

Constitution and Bylaws of
Denia Community Church
Denton, Texas



Approved June 2, 2021

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PREAMBLE

Having been called by God to form Denia Community Church in Denton, Texas, we adopt this constitution and bylaws as our articles of governance. They are to be interpreted at all times in a way that glorifies God, accords with Scripture, and agrees with this church's articles of incorporation, doctrinal statement, and membership agreement.

ARTICLE I: IDENTITY

This congregation of believers in Jesus Christ shall be known as Denia Community Church (DCC). DCC is an independent, self-governing entity with no official connection to any outside body.

Denia Community Church is a spiritual family of saved sinners who love God, one another, and others. Because we love God, we trust, obey, adore, exalt, study, serve, worship, and pray to Him and desire others to do the same. Because we love one another, we serve, encourage, edify, support, pray for, and fellowship with one another and help each other grow in holiness, faith, hope, and love. Because we love others, we serve them, pray for them, share the truth of God's word and the good news of Jesus Christ with them, and invite them to join God's family. In reliance on the Holy Spirit, we prayerfully strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God by loving Him, one another, and others in accordance with Scripture until our Lord returns to reunite us with God forever.

DCC is a nonprofit corporation according to the laws of the State of Texas and is registered in the City of Denton, Denton County, Texas. It is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended. This nonprofit entity is formed for any lawful purpose or purposes under the laws of the State of the Texas Tax Code, Section 11.18 pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organizations, including any purpose described by Section 2.002 of the Texas Business Organization Code.

ARTICLE II: DOCTRINE

To promote orthodoxy and unity, Denia Community Church affirms three levels of doctrine.

Foundational doctrines identify us with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church that exists in all places and ages. Agreement with the foundational doctrines is required to *volunteer* at DCC.

Fundamental doctrines associate us with the Protestant evangelical tradition. Agreement with the fundamental doctrines is required for *membership* at DCC.

Distinctive doctrines situate us theologically among Protestant evangelicals. Agreement with the distinctive doctrines is required for *all officers and pastoral staff* at DCC.

Foundational Doctrines

In unity with the historic, universal church we affirm the *foundational doctrines* confessed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.¹

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

¹ Many Christians learned this line of the creed as “He descended into hell.” However, this departs from the official received text (the *textus receptus*) of the Apostles' Creed, miscommunicates what the early church confessed, and, most importantly, differs from what the Bible actually teaches. The earliest Latin copies of the creed read *inferus*, a reference to the place of the dead, which in Hebrew was called *Sheol* and in Greek *Hades*. In the fourth century, however, a Syrian monk named Rufinus changed *inferus* to *infernus*, a reference to the place of eternal perdition and punishment, i.e., hell. Thus what the Creed affirms is that after Jesus was crucified and died, His body was buried and His soul descended into Sheol/Hades, the place of the dead. On the third day Jesus rose body and soul from the dead, as will those who are in Christ when He returns.

The Nicene Creed (381)

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven;
He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come.

Amen.

Fundamental Doctrines

In unity with Protestant, evangelical Christians we affirm the following *fundamental doctrines*.

1. The Bible. The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God whose sixty-six books are the primary source and final authority in all matters of faith and practice.²

2. God. The one true God exists as a Trinity of three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each of whom is fully divine, yet there is only one God. The Triune God is eternal and immutable, omnipotent and omniscient, transcendent and immanent, compassionate and gracious, holy and loving. He is the sovereign creator, the gracious redeemer, and the righteous judge. God’s natural and moral perfections as well as His creative and redemptive works make Him alone worthy of our wholehearted adoration, allegiance, and obedience.³

3. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary to be fully human while remaining fully divine. He was the promised Messiah and the second Adam who lived a perfect life as humanity’s representative and died an atoning death as sinners’ substitute. He was resurrected bodily from the grave and ascended into heaven where He reigns as Lord and intercedes as high priest. When Christ returns, He will defeat God’s enemies, judge the living and the dead, hand over the kingdom to God the Father, and then dwell with the redeemed forever.⁴

4. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who regenerates, baptizes, seals, sanctifies, gifts, guides, illumines, empowers, comforts, helps, and produces fruit in believers. He indwells both the church as a whole and every individual believers, who are commanded to live and walk and to be led and filled by the Spirit.⁵

5. Humanity. Humans are made in God’s image and therefore possess inherent dignity and worth from conception until death. God makes humans either male or female at conception and confines sexual activity to a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. Humanity’s purpose is to glorify God by loving Him wholeheartedly and serving Him faithfully. Adam’s disobedience resulted in humanity’s condemnation and corruption, so that every person is born spiritually dead, alienated from God, subject to sin, and unable to save themselves.⁶

6. Salvation. In love God the Father accomplished salvation through the virgin birth, representative life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. Salvation involves union with Christ, propitiation, justification, forgiveness, redemption,

² Psalm 119; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2; 4:12–13; 2 Peter 1:19–21; 3:15–16.

