

CONSTITUTION
of the
Redeemer Bible Church
Karen, Kenya

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 2018 under the name Redeemer Bible Church of Karen, Kenya, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Redeemer Bible Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves to closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Redeemer Bible Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the laws of Kenya and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is Redeemer Bible Church

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of our Triune God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities.

This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshipping Him;

Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and
any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and
international;

Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;

Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;

Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and
spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and

Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement
about the nature of the local church.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her

regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. 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 such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches (exception: associate members).

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

Membership in the church shall include the following:

Maintenance of a godly lifestyle, which must include personal and family devotions (Daniel 6:10, Genesis 18:19), separation from worldliness (James 4:4), and conscientiousness in the expression of one's Christian liberty (Romans 15:1-23).

Attendance at all the meetings of the church, eg. Sunday services, midweek meetings, business meetings, and any special meetings called upon by the elders (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:24-25).

Labouring to extend God's kingdom through the ministries of the church, according to their gifts, graces and calling (1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 4:7-16).

Financially supporting the work of the Lord by systematic and proportionate giving to the church. This shall be through tithing and free-will offerings (Malachi 3:8-10, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

Seeking the welfare of all other members (Hebrews 3:12-13) by, cultivating their acquaintance with them, praying for them (Ephesians 6:18), responding to their practical and spiritual needs (James 2:14-16, 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15), and refraining from all gossip and evil speaking about them (Proverbs 16:28).

Submitting to the elders as they discharge their duties of teaching and oversight, and co-operating with the deacons as they administer the ordinary and outward affairs of the church (Hebrews 13:17).

Section 4 – Associate Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the Nairobi area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that:

- (a) when absent from the Nairobi area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services;
- (b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Nairobi area.

Section 5 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonoured shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; I Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews 12:1–11; 24; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:2, 13–14; James 1:22);

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25);

For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5:6–7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10); and
Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; II Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; I Peter 2:12).

Section 6 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

Article 4 - Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, at some time apart from a

public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of secretary and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised two or more men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. If two biblically qualified elders cannot be identified, one elder may lead the church; however, this should be viewed as a temporary and undesirable situation. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and I Peter 5:1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. **Once elected, an elder continues to serve until he either resigns his office (with a thirty-day notice) or is dismissed by the church (with thirty days of severance pay, assuming he is salaried).** Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and I Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of elder. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemised budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

The church under the supervision of its elders shall do any of the following:

Receive money on deposit or loan and borrow or raise money in such a manner as the church shall think fit subject to such consents as many be required by law.

Purchase, take, receive, lease, take by gift, devise or bequest, or otherwise and own, hold, use, or otherwise deal in an with any real or personal property, or proprietary interest in and outside the republic of Kenya.

Sell, bequeath, convey, mortgage, [pledge, lease or otherwise dispose all or any part of its property and assets.

Purchase, take, receive, lease, and take by gift, devise or bequest, or otherwise and own, hold, use, or otherwise deal with any shares, intellectual property or other interests in societies in Kenya whether for profit as individuals or through partnerships and associations.

Enter into contracts and incur liabilities, open bank accounts, borrow money, to issue its notes, bonds and other obligations by mortgage, pledge, or deed of trust of all or any of its property, franchise, and income as appropriate.

Employ staff and volunteers in the work of the church as per the determination in members meetings.

Exercise any such powers in terms of investment from time to time of any real or personal property, to lend or borrow or to take hold of any real and personal property as security for funds so invested, borrowed or lent or such powers as are necessary and convenient in ensuring efficacy of the church functions.

Section 3 – Deacons & Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving

of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. **Upon election, a deacon shall serve for a term that consists of three years.**

Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

The deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section 4 – Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.

The secretary shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. In the absence or incapacity of the secretary the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church secretary.

The church secretary shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section 5 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, secretary, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least four weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

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

Article 7 – Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15–20, I Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 9 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church secretary.

Article 10 - Dissolution

The church may at any time be dissolved by resolution of a majority of two thirds of the members present and entitled to vote at an ordinary General Meeting of the church. In the event of such a resolution being passed, the elders or deacons (in the event that there are no elders) shall take the necessary steps to wind up the affairs of the church.

No donor, member, officer of the church, or private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets of the church upon dissolution. The assets shall be given only to another church of like faith and practice.