presentation and affirmation of the annual budget shall be as follows:

- (a) **Presentation to the congregation**. The Board shall publish on the Foothills website the proposed budget for the new fiscal year together with the year-to-date actual expenditures versus the current year budget. A Special Congregational Meeting shall be convened at least four (4) weeks in advance of the Annual Congregational Meeting. In this meeting the Board shall distribute copies of the proposed budget and answer questions from the congregation. A copy of the proposed budget shall be made available to each member household that was not represented at the Special Congregational Meeting.
- (b) **Evaluation by members**. Members of Foothills Fellowship shall respond to the Board with either affirmation of the proposed budget or the expression of concerns during the **four week** period between the Special Congregational Meeting above and the Annual Congregational Meeting. Members may respond to the Board in writing or by meeting with one or more of the Elders. Weekly reminders will be presented during the intervening worship services as to the suspense date for member feedback. During the four week period there shall be at least one congregational meeting to solicit and discuss member feedback.

- (c) **Approval by the Board.** In their first regular meeting after the membership evaluation period, the Board shall prayerfully evaluate and discuss the feedback from the membership. They may decide to revise the annual budget in this meeting. By unanimous decision, they shall approve the budget to be presented in the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- (d) **Presentation to the congregation.** The Board shall present the approved budget during the Annual Congregational Meeting, including any revisions that were made as a result of member feedback. Members shall be asked by the Board to affirm the budget at the meeting by standing, filling out and signing a pledge card, or other appropriate means.

## ARTICLE VIII. DEACONS

The Board shall appoint Deacons to serve in prescribed areas of ministry leadership according to the following steps:

- (a) **Candidacy.** The Board shall assemble a list of candidates.
- (b) **Evaluation.** The Board shall evaluate the spiritual and moral qualifications of each candidate against the Deacon Qualifications Template. (Refer to Article XI, Section 1, of the Constitution.)
- (c) **Selection of qualified candidates.** By unanimous agreement, the Board shall select the Deacon candidates who they deem to be qualified.
- (d) **Self-assessment by candidates.** Each of the selected candidates shall be personally contacted by an Elder, and he or she shall be asked to perform a self-assessment using the Deacon Qualification Template.
- (e) **Interviews.** A pair of Elders shall conduct an interview of each candidate and his or her spouse, either individually or as a couple. This interview shall include walking through and discussing the candidate's self-assessment. Moreover, in the case of each candidate, one or more of the Elders shall interview individuals in his or her network, including family members, neighbors, employers, and work associates.
- (f) **Approval by the Board.** The Board shall prayerfully evaluate and discuss all of the information gathered from the above interview step. They shall unanimously approve the list of Deacon candidates to be presented to the members of Foothills Fellowship for affirmation.
- (g) **Presentation to the congregation.** The Board shall present to the congregation of Foothills Fellowship each of the candidates for Deacon they have approved in accordance with the foregoing steps. One or more of the Elders shall publicly affirm the candidate's qualifications for Deacon, and the candidate himself or herself shall present public testimony concerning his or her call to service as a deacon.
- (h) **Evaluation by members.** The Board shall allow at least four (4) weeks after their formal presentation of a Deacon candidate to the congregation. During this time members of Foothills Fellowship shall respond to the Board with either affirmation of the candidate or the expression of biblically-based concerns over his or her spiritual, moral, or leadership qualifications. Members may respond to the Board in writing or by meeting with one or more of the Elders.

Weekly reminders will be presented during the four intervening worship services as to the suspense date for congregational feedback. During the four week period there shall be at least one congregational meeting to solicit and discuss member feedback.

- (i) **Acceptance by the Board.** At their first regular meeting after the membership evaluation period, the Board shall prayerfully evaluate and discuss the feedback received for each of the Deacon candidates. By unanimous vote, the Board shall decide to either accept or table each of the candidates. A tabled candidate can be reconsidered at some future time; should this occur, he or she will be processed through all of the foregoing steps.
- (j) **Public affirmation.** Each Deacon candidate that is accepted shall be formally and publically commissioned by the Board before the congregation. Normally this would be done in a Sunday morning worship service.
- (k) **Preparing to lead.** Each new Deacon shall attend a training seminar for all Foothills Fellowship leaders. After completing this seminar, he or she shall begin to serve as a Deacon.

## ARTICLE IX. ORDERED DISCIPLESHIP

Section 1: Biblical Mandate. The Great Commission of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 sets forth the biblical mandate for an ordered discipleship process in the local church. In particular, Jesus Christ commanded that his followers be taught to obey all that he commanded. The biblical mandate for training and equipping of the members by the leaders is set forth in Ephesians 4:11-13.