³ Genesis 1:1; Exodus 10:1–11; 34:5–7; Deuteronomy 4:35–40; 6:4–5; Psalm 86:8–10; Isaiah 6:3; 45:5–25; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9–11; John 10:30; 17:3; 20–21; Romans 3:6; 11:33–36; 1 Corinthians 8:4–6; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 13:14; Ephesians 1:3–14; 4:5–6; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 4–5; 21–22.

⁴ Matthew 1:18–25; Mark 10:45; Luke 1:34–35; 24:1–6; 25–27; John 1:1–18; Acts 1:11; Romans 1:3–4; 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:13–19; Hebrews 1:1–2:3; 4:12–14; 7:25; 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Peter 1:1; 2:20; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:2–3, 9, 15; 5:20; 2 John 7; Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 19:11–16.

⁵ Luke 3:21–22; John 3:3–7; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–14; 1 Corinthians 2:10–14; 6:9; 2 Corinthians 3:1–6, 17–18; Romans 8:9, 14, 16, 27; Galatians 4:4–7; 5:16–25; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30; 5:18; Colossians 3:14; Titus 3:5.

⁶ Genesis 1:26–30; 2:7–9, 15–25; 3; 5:1–6:6; 9:6; Psalm 8; 51:5; Romans 1:18–3:20; 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–50; Ephesians 2:1–3.

regeneration, adoption, and reconciliation. Salvation is applied by the Holy Spirit to those who repent of their sins and embrace Jesus as their Savior and Lord by grace alone through faith alone on the basis of Christ alone. Salvation is confirmed by an orthodox gospel confession, the internal witness of the Spirit, and the testimony of a transformed life evidenced by increasing holiness and love.⁷

7. Sanctification. Christians are sanctified positionally, progressively, and perfectly. Positionally, God consecrates believers by identifying them with Himself and setting them apart for Himself. In this sense, every Christian is a saint—someone set apart by God as holy to live a holy life and fulfill a holy purpose. Progressively, God calls and causes Christians to grow in holiness, conforming them to the image of Christ and producing in them the fruit of the Spirit. Ultimately, God will perfect His children in holiness and resurrect them in glorified bodies. Christians are expected to live in Christlike holiness, obedience, and love through the Holy Spirit and to confess and repent of their sins when they do not. Scripture summarizes sanctification as wholehearted love for God, Christ-like love for Christians, and selfless love for others.⁸

8. The Church. The Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is comprised of regenerate Christians, who receive spiritual gifts to edify the church in unity and love. Membership in the universal church is enjoyed and expressed through committed, active participation in a local church community. The mission of the church is to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded us.⁹

9. Ordinances. The New Testament establishes two ordinances for the church: the Lord's Supper and baptism. The Lord's Supper is to be observed regularly in remembrance of Christ's atoning death, in celebration of His communion with His Church, and in anticipation of His return. Baptism symbolizes a convert's repentance, salvation, consecration, and cleansing and indicates his or her identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus and his or her incorporation into the body of Christ, the church. Water baptism is obligatory but not salvific.¹⁰

10. Eternity. Christ is returning to judge the living and the dead and will righteously consign every soul to either eternal bliss or eternal judgment. The blessed hope of the church is to live forever on the new earth in glorified bodies in the glorious, loving presence of the Triune God.¹¹

Distinctive Doctrines

⁷ Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; John 1:12; 3; Acts 2:37–38; 4:12; 10:42–43; 16:30–31; Romans 1:16–17; 3:21–5:11; 6:23; 8:29–30; 10:9–10; 1 Corinthians 3:5–7; 15:1–4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:3–9; 2:15–21; Philippians 2:5–11; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:1–11; Colossians 1:13–14; 1 Peter 1:17–21; 1 John 2:1–2; 5:11–13.

⁸ Exodus 20:1–17; Deuteronomy 6:1–9; 10:12–14; Matthew 7:21–23; 22:37–40; John 13:34–35; Mark 3:35; Luke 6:46; John 17:17; Romans 6; 8:12–14; Galatians 5:13–26; Colossians 3:1–17; 1 John 3–4.

⁹ Matthew 16:18; 18:15–20; 28:16–20; Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 3:5–17; 12–14; Ephesians 2:11–22; 4:1–16; 5:23–32; Colossians 1:18–29; Hebrews 10:19–25; Revelation 2–3.

¹⁰ Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 22:14–21; Acts 8:12, 36–38; 16:32–33; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34.

¹¹ Matthew 13:36–50; 24:31–46; 25; John 3:36; 4:36; 5:28–29; 6:40; 11:23–27; 14:1–3; Acts 1:11; Romans 8:18–39; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–12; Revelation 19–22.

