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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

 The First Community Church of Buckeye Lakehad its inception in 1921 when Charles F. Miller of Basil began holding services on park benches in the rear of the Lake Breeze Hotel. The Church continued in a cottage on Mill Street called "Liberty Hall" until a successful building campaign resulted in the erection of the Miller Church in 1923.

 For over 24 years Rev. Charles Miller pastored the little Church on Picnic Point and, in 1947, upon his death, "Miller Church" closed its doors.

 The Church remained closed for six weeks until interested Christians, with the assistance of ministers from the First Community Church in Columbus, formed a constitution and changed the name to the "Miller Memorial Community Church" affiliated with the International Council of Community Churches of Columbus, Ohio.

 In August, 1947, Rev. Charles Alspach of Canal Winchester was engaged as Pastor and he served faithfully until April 19, 1953.

 Continuing the progress of Miller Memorial Community Church, on April 26, 1953 Howard A. Meacham was engaged as Pastor and the need for a larger Church became evident. In 1953 the Church purchased two acres of land on Route 79 anticipating future needs of the congregation. At a Special Congregational Meeting April 13, 1958, the new Church was voted in and ground breaking took place July 27, 1958. The first service in the new Church took place on Good Friday, March 27, 1959.

 The focal point in the beautiful Church is the stained glass window that surmounts the chancel, a gift created by Ludwig von Gerichten of Munich, Germany.

 The following year, the congregation voted to erect a four bedroom parsonage adjoining the Church. In 1961, Dr. Clyde Reed donated the Fellowship Center in memory of his wife, Mamie, which is used by all organizations. In 1969, the Bell Tower holding the original bell from Picnic Point was erected in memory of Beth Braig.

 Rev. Meacham retained leadership until September 1969 when Rev. Jack Swick became the Pastor and served until June 1974.

 Rev. Edwin Baldwin was called as Pastor in 1974 and served for 15 years. During the summer of 1989, Rev. Baldwin announced his retirement from the pulpit, surprising many in attendance.

 Rev. Arnold Ettenhofer, a retired Methodist minister, provided Pastoral Care on an interim basis while a nationwide search was conducted.

 Following a search that extended for most of the next 12 months, Rev. Kevin Roach became full-time Pastor in July, 1990. Rev. Roach served the Church the next 2 1/2 years, through December 1992.

 In January, 1993, Rev. Kevin Blade was appointed Associate Pastor to serve the Church's needs while a Pastoral search was conducted.

 In August, 1993, following a search that drew applications from across the nation, Rev. David Moody became the 7th full-time minister in the 70-plus year history of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake.

 The Church broke ground for construction of a new fellowship hall on Palm Sunday, April 5, 1998. The addition was constructed entirely through the efforts and donations of time and resources of the membership. A service dedicating the new hall, officially named Koinonia Hall, was held in conjunction with a Thanksgiving Dinner on November 18, 2001.

 Rev. Moody retained leadership until his retirement on September 20, 2011 and Rev. Kevin Blade was called as full-time minister at the Congregational Meeting in October, 2011.

**Preamble**

The membership of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake adopt the constitution and bylaws, herein revised, at the Annual Congregational Meeting October 11, 2015. The revised constitution and bylaws shall serve as the basis for local governance of this congregation.

**Name**

Our Church shall be called the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake.

**Article I.**

**MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Qualifications for Membership**

The Membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake's Constitution and Bylaws, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The membership of the Church shall have final authority in all matters of Church governance as set forth and described in this Constitution and Bylaws.

**B. Reception of Members**

 Members may be received into the Church membership by confession of faith in accordance with the Qualifications for Membership cited previouslyor by letter of transfer. A letter of transfer will be accepted from any Christian Church provided the individual seeking transfer understands and accepts the Qualifications for Membership cited previously, the tenets of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, this Constitution and Bylaws, and accepts the sufficiency and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures.

 Membership classes shall be offered to inform prospective members, who shall not be less than thirteen years of age, concerning the government and policy of the Church, the expectations of membership, and their opportunity for service.

 The reception of members shall take place at a public worship service.

 Children of families received into membership, but not yet thirteen years of age, shall be listed as provisional members. When a person thirteen years of age or older attends the membership classes and accepts the covenant and vows of membership they shall receive voting privileges. All adult members of the Church shall be listed in the permanent record book according to the date of their reception.

**C. Rights of Members**

 All members may participate in the worship, teaching and fellowship of the Church. Members not less than thirteen years of age may vote on all matters pertaining to the life of the Church except when prohibited by State law. Members not less than eighteen years of age may hold any office elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**D. Duties of Members**

* To fulfill their covenant with God through Jesus Christ.
* To attend the services of the Church.
* To give regularly toward the support of the Church.
* To share their talents in the ministry of the Church.
* To cooperate with other Christian Churches.

