

# **Constitution of Pillar Church of San Diego**

## **Preamble**

This Constitution has been created in order to:

1. preserve and secure the principles of our faith,
2. preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church,
3. ensure freedom of action and independence from any religious body or organization, and
4. provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

## **Article I – Name**

The name of this organization shall be Pillar Church of San Diego.

## **Article II – Purpose**

This church exists to bring glory to God and display His character by knowing Jesus and making Him known. This church shall endeavor to accomplish this purpose by:

1. loving God and obeying His commandments,
2. equipping the saints through biblical preaching, instruction, and study,
3. proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Scripture,
4. encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work and the establishment of new churches – local, domestic, and international,
5. administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper,
6. encouraging biblical fellowship among believers, and
7. serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

## **Article III – Statement of Beliefs**

### *Section I – God:*

God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equals and one God.

The Father: God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.

The Son: Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death, and ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God the Father.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He lives in all Christians from the moment of salvation, providing them with power for living and guidance in doing what is right.

References: John 16:7-13; Galatians 5:22-25; John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4; Philippians 2:5-11; Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4.

### *Section 2 – Scripture:*

The Bible is God’s word to us. Human authors wrote the Bible under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because of its divine inspiration, the Bible is the supreme source of truth for all people. We believe that every word of the Bible is inspired and that, in its original form, the Bible has no error. We also believe that the Bible plays an indispensable role for the follower of Christ. It builds up, transforms, encourages, corrects, and protects the Christian as he or she studies and applies it.

References: Psalms 119:11; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 5:26; 6:17; Exodus 24:4; Psalms 40:8; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:105; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; John 16:12-15

### *Section 3 – Man:*

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Man’s decision to sin caused a division between Creator and creation leaving man in need of a Savior.

References: Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5;7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

### *Section 4 – Salvation:*

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

1. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.
2. Justification is God’s gracious and full acquittal, upon principles of His righteousness, of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.
3. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life.
4. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

References: Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25;4:3; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy

1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

#### *Section 5 – Ordinances:*

There are two ordinances for the New Testament church. The first, baptism, is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. Second, the Lord's Supper, is a symbolic act of obedience whereby followers memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

References: Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

#### *Section 6 – Evangelism and Church Planting:*

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ, and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. We believe that disciples are most effectively made in the context of the local church. Therefore, church planting and missions are of utmost importance. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every Christian to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ.

References: Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

#### *Section 7 – Gender Identity and Marriage:*

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God; marriage was created and instituted by God for the good of his creatures and creation in order to display his gracious love and to teach the world about how he would unite himself to his redeemed people through Jesus Christ; marriage is a single, exclusive, covenant union entered into by one man and one woman which God bears witness to; only within such union does God intend sexual intimacy to occur; any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God.

References: Genesis 1:26-28, 2:4-25, 9:1, 19:1-29; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1-30, 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; 1 Kings. 15:21; 2 Kings. 23:7; Job 31:1; Proverbs 2:16-20, 5:8, 9-20, 7:5, 10, 13, 21-22; Amos 2:7; Malachi. 2:14-15; Matthew 5:28, 31-32, 15:18-20, 19:3-12, Mark 6:18, 10:2-12; Romans 1:21-31, 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9-10, 18, 7:2-9, 36-39; Ephesians 4:24, 5:3-4, 25, 31-32; Colossians 3:5, 10; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Peter 2:14; Jude 6-7, Revelation 19:7-9

### **Article IV – Structure: Offices and Staff**

Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). He is the source of all that the Church is and does. His Word, the Bible, is our standard for every decision. Pillar Church's existence is for His pleasure and purpose alone.

Pillar Church believes that all Christians are ministers and priests of God (1 Peter 2:5-10), that all Christians have received spiritual gifts from God (Romans 12:3-6), and that all Christians have a special place of service in the church body (1 Corinthians 12). Pillar Church recognizes that God's plan for church leadership is not specified in the pages of the Bible. Therefore, Pillar Church's structure follows the example modeled by the early Christian church as recorded in the New Testament. Where Scripture is silent we seek through prayer and biblical principles to mold the structure to a form most useful for His work.

Two offices existed in the early Christian church: Elder and Deacon. The term elder is used synonymously with the terms Bishop, Overseer, and Pastor in the New Testament. For the purpose of this document, we will use the term elder to represent all four terms. All officers (elder or deacon) shall be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

#### *Section 1 – Elders:*

The leadership of this church shall be vested in the elders who are responsible to govern the church, giving themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer, thereby tending the flock of God in this church. The purpose of this office is to lovingly guide, give oversight to, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. This church shall maintain a plurality of elders, exemplifying the biblical model for church leadership as described in Acts 15:4; Acts 14:3; Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1; James 5:14.