With regards to doctrines that distinguish Protestant, evangelical Christians, Denia Community Church affirms the following *distinctive* doctrines:

The verbal plenary inerrancy of Scripture, which affirms that the entirety of the Bible, including every word of the autographs, is inspired by God and therefore completely accurate and without error in what it asserts as true.¹²

A Reformed view of the total depravity of fallen humanity, the sovereign grace of God in salvation, and the eternal security of the redeemed.¹³

An elder-rule church polity, which believes that the church government best fitting Scripture is for each local church to be self-governed by a plurality of biblically qualified elders.¹⁴

Believers' baptism by immersion performed in obedience to Christ but not to effect salvation.¹⁵

A premillennial view of the end times, which distinguishes between the church and Israel and anticipates a thousand year reign of Christ on earth prior to the final judgment and eternity.¹⁶

A cautious view of the sign gifts, which does not deny the possibility that tongues, prophecies, and healings might occur but insists that they be practiced and interpreted biblically as well as be tested to see whether they are indeed from God.¹⁷

A complementarian view of gender roles, which affirms the equal value and dignity of men and women but recognizes a divinely ordained distinction in their roles in the church and family as defined by Scripture.¹⁸

DCC volunteers are expected to affirm the foundational doctrines confessed in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. DCC members and employees are expected to affirm both these foundational and fundamental doctrines. DCC officers (elders, deacons, and deaconesses) and ministry staff are expected to affirm these foundational, fundamental, and distinctive doctrines in writing each year. If at any time a volunteer, member, officer, or ministry staff rejects any doctrine they are required to affirm, they will bring this to the attention of the DCC elders. If after discussion and prayer their doctrinal disagreement cannot be resolved, they will resign their position or may be forced to do so. DCC volunteers, members, officers, ministry staff, and employees agree not to undermine or contradict the DCC doctrinal statement so as to create confusion, dissension, or division.

Denia Community Church in general, and its elders in particular, are obligated to teach and practice whatever the Bible reveals and commands. Under Christ's headship, the DCC elders have the ultimate authority and final decision in all matters of interpretation relating to the doctrine, practice, policy,

¹² Psalm 119; Matthew 5:17–18; John 10:34–35; 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:13; 3:16–17; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:23–25.

¹³ Matthew 11:17; John 6:44, 55; 10:25–30; Romans 1:18–3:20; 8:31–39; 9; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:1–3.

¹⁴ Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; 5:17–22; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Hebrews 13:17.

¹⁵ Matthew 3:1–17; 28:18–20; John 4:1–2; Acts 8:12, 36–38; 16:32–33; Corinthians 1:17.

¹⁶ Revelation 20:1–7.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 12–14; Hebrews 2:3–4; 1 John 4:1.

¹⁸ Genesis 2:7, 22; 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1–16; 14:34–36; Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:9–15; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1–7.

and discipline of DCC. Alteration of any DCC doctrine can only be made by the elders and must be announced to the church.

God is DCC's ultimate authority in all matters, and He has revealed His truth and His will in His inspired and inerrant Bible. Therefore at no time and for no reason will DCC deny, alter, neglect, or disobey any clear teaching of Scripture, no matter what civil authorities may legislate or public pressure attempt to compel, for "we must obey God rather than men."¹⁹

ARTICLE III: GOVERNMENT

The New Testament explicitly identifies two church offices: elders, who pastor, oversee, and rule the church, and deacons, who serve the church under the oversight of the elders. The office of deaconess is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture but has been practiced since the second century, may be preceded in Scripture (Romans 16:1), and is valuable for serving the needs of women in the church. Accordingly, Denia Community Church shall be governed by an Elder Board and served by deacons and deaconesses.

Other ministry staff and employee positions may be added at the elders' discretion. All elders, deacons, deaconesses, and ministry staff shall be members of Denia Community Church and shall be selected, governed, and retained in accordance with the doctrinal and moral standards prescribed by God in Scripture as summarized in the doctrine section and interpreted by the elders.

A. Elders

Authority. Ultimate authority in the church resides in Jesus Christ, its head (Ephesians 1:22–23; Colossians 1:18). Christ mediates His authority over local churches through qualified elders whom the Spirit appoints and directs (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1–5). Therefore the elders of Denia Community Church shall have final authority to oversee all church matters at DCC. This authority includes but is not limited to:

- Ensuring the biblical fidelity, holy character, loving demeanor, and faithful direction of DCC.
- Selecting and removing elders, deacons, deaconesses, ministry staff, employees, and volunteers, as well as defining their duties and determining their terms and compensation.
- Controlling all funds, properties, and resources of the church.
- Approving and handling all financial and legal commitments.
- Determining the locations, times, participants, and agendas of church gatherings.
- Setting, approving, and altering all policies, practices, and procedures.
- Defining and approving church membership and exercising church discipline.
- Resolving disputes between church members.
- Representing the church to outside individuals, parties, and communities.
- Entering into agreements and arrangements with outside individuals and parties.

¹⁹ Acts 5:29. See also Daniel 1:8; 3:16–18; 6:5–10; Matthew 10:22; 24:9–13; Acts 4:19; Revelation 2:7, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7.