Section 2: Mission. Pursuant to the biblical mandates set forth in Section 1, together with the first component of our mission statement (refer to Article II, Section 3 above), Foothills Fellowship shall formulate, develop, and maintain an ordered discipleship process, and the Elders shall vigorously promote devotion to lifelong learning on the part of all members.

Section 3: Values. The following values shall govern our ordered discipleship process:

- (a) In accordance with Romans 15:15-16 and Ephesians 3:1-13, the Apostle Paul was specially commissioned by Jesus Christ to set forth, through his epistles, the governing principles for establishing disciples in the way of Christ and the apostles, planting and establishing churches, and ordering churches with qualified leaders.
- (b) The whole purpose of theological education in the local church is to train and equip followers of Jesus Christ to walk in the way of Christ and the apostles, which is the way of wisdom.

Section 4: Goals. The goals of our ordered discipleship process are as follows:

- (a) That every member of Foothills Fellowship be trained and equipped to walk in the way of Christ and the apostles, to derive theological principles from Scripture according to correct methods of interpretation, and to make biblically sound life decisions.
- (b) In addition to (a), that Deacons fulfill the parameters of the Deacon Qualifications Template; and, moreover, that they be trained and equipped to serve as ministry leaders and to skillfully and wisely mentor those in their ministry teams.

- (c) In addition to (a) and (b), that Elders fulfill the parameters of the Elder Qualifications Template; and, moreover, that they be trained and equipped to skillfully and wisely teach and serve as shepherds and overseers of the flock of God.

## ARTICLE X. LOCAL MISSIONAL LIVING

To be provided later.

## ARTICLE XI. GLOBAL MISSIONS

Section 1: Mission. Pursuant to the third component of our mission statement (refer to Article II, Section 3 above), Foothills Fellowship shall make disciples and establish church communities primarily among unreached people groups.

Section 2: Values. The following set of values shall govern our pursuit of global missions:

- (a) **Comprehensive missionary care.** We are committed to adequately preparing our global missionaries before they go; providing strong financial support for them over the duration of their missionary service; regularly corresponding with them while on the field; strongly upholding them in prayer at all times; facilitating the completion of their missionary assignment; and defining clear strategies for exit from the field and reentry to the United States of America for them.
- (b) **Centrality of the local church.** We are committed to the centrality of the local church in preparing, sending, and supporting global missionaries. Our global missionaries serve under the oversight and direction of the Board, which provides vision, strategy, and evaluation for them while on the field.
- (c) **Pauline model for planting, establishing, and ordering churches.** We are committed to planting cross-cultural, reproductive, indigenous churches. The missionary functions as an apostolic messenger by evangelizing a local area, gathering the new disciples into a local assembly, establishing the disciples in the way of Christ and the apostles, appointing leaders, and training the leaders to the point that they are able to train future leaders, teachers, and ministers.
- (d) **Church-wide involvement.** We are committed to involving as many people in the church as possible by exhorting and encouraging them to identify and exercise their individual and God-directed roles of sender, goer, mobilizer, welcomer, and/or intercessor.
- (e) **Partnerships.** We are committed to forging partnerships with other like-minded churches, organizations, and missions agencies who can help us accomplish our global mission.
- (f) **Holistic approach.** We are committed to a holistic approach to missions whereby we strive, through our missionaries, to meet not only the spiritual needs of people, but also their emotional, mental, physical, and material needs.

- (g) **Prayer.** Because we recognize that our global missions efforts are merely our participation with God in the work he is doing to build his kingdom, we passionately embrace our total reliance upon him, and we are committed to fervently seeking his guidance and his empowering of our efforts through consistent prayer.

## ARTICLE XII. INDEMNIFICATION OF ELDERS

Each and every Elder shall be indemnified by Foothills Fellowship against all expenses and liabilities reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him in connection with any proceeding to which he is a party by reason of his being or having been an Elder of Foothills Fellowship. The only exception to this requirement is the case wherein the Elder is determined to be guilty of negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties. In the event of a settlement, the indemnification herein specified shall apply only when the Board of Directors approves such settlement as being for the best interests of the corporation. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and not exclusive of all other rights to which an Elder may be entitled.

## ARTICLE XIII. DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS ON DISSOLUTION OR FINAL LIQUIDATION

In the event Foothills Fellowship is ever dissolved or liquidated, the assets of the corporation shall be distributed in the following manner pursuant to Section 53-8-48 NMSA, 1978 Comp as follows:

- (a) **Payment of liabilities.** The Board of Directors shall pay or make provision for the payment of all liabilities and obligations of the corporation.
- (b) **Distribution of remaining assets.** The Board of Directors shall distribute all remaining assets of the corporation among any one or more corporations, trusts, community chests, funds, or foundations described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and whose doctrinal position corresponds to that set forth in Article IV of the Constitution.