Since the office of an elder is a biblical one, certain qualifications of spiritual maturity shall be met. Qualifications for elders are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. The Bible indicates that only men shall hold the office of elder; therefore, only male members shall be considered for this position. This church shall maintain a majority of the eldership as non-staff (unpaid) elders.

The responsibilities of the elders shall include:

1. examination and instruction of prospective members,
2. examination and recommendation of all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
3. overseeing the work of the deacons,
4. conducting worship services,
5. overseeing the administration of the ordinances of baptism and Lord's Supper,
6. equipping the membership for the work of the ministry,
7. encouraging sound doctrine and practice,
8. admonishing and correcting error,
9. overseeing the process of church discipline,
10. overseeing the ministries of this church,
11. mobilizing this church for world missions and the establishment of new churches, and
12. ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share this church's fundamental convictions as expressed in the Statement of Beliefs.

#### *Section 2 – Deacons:*

This church shall recognize men and women who are giving of themselves in service to this church, and who possess particular gifts of service. Qualifications for deacons are described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.

The responsibilities of the deacons shall include:

1. freeing the elders to provide spiritual oversight to the congregation,
2. assisting the elders by performing services of administration, and
3. attending to the physical needs of the congregation.

*Section 3 – Process:*

The members will be informed of the need of additional elders and may prayerfully submit names of persons they understand to be biblically qualified for the position. Prospective elders will be approached and examined by the current elders. If the candidate shows both willingness and aptitude for the office, he will enter an “elder-in-training” status that will last a designated amount of time, as determined by the current elders. Upon completion of this training, the candidate will move to the appointment category.

*Section 4 – Appointment:*

The election of officers shall be held at a members’ meeting.

Names of nominees to serve as officers shall be presented by the elders at least 1 month prior to the member’s meeting, and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The moderator shall declare elected all officers receiving a three-quarters vote of the members.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

*Section 5 – Staff Elder(s):*

The staff elder(s) shall perform the duties of elder described above and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the vocational ministry of preaching, teaching, and/or equipping.

*Section 6 – Support Staff:*

The elders may create or dissolve paid support staff positions. Support staff shall serve under the supervision of the elders. Support staff shall affirm and support the governing documents of this church, and shall exemplify godly character.

*Section 7 – Removal:*

An officer or support staff member’s term may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. For the support staff, a three-quarters vote of the elders is required. For an officer, a unanimous vote by the remaining elders is required.

*Section 8 – Resignation:*

When an elder or staff member chooses to terminate his relationship with the church, thereby resigning his position, or resigns his position and remains a member of the church, he shall present a letter of resignation. For the Staff elder, he should provide notice at least thirty days prior to the date of termination.

## **Article V – Membership**

### *Section 1 – Qualifications:*

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be:

1. a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
2. baptized by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and
3. willing to commit themselves to serve Jesus Christ through the ministry and vision of this church.

The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or other such evidence as the elders deem appropriate.

### *Section 2 – Admission:*

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall:

1. attend a membership class,
2. interview with at least two elders to give credible evidence of repentance of sin, faith in Christ, and understanding of the gospel,
3. commit to uphold, be governed by, and submit to the governing documents of this church,
4. be recommended by the elders for admission, and be presented before the gathered membership (weekly worship gathering or duly called members' meeting),
5. be at least 18 years of age (\*see note under Section 3).

### *Section 3 – Duties and Privileges:*

In accord with the duties described in the Group Life Membership Class, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of this church consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Further, members are privileged and expected to regularly attend its Lord's Day meetings, faithfully observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and submit to the church's discipline and instruction.

Only those who are members of this congregation shall serve in positions of leadership within the church. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under the oversight of the elders, persons from outside of the church may give instruction from the Scriptures for worship services, conferences, and other specifically determined occasions.

Under Christ, the members of this congregation shall have the final word in matters of doctrine, membership, discipline, and direction. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all Members' Meetings and participate in the affirmation of officers (thereby affirming doctrine), decisions regarding membership status (thereby affirming membership), the discipline of unrepentant members (thereby upholding discipline), the annual church budget (thereby affirming direction), and in other such matters that may be submitted by the elders to the congregation.

\*Children under the age of 18 shall fall under their parent's church membership and be allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper at the discretion of their parent. Should concern over this issue arise, one or more elders will discuss the matter with the child's parent. Matters of spiritual discipline for minor children will be handled by the parents/legal guardians of the child, under the appropriate headship of the home.

### *Section 4 – Discipline:*

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her scriptural duties as specified in the governing documents of this church, or who is otherwise guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church. Any such action shall be done in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; and any other pertinent Scriptures.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or members, suspension from participation in Lord's Supper, removal from office, and/or removal from membership. See Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

If private efforts to bring about the member's repentance and reconciliation are unsuccessful, one or more members shall bring the matter to the attention of the elders. The elders shall review and investigate the matter. After prayer and deliberation, the elders may:

1. dismiss the matter,
2. take disciplinary action, or
3. submit the matter to the members at a duly convened members' meeting for a decision.