**E. Transfer or Termination of Membership**

 Any member, on request, may receive a letter of transfer or certificate of good standing to any other Christian Church*,* provided that the member is, in fact, in good standing. To be considered to be a member in good standing, the member would actively be meeting the Qualifications of Membership (Article I.A of this Constitution and By-Laws), fulfilling the Duties of Membership (Article I.D of this Constitution and By-Laws) and is not the subject of any active Church disciplinary action. Any member in good standing moving from the community shall be encouraged to attend and support the Church of their choice.

Any member, on request, may terminate their membership with this Church provided that the member is in good standing (as described above) and is not the subject of any active Church disciplinary action.

**Article II.**

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**A. Procedure**

 The Annual Congregational Meeting shall consist of the members of the Church and shall be conducted in October each year. Public announcement of the meeting shall be made at the Sunday School and worship services on two Sundays preceding the meeting. The president of the Board of Trustees shall preside and the secretary of the Board of Trustees shall record the minutes.

 Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the minister or the president of the Board of Trustees.

 Only members of the Church may vote. The voting age shall be thirteen and over, except on legal decisions when the corporation laws require a limitation of eighteen years of age. No person shall hold more than two elective offices as elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Unless specified, a majority vote shall be sufficient to transact any item of business. In case any elective office is vacated during the year, the office shall be filled by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

**B. Responsibilities**

 At the Annual Congregational Meeting the members in attendance shall authorize all buying, selling, mortgaging or transferring of Church property in excess of $1,500 by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

 In an emergency or other critical situation, as determined by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees, and when acting in the interests of health, compliance with laws, and other matters critical to the safety of the Church and congregation, the Board of Trustees are compelled to act decisively, the $1,500 provision shall be waived. The Board of Trustees shall make a report to the congregation detailing any such actions at a Special Congregational Meeting called according to the provisions of these bylaws.

 The membership in attendance shall:

* Consider and approve, as appropriate, the annual budget submitted by the Board of Trustees;
* Approve the program, teachers and budget submitted by the Board of Trustees; and
* Elect from a ballot submitted by the Nominations Committee and approved at the Annual Congregational Meeting the Trustees, the Deacons, the Board of Women, the Sunday School Superintendent, the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, the Historian, the Home Missions, and Missionary Committees.

 In the event of a tie vote, those counting the ballots and the president of the Board of Trustees shall cast a supplemental vote in order to break the tie.

 Absentee ballots may be supplied only to members who are shut-ins or to those members for whom unavoidable, extenuating circumstances prevent them from being in attendance at the Annual or Special Congregational Meeting.

 Those who are called to the Ministry and to office in the Church are to lead a life of obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the standards of the Church. Among those standards is the requirement to live in either fidelity within the covenant of marriage of a man and woman or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which Scripture calls sin shall not be installed as an officer or Minister of the Church. Any person already installed as an officer or Minister of the Church and who refuses to repent of any practices which Scripture calls sin shall be removed from that position.

 The membership in attendance shall:

* Ratify, by two-thirds vote of the members present, any amendments or changes in the constitution and bylaws of the Church;
* Be presented with reports concerning the work, finances and future programming from the president, the financial clerk, and the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, the head deacon of the Board of Deacons, the president and treasurer of the Board of Women, the Sunday School Superintendent, and the Audit, Home Missions, and Missionary, the presidents and treasurers of the Choir, Bible Class, Ladies Guild, Men's Club, Willing Workers Class, Promise Keepers, Ladies Discipleship, Youth Fellowship, and any other fellowships created;
* Take action on any reports which involve the programming of financing for the Church; and
* Transact any business they deem necessary for the proper function of the Church.

**Article III.**

**BOARDS**

**A. Board of Trustees**

 **1. Procedure**

 The Board of Trustees (the Board) shall consist of nine members of the Church. Three members are to be elected each year at the Annual Congregational Meeting for a term of three years. The term of office shall be limited to two consecutive terms or six consecutive years.

 The Board shall organize at the first monthly meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting and elect from their membership a president and vice president, and shall appoint a treasurer, secretary and financial clerk, all of whom shall be members of the Church.

 The Board shall meet monthly in open session following Robert's Rules of Order. Their vote, affirmative, negative or abstain shall be recorded if the vote is not unanimous.

 Absences from three consecutive stated meetings shall constitute a voluntary resignation unless reviewed by the Board and absence is found unavoidable.

 The Board shall have five Trustees present to constitute a quorum.

 **2. Responsibilities**

 The Board shall:

* Represent the membership of the Church by managing the affairs of the Church in conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, and the laws of the State of Ohio;
* Be custodian of the Constitution and Bylaws, which shall be kept in the lock box at the bank;
* Hold in trust the property and general funds of the Church;
* Buy, sell and mortgage or transfer any property in excess of $1,500 with a two-thirds vote of the congregation authorizing such action. In an emergency or other critical situation as determined by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees and, when acting in the interests of health, compliance with laws, and other matters critical to the safety of the Church and congregation, the Board of Trustees are compelled to act decisively, the $1,500 provision shall be waived. The Board of Trustees shall make a report to the congregation detailing any such actions at a Special Congregational Meeting called according to the provisions of these Bylaws;
* Keep the buildings, the furnishings and the equipment in good repair and safely insured against loss;
* Consider permission for the buildings to be used by groups other than those of the Church;
* Provide the means of raising funds for the Church, approve all disbursements and authorize payment of all bills from the general fund;
* Submit a budget to the Annual Congregational Meeting for approval;
* Appoint, upon recommendation of the Nomination Committee, a member of the Church to fill the unexpired term upon the resignation or removal of any officer elected by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting;
* Appoint a pulpit committee to seek a minister (when a vacancy occurs);
* Present a written contract to the minister which shall be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the congregation present at the Annual or Special Congregational Meeting;
* Notify the minister when a meeting of the Board of Trustees is in closed session; and
* Arrange for flowers to be sent on behalf of the Church for funerals and other occasions the Board deems necessary.

 **3. Duties of the Board of Trustees Officers**

 **The President**

 The president shall:

* Preside at the Congregational Meetings and at all meetings of the Board of Trustees;
* Appoint a Financial Clerk and a chairperson of the Finance Committee at the first meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting;
* Appoint an Audit Committee; and
* Submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

 **The Vice President**

 The vice president shall preside and assume the president's responsibilities in the president's absence.

 **The Secretary**

 The secretary shall keep an accurate record of all Board proceedings and record the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**The Financial Clerk**

 The financial clerk shall:

* Receive all collections and deposit them weekly in the name of the Church;
* Keep a record of all gifts received by envelope;
* Distribute an annual record to each envelope contributor; and
* Shall submit a monthly report to the Board of Trustees and a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

 **The Treasurer**

 The treasurer shall:

* Pay all bills and keep an accurate record of such expenditures;
* Report monthly to the Board of Trustees and at the Annual Congregational Meeting; and
* Make his books accessible to the Board of Trustees and the Audit Committee.

 **B. The Board of Deacons**

 **1. Procedures**

 The Board of Deacons shall consist of nine male members of the Church. Three members shall be elected at the annual Congregational Meeting each year for a term of three years. The term of office shall be limited to two consecutive terms or six consecutive years.

 The Board of Deacons shall:

* Meet and organize in the month following the Annual Congregational Meeting. They shall elect a head deacon, an assistant head deacon and a secretary for the term of one year; and
* Meet quarterly to review its work and to transact its business. A special meeting may be called at the request of the minister or head deacon.

 **2. Responsibilities**

 The Board of Deacons shall:

* Welcome, distribute bulletins and seat the worshipers;
* See to the comfort of the congregation;
* Register the attendance;
* Receive and count the offering;
* Assist in the services of baptism and Holy Communion;
* Assist in conducting worship; and
* Close the Church after the service.

**C. Board of Women**

 **1. Procedures**

 The Board of Women shall consist of nine female members of the Church. Three members shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting each year for a term of three years. The term of office shall be limited to two consecutive terms or six consecutive years.

 The Board of women shall:

* Meet and organize the month following the Annual Congregational Meeting. They shall elect a president, vice president, a secretary and a treasurer;
* Meet monthly to review its work and to transact its business. A special meeting may be called at the request of the minister or the president;
* Prepare the Church for baptisms;
* Prepare the element and arrange the table for Holy Communion;
* Prepare the Church for weddings and serve the reception when the married couple so desires;
* Change and care for the paraments and symbols on the altar and pulpit;
* Arrange for flowers to be used during worship services;
* Send cards to the visitors and the ill;
* Recruit door greeters and provide greeters with name tags;
* Recruit sponsors for the Church bulletin; and
* Serve refreshments when requested by the minister.

**D. Board of Education**

 **1. Procedures**

 The Board of Education shall consist of the Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, the secretary and treasurer of the Sunday School, the Sunday School teachers, the librarian, the children's director, the youth advisor, and the president of the Youth Fellowship. These persons shall be members of the Church.

 The Board shall organize at the first meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting. They shall elect a secretary, treasurer and librarian.

 The Board shall meet monthly to transact their business. The Sunday School Superintendent shall preside at the meeting. A special meeting may be called by the minister of the superintendent.

**2. Responsibilities**

 The Board of Education shall:

* Plan, promote and supervise the entire program of education among children, youths and adults;
* Establish and conduct a teacher training program from which the teachers, the children's directors and the youth advisor shall be selected;
* Maintain a library and assist study groups who are seeking materials;
* Provide a Jr. Church and nursery program during the worship service;
* Present a report for approval at the Annual Congregational Meeting; and
* Report to the Board of Trustees on their program and finances.

**3. Sunday School**

 The Sunday School shall meet each Sunday for the Christian instruction of children, youth and adults. The program shall be planned and promoted by the Board of Education.

**Superintendent**

 The superintendent shall:

* Be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting to serve for one year; and
* Preside over the meeting of the Board of