Qualifications. Elders must be regenerate, faithful, and mature disciples of Jesus Christ who meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. The overarching criterion is that they be “above reproach” (1 Timothy 5:7; Titus 1:6, 7), which includes, but is not exhausted by, the characteristics listed in these passages. Scripture requires elders to be doctrinally sound, spiritually mature, ministerially capable, Christlike, Spirit-filled, respectable family men who are humble and holy, prayerful and wise, and reliable and discrete.

DCC understands the requirement “the husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6) to refer to marital fidelity and not to preclude unmarried, divorced, or widowed men from consideration. The requirement to “not lay hands upon anyone too hastily” (1 Timothy 5:22) does preclude new believers from consideration. Because the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write, “I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man” (1 Timothy 2:12), the office of elders, which necessarily involves teaching and exercising authority over men, is limited to biological males.

Responsibilities. Elders are responsible for the spiritual care, administrative oversight, orderly worship, and financial stewardship of the church, and for maintaining its doctrinal and moral fidelity. This includes: shepherding and guarding God’s flock (Acts 20:28), overseeing God’s church (1 Peter 5:2–3), devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4), proving themselves to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), praying for the sick (James 5:14–15), faithfully stewarding God’s mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1–2), exhorting in sound doctrine and refuting those who contradict (Titus 1:9), ensuring that things are done properly and in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40), equipping the saints for the work of service (Ephesians 4:11–12), and exercising church discipline (Matthew 18:15–18). The DCC elders care of God’s church and keep watch over the souls of its members, for which they will give an account to God (1 Timothy 3:5; Hebrews 13:17).

Appointment. After the initial group of elders has been installed, subsequent elders will be selected and installed by existing elders. Potential elders must be qualified, willing, and able to perform the responsibilities of elders, as set forth above. Elder candidates will be presented to the church no less than two weeks prior to their installation to ensure that they are “above reproach” and acceptable to the church. Church members having questions, concerns, or objections about an elder candidate should present them in person to the existing elders, who will investigate them and determine whether they disqualify the candidate from consideration. Following this period of member confirmation, the elders will be officially installed by the existing elders with the laying on the hands (1 Timothy 5:22).

Number. New Testament churches were governed by a plurality of elders, so DCC will be as well. Ideally there should be no less than three and no more than necessary and practical. The term of membership shall be for an indefinite period of time or may be removed for cause.

Parity. Elders share equal authority and status, except for the elder designated “Senior Pastor” who will be considered “first among equals” and function as the chief executive officer of the church. As such the elder designated Senior Pastor will: (1) bear primary responsibility for preaching and teaching, (2) call and preside over meetings of the Elder Board and see that the all orders and resolutions of the board are carried into effect; (3) call and preside over church business meetings; (4) have the tie-breaking vote if an even number of elders cannot reach a majority decision; (5) shall have general management of the business of the church and general supervision of ministry staff and church employees, including the authority to hire and release employees (hiring and releasing ministry staff

requires elder board approval); (6) shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees; and (7) shall have the general powers and duties of supervision and management usually vested in the office of president of an organization. The Senior Pastor will be supported by and accountable to the rest of the Elder Board.

Meetings. The elders of DCC will meet regularly, and are expected to attend regularly, to discuss and pray for the church and to make whatever decisions are required. Elders unable to be present physically should attempt to be present electronically. The Senior Pastor shall determine the agendas and direct the meetings. Minutes or recordings of these meetings shall be made, preserved, and made available to elders upon request.

Quorum. A majority of the Elders shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the board.

Decisions. A majority of elders shall constitute a quorum, including elders attending electronically so they can hear and be heard. and a majority vote is sufficient to make a decision unless the Constitution and Bylaws specify otherwise, including votes submitted via email, text, or other preservable form of communication. In instances where an even number of elders are evenly divided, the Senior Pastor has the authority to make the tie-breaking vote. In order to promote and preserve unity, elders will attempt to reach unanimous consensus on decisions and agree to speak with a unified voice (“the elders have decided”) when making decisions known. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Elder Board under any provision of law may be taken without a meeting, if members of the board shall individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the board. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the directors. Any certificate or other document filed under any provision of law which relates to action so taken shall state that the action was taken by the written consent of the board of directors without a meeting and that the bylaws of this organization authorize the Elder Board to so act and such statement shall be prima facie evidence of such authority.

Term. An elder may remain in office as long as he is qualified, able, and willing to do so. Elders must recommit annually and also reaffirm their agreement with DCC’s foundational, fundamental, and distinctive doctrines. Elders who request a leave of absence may rejoin the elder board without going through reinstallation so long as they (1) reconfirm their agreement with DCC doctrine, (2) are still deemed qualified and capable by the currently serving elders, and (3) have not been absent from the elder board more than two years. An elder who is absent from office more than two years may still be reappointed through the regular selection and installation process.

An elder may resign by officially submitting his resignation to the elders in writing. Elders considering resignation should discuss this with the other elders before doing so and if possible should complete their year of service and leave adequate time to select and install a replacement.

An elder may be removed by the other elders if he no longer (1) meets the qualifications of an elder, (2) is able to perform the responsibilities of an elder, (3) affirms DCC’s foundational, fundamental, and distinctive doctrines, or (4) is able to serve harmoniously with the elders, deacons, deaconesses, and staff and to minister lovingly and effectively to the members of the church. Reasons for removal could include (but are not limited to) marital infidelity, abandonment, or abuse; gross sexual

immorality; misappropriation of church funds or misuse of church resources; characteristic anger, belligerence, or divisiveness; and, conviction of a felony that does not constitute persecution against Christians. Accusations against an elder will only be received on the basis of two or more witnesses or incontrovertible evidence (1 Timothy 5:19). Elders under investigation for removal may not have a vote in the removal proceedings or be counted for the purpose of establishing a quorum. If after a thorough investigation an elder is found guilty of a disqualifying sin and persists in his sin, he should be rebuked in the presence of the church (1 Timothy 5:20).

B. Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons are a second church office explicitly mentioned in the New Testament (Philippians 1:1), so DCC will install deacons. The deacons serve the church under the direction and oversight of the elders so that the elders can devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4).

Deaconesses. Female deacons, or deaconesses, may be mentioned in Scripture (e.g., Romans 16:1), were appointed by the early church, and are useful for serving women in ways most appropriate for other women. Therefore, DCC will install deaconesses as well as deacons. However, deaconesses are not permitted to perform functions prohibited by Scripture (e.g., teach or exercise authority over men; 1 Timothy 2:12).

Qualifications. The qualifications of deacons (and deaconesses) are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

⁸ Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹ Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

DCC understands the requirement to be “the husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:12; or, in the case of deaconesses, the wife of one husband) to refer to marital fidelity and not to preclude unmarried, divorced, or widowed men or women from consideration.

Responsibilities. The office of deacon or deaconess do not involve exercising authority, spiritual oversight, or teaching Scripture like the office of elder but rather caring for the physical needs of church members, preparing facilities for public worship, and performing other tasks and duties prescribed by the elders. Deaconesses may be asked by the elders to serve female members of the church in areas where it is more or only appropriate for a woman to serve another woman. Deaconesses are not, however, permitted to teach or exercise authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12).

Appointment. Deacons and deaconesses will be selected and installed by the elders. Potential deacons and deaconesses must be qualified, willing, and able to perform the responsibilities set forth above. Deacon/deaconess candidates will be presented to the church no less than two weeks prior to their installation to ensure that they are qualified and acceptable to the church. Church members having questions, concerns, or objections about deacon/deaconess candidate should present them in person to the elders, who will investigate them and determine whether they disqualify the candidate from consideration. Following this period of member confirmation, the deacon/deaconess will be officially installed by the existing elders with the laying on the hands (Acts 6:6).

Term. A deacon or deaconess may remain in office as long as he or she is qualified, able, and willing to do so. Deacons and deaconess who request a leave of absence may resume their office without going through reinstallation so long as they (1) reconfirm their agreement with DCC doctrine, (2) are still deemed qualified and capable by the currently serving elders, and (3) have not been absent more than two years. A deacon or deaconess who is absent from office more than two years may still be reappointed through the regular selection and installation process. A deacon or deaconess desiring to resign should discuss this with the elders and present their resignation in writing.

A deacon or deaconess may be removed by the elders if he or she no longer (1) meets the qualifications of a deacon/deaconess, (2) is able to perform the responsibilities of a deacon/deaconess, (3) affirms DCC's foundational, fundamental, and distinctive doctrines, or (4) is able to serve harmoniously with the elders, deacons, deaconesses, and staff and to minister lovingly to the members of the church. Accusations against or concerns about a deacon or deaconess should be made directly to the elders and will only be acted upon after careful investigation.

C. Ministry Staff and Employees

The elders may hire full- and part-time ministry staff and employees. Ministry staff perform ministerial functions, such as teaching Scripture, discipling members, directing worship, and counseling. Employees perform non-ministerial functions, such as administrative work and caring for facilities.

Ministry staff and employees are alike in that:

- They must affirm and remain in agreement with the DCC foundational and fundamental doctrines as set forth in the DCC Constitution and Bylaws.
- The elders define their duties, determine their compensation, set their term, and if necessary exercise discipline or remove them from their position.
- The Senior Pastor approves their hire and directs their activities, though he may delegate their management.
- They shall undergo initial and intermittent background checks.
- They are expected to conduct themselves in faithfulness, holiness, and love as is befitting their association with DCC and, more importantly, with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ministry staff are unlike employees in that they:

- Must be DCC members in good standing.
- Must affirm and remain in agreement with the DCC foundational, fundamental, and distinctive doctrines as set for in the DCC Constitution and Bylaws.
- Are expected to meet the character qualifications of an elder, deacon, or deaconess, depending on the nature of their ministry service.
- Shall be interviewed and hired by the elders and can only be removed with elder approval.
- Shall be spiritually shepherded and disciplined by the officers of the church.
- May be ordained, licensed, or commissioned.

- *Ordination* is the formal recognition by the elders that someone has been called to vocational ministry and their official endorsement of that person to minister so long as they remain biblically qualified to do so.
- *Licensing* is the formal recognition by the elders that someone has been called to bi-vocational ministry and their official endorsement of that person to minister so long as they remain biblically qualified to do so.
- *Commissioning* is the formal recognition and official endorsement by the elders that someone is qualified to minister for a particular period (such as serving for a stint in missions) or for particular occasions (such as officiating weddings).

The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable to the Board of Elders. Ministry staff and employees are responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor, though he may delegate their management to other ministry staff and employees.

D. Sabbaticals.

The elders may at their discretion grant paid sabbaticals to the Senior Pastor and ministry staff, and unpaid sabbaticals to elders, deacons, and deaconesses from their duties. The duration, location, and nature of the sabbatical will be determined by the elders on a case-by-case basis.

E. Indemnification

No elder, deacon, deaconess, ministry staff, employee, member, or approved volunteer or agent of the church shall by virtue of such office, position, membership, or association incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts, or omissions of this church corporation. DCC has the full power to indemnify and advance or reimburse expenses pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Business Organizations Code to any person entitled to indemnification under the provisions of the Texas Business Organizations Code.

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an elder, deacon, deaconess, ministry staff, employee, member, or approved volunteer or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if a majority of 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 (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. With the decision 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.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

All Christians are members of the household of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit—the one, holy, universal, apostolic church.²⁰ They enjoy and express these memberships through their identification with, commitment to, and active participation in a local church community. Therefore Denia Community Church shall have formal church membership as a means of enjoying and expressing our membership in God's family, Christ's body, and the Spirit's temple.

²⁰ Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4–31; Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 4:11–16.

The DCC elders have the authority and responsibility to define and uphold the biblical qualifications for membership, to evaluate and approve candidates for membership, to determine which roles and activities should be limited to members, to oversee and spiritually shepherd members, and to discipline and restore members.

A. Qualifications

To qualify for membership at DCC a person must:

- Be a Christian.

He or she must have repented of their sins and embraced Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord by grace through faith so that he or she has been redeemed by God, identified with Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. A profession of saving faith must be validated by an orthodox confession of the gospel the witness of a transformed life.

- Be baptized.

He or she shall have been baptized as the biblically required expression of his/her repentance for sin and commitment to Christ. DCC believes believers' baptism by immersion to be the consistent pattern of Scripture and therefore the preferred way for churches to practice the ordinance of baptism. Those who received infant baptism should discuss this with the elders.

- Be in agreement with DCC's foundational and fundamental doctrines.
- Be living in a biblical manner that demonstrates love for God, other Christians, and others.

B. Process

To become a member at DCC a person should:

- Complete DCC's membership instruction.
- Sign DCC's Membership Agreement.
- Share his/her testimony and discuss his/her membership application with an elder or an elder-designated church officer or ministry staff.
- Have his/her membership application officially approved by the elders.

Qualified applicants who complete the membership process and are officially approved by the elders shall be made official members of Denia Community Church.

C. Commitments

DCC members commit by God's grace to:

Love God by

- Affirming His Word.
- Obeying His commands.
- Giving to His work.

- Gathering regularly to worship Him on the Lord's Day – physically if possible and electronically if not.

Love One Another by

- Participating actively in the church family.
- Praying for the church family.
- Serving the church family.
- Keeping the “one another” commands of Scripture.

Love Others by

- Welcoming them.
- Serving them.
- Praying for them.
- Sharing with them the good news of Jesus Christ.

D. Discipline

Church discipline is commanded by Christ and therefore will be exercised at Denia Community Church (Matthew 18:15–20). Church discipline is an act of love—love for God in obeying His will, love for the church in protecting it from sin, love for others by preserving the church's witness, and love for the offending member, who is making choices harmful to him/herself and others. Church discipline is neither hateful nor punitive but rather an act of loving commitment with the goals of genuine repentance and full restoration. Members who repent of their sin and are restored to fellowship are to be forgiven, comforted, and reassured of the church's love (2 Corinthians 2:6–7). Church members who refuse to repent may have their sin reported and their membership rescinded (Matthew 18:17). Non-members who attend and participate in church events at DCC for at least three months may be considered de facto members for church discipline purposes, even without formal church membership.

Reasons for conducting church discipline include but are not limited to:

- Rejecting biblical instruction (2 Thessalonians 3:14–15)
- Factiousness and divisiveness (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10–11)
- False teaching (2 Peter 2:1–3; 2 John 10)
- Disorderliness (2 Thessalonians 3:6)
- Sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1–13)

The DCC elders have the ultimate authority and responsibility to discipline, restore, and remove DCC members according to relevant Scripture guidelines (e.g., Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 2 Corinthians 2:6–8; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; Galatians 6:1–2). If a member departs from DCC while under church discipline and attends another church or ministry, the DCC elders may inform that church's or organization's leadership of the disciplinary action, along with the grounds for that

action. The DCC elders may share information about a disciplined church member to other persons or parties whom they deem to have the need or right to know.

D. Resignation/Rescission

A DCC member can/may resign his or her membership at any time by submitting a written letter to the elders. The DCC elders can rescind a person's membership (1) as an act of church discipline, (2) if the member moves from the area, (3) if the member is absent from DCC services for an extended time without a compelling reason, or (4) upon the member's death.

ARTICLE V: FINANCES

Churches are stewards of God's gospel, revelation, people, and resources, and they must use their God-given resources to serve His people, convey His revelation, and proclaim His gospel. Therefore, DCC will utilize its financial resources in a way that honors God and preserves its integrity in the eyes of the world (2 Corinthians 8:19–21). To do so DCC will maintain wise, responsible, and accountable control over all funds and gifts it receives and ensure that all gifts are used for to the church's biblical and tax-exempt purposes.

Fiscal Year. The elders shall set, and can change, the church's fiscal year. Unless a change is made, DCC's fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of the same calendar year.

Treasurer. One elder shall be designated "Treasurer" to supervise the church's finances. He may, with elder approval, delegate part of this responsibility to DCC deacons, deaconesses, ministry staff, employees, and members and may also employ outside accountants, advisors, agents, and legal counsel. The treasurer shall: (1) ensure that church funds and securities are held in appropriate institutions; (2) keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in records belonging to the church; (3) implement adequate controls to guarantee that church funds are handled appropriately; (4) create financial reports; and (5) provide an annual financial report to the church's members. In the absence or incapacity of the treasurer, the elders shall appoint another member to perform the duties of the treasurer until such time as some person can be duly recognized by the church as the treasurer. The treasurer shall be appointed by the elders and serve until he resigns or is incapacitated or removed.

Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor will not be able to withdraw money or write checks from the church account. Nor will he have knowledge of what individual members give, unless special circumstances warrant it and the elders approve it.

Contributions. Contributions shall be collected by two approved individuals—ideally the Treasurer and another consistent assistant—who will count and record them that same day. These contributions will be entered into secure software and then deposited in the church's bank account within the following work week. DCC may arrange for electronic contributions as well. DCC may accept designated contributions, grants, bequests, or gifts provided that they are in concord with the church's identity, mission, values, and reputation and that they comply with relevant local, state, and federal laws so as not to jeopardize the church's tax-exempt status or good legal standing. DCC shall reserve all right, control, title to and interest in such contributions, as well as full discretion as to their expenditure or distribution thereof.

Checks. Elders other than the Senior Pastor may sign checks up to \$3,000. Checks over \$3,000 require two elder signatures. The elders may also authorize a deacon, deaconess, ministry staff, or employee to sign checks up to \$500.

Assets. Elders have the authority to purchase, lease, rent, or sell assets, and to authorize a deacon, deaconess, ministry staff, or employee to do so on their behalf and with their approval. All property, real or chattel, shall be purchased, received, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the church's name. No real or chattel property of the church shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated without authorization of the DCC elders.

Dissolution. In the event that Denia Community Church ceases to exist, the elders shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the church, distribute its assets to tax-exempt, non-profit organizations that are of similar Christian purpose and values.

Loans. The church is prohibited from making any loan to any elder, deacon, deaconess, ministry staff, or employee. The church elders shall have the authority to enter into lending transactions with banks and other providers of financial services to further its tax exempt ministry purposes.

Compensation. The elders shall provide regular and reasonable compensation to the Senior Pastor, ministry staff, and employees, which shall be reviewed. The Senior Pastor and other full-time ministry staff and employees shall have no less than two weeks paid vacation each calendar year.

Benevolence. The elders at their discretion may offer benevolence funds and purchases to help meet the material and financial needs of church members and others.

ARTICLE VI: MISCELLANEOUS

Privacy. DCC shall take care to keep its members' information private, such as their membership applications, written testimonies, attendance, financial contributions, and counseling records. The elders do have the right to share information they deem necessary to appropriate persons and parties if they deem it necessary for the well-being of a member or the protection of others. No request shall ever be released to any government authority without due process and a valid subpoena delivered by the proper government agency.

Baptisms. Baptisms will be performed by immersion based upon a credible confession of saving faith and conversion as determined by the elders. Parents and spouses may baptize their children or spouse so long as they themselves are Christians currently living in Christlike manner as determined by the elders. Other persons may perform baptism as well with elder approval. Infant baptisms will not be performed at DCC, though baby dedications will.

Weddings. Weddings may be officiated by ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers who are endorsed or recognized by the DCC elders. However, the involvement of DCC ministers or the use of DCC facilities is only permitted for weddings that are biblically permissible. This means

- DCC will only perform and host weddings between a biological male and a biological female.
- DCC will only perform and host weddings between two Christians.
- DCC will only perform and host monogamous marriages.

In instances where one or both parties have been divorced, the elders will determine whether the circumstances in that particular instance permit remarriage.

In instances where the engaged couple is sexually active or cohabiting, the elders will determine what steps the couple need to take before endorsing or officiating their wedding.

DCC does not recognize or condone homosexual or polygamous marriages, even if governing authorities permit, provide for, or require their recognition. DCC's religious convictions require it to subscribe to Scriptural definitions, prescriptions, and prohibitions in all matters regarding sexual identity and activity.

Plants. DCC may plant other churches, which will initially be led by persons selected by the DCC elders and governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of Denia Community Church until such time as they draft and approve their own.

Missions. DCC may send and support full-time, part-time, and short-term missionaries who are in agreement with its foundational and fundamental doctrines and compatible with its mission and values.

ARTICLE VII: AMMENDMENTS

The Constitution and Bylaws of Denia Community Church may be altered, amended, repealed, or replaced by the Elders. Any and all changes will be recorded and explained in this section of the DCC Constitution and Bylaws and announced and explained to the church members at the next annual members meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: SUPPLEMENTS

SUPPLEMENT A: DCC MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

Having repented of my sins and embraced Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, I affirm that I am a regenerate member of God's household, Christ's body, and the Holy Spirit's temple—the one, holy, universal, apostolic church. I desire to enjoy and express these memberships by becoming a member of Denia Community Church. In doing so I affirm that I agree with DCC's foundational and fundamental doctrines, that I agree to abide by DCC's constitution and bylaws, and that I agree to submit myself to church discipline if DCC's leaders deem it necessary.

I therefore commit myself by God's grace to obey the Bible's three great love commandments: to love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, to love my brothers and sisters in Christ as Christ loved me, and to love my neighbors as myself.

I commit to love God by affirming His Word, obeying His commands, giving to His work, and gathering regularly to worship Him on the Lord's Day—physically if I am able and electronically if I am not.

I commit to love my brothers and sisters in Christ by participating actively in the church, serving and praying for the church family, and keeping the "one another" commands of Scripture.

I commit to love others by welcoming them, serving them, praying for them, and sharing with them the good news of Jesus Christ.

Signed the _____ day of _____, _____.

Signature _____ Printed Name _____

Approved the _____ day of _____, _____.

SUPPLEMENT B: THE “ONE ANOTHER” COMMANDS

- “Love one another” (John 13:34).
- “Love one another” (John 13:34).
- “Have love for one another” (John 13:35).
- “Love one another” (John 15:12).
- “Love one another” (John 15:17).
- “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love” (Romans 12:10).
- “Love one another” (Romans 13:8).
- “Increase and abound in love for one another” (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- “Love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9).
- “The love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater” (2 Thessalonians 1:3).
- “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24).
- “Fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22).
- “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another” (1 Peter 4:8).
- “We should love one another” (1 John 3:11).
- “This is His commandment, that we ... love one another” (1 John 3:23).
- “Beloved, let us love one another” (1 John 4:7).
- “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).
- “If we love one another, God abides in us” (1 John 4:12).
- “We love one another” (2 John 1:5).
-
- “Be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50).
- “Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19).
- “Be of the same mind with one another” (Romans 15:5)
- “Live at peace with one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
-
- “Wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14).
- “Through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:15).
- “Bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2)
- “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another” (1 Peter 4:10).
- “Give preference to one another in honor” (Romans 12:10).
- “Stop depriving one another” (1 Corinthians 7:5).
- “Wait for one another” (1 Corinthians 11:33).
- “Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).
- “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).
-
- “Forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).
- “Forgiving each other” (Colossians 3:13).

“Let us not judge one another” (Romans 14:13).

“Accept one another” (Romans 15:7).

“Showing tolerance for one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2).

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted” (Ephesians 4:32).

“Bearing with one another” (Colossians 3:13).

“Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another” (1 Peter 5:5).

“Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16).

“Greet one another with a holy kiss” (1 Corinthians 16:20).

“Greet one another with a holy kiss” (2 Corinthians 13:12).

“Greet one another with a kiss of love” (1 Peter 5:14).

“Admonish one another” (Romans 15:14).

“Speak truth ... for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25).

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19).

“With all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another” (Colossians 3:16).

“Comfort one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

“Build up one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

“Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people” (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

“Encourage one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

“Encourage one another” (Hebrews 3:13).

“Encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:25).

“Confess your sins to one another” (James 5:16).

“Pray for one another” (James 5:16).

“Be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Peter 4:9).

“Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another” (Galatians 5:26).

“Do not lie to one another” (Colossians 3:9).

“Do not speak against one another” (James 4:11).

“Do not complain ... against one another” (James 5:9).

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

We, the elders of Denia Community Church, a Texas Nonprofit Corporation, do hereby certify that the attached Constitution and Bylaws were officially adopted on June 2, 2021, and do now constitute the Constitution and Bylaws of Denia Community Church.

John Robert Brown (Elder / Senior Pastor)

Jonathan David Brown (Elder / Treasurer)

Frederick Pierce Cummings (Elder / Secretary)