If the members vote to discipline the member, it shall be announced to the members to carry out the biblical admonition to bring about repentance and restoration of the disciplined member. Members who have been removed from membership by the church shall be restored to full membership privileges according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 when their conduct is judged by the elders and the members to be in accordance with the governing documents and biblical repentance.

#### *Section 5 – Removal:*

This church shall recognize the removal of a person's membership:

1. upon the voluntary resignation of a member by letter,
2. upon joining in membership with another church,
3. by failure to attend worship and other ministry events at Pillar San Diego for three consecutive months, not having to do with military orders or other extenuating circumstances,
4. upon the death of the member, or
5. as an act of church discipline, upon the recommendation of the elders, and when three-quarters of the present members (provided there's a quorum) vote to terminate membership.

This church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation from membership for the purpose of:

1. proceeding with a process of church discipline,
2. to protect that member from following false teaching, or
3. for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent.

In these instances, this church has the right and responsibility to bring any disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make final determination as to the person's membership status in connection with that process.

## **Article VI – Meetings and Voting**

### *Section 1 – Worship Meetings:*

This church shall meet every Sunday (the Lord's Day) and may schedule any other meetings deemed necessary by the elders.

*Section 2 – Members' Meetings:*

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least three times per year, at some time apart from a public worship service. The date, time, and location of regular members' meetings shall be announced at the public service of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

Special members' meetings shall be called as required by the elders. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at the public service of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

A designated elder shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of this church. This is assigned on a rotating basis and will cycle through all of the current elders. The elders shall see that the stated meetings are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

A budget shall be approved by the members at a members' meeting not less than one month before the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures shall continue at the prior year's level. A fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

*Section 3 – Voting:*

A three-quarters vote is necessary on all matters. All votes shall be cast at a regular or special members' meeting and shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present, except in the case of proxy voting (\*see more below). Upon the discretion of the moderator, a members' meeting shall be postponed if a sufficient representation (quorum) of the membership is not in attendance. This determination will be made upon calling the meeting to order. If this is the case, the meeting will cease immediately and be rescheduled. Some matters presented to the members may require a period of consideration before voting. The elders shall determine the instances where this is the case.

\*Voting by proxy is allowed in special cases when official work-related or personal health issues prohibit a member from attending. Votes by proxy must be received before the calling to order of the members' meeting. It is the absentee member's responsibility to get the vote in on time and to inform the elders that they will not be present. Proxy voting is open for matters of church policy or discipline (budget, discipline, appointing offices).

## **Article VII – Affiliations**

This church shall be affiliated with the Praetorian Project, the Pillar Church Network, the San Diego Southern Baptist Association (SDSBA), the California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC), and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

## **Article VIII – Non-Profit Status and Disposition of Church Property**

This church is not organized for profit.

*Section 1 – Division:*

In the case of organic division of this church, all assets shall belong to those members who abide by this document as determined by Pillar Church of San Diego, CA.



*Section 2 – Dissolution:*

Should conditions arise when, for any reason, this church's work cannot continue, all assets shall be transferred to the San Diego Baptist Association for redistribution.

*Section 3 – Consolidation:*

Should the conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of similar biblical faith is advisable, the elders shall be authorized by a three-quarters vote of the members to negotiate the terms of such a consolidation. Should the terms of said negotiation be acceptable, the members shall approve the consolidation by a three-quarters vote.

### **Article IX – Revisions and Amendments**

Revisions or amendments to this Constitution shall be made only in the following manner:

1. Any member of the church can provide a suggested revision or amendment to this Constitution in writing to the elders of this church.
2. For a revision or amendment to this Constitution to be effected, the elders shall confirm its consistency with Scripture and unanimously affirm the revision or amendment.
3. After approval from the elders, the revision or amendment to the Constitution of this church shall be presented at a members' meeting for affirmation.
4. Any revision or amendment to this Constitution shall be approved by a three-quarters vote.

### **Article X – Indemnification**

The Church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to or witness in, any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that the person is or was an Elder, Deacon, or Support Staff Member against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by that person in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding to the fullest extent and in the manner set forth in and permitted by the Act and any other applicable law, as from time-to-time in effect. Such right of indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such Elder, Deacon, or Support Staff Member may be entitled apart from the foregoing provision. The foregoing provision of this Article shall be deemed to be a contract between the Church and each Elder, Deacon, and/or Support Staff Member who serves in such capacity at any time while this Article and the relevant provisions of the Act and other applicable law, if any, are in effect, and any repeal or modification thereof shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing, with respect to any state of facts then or theretofore existing, or any action, suit, or proceeding theretofore, or thereafter, brought or threatened based in whole or in part on any such state of facts.




Date: \_\_\_\_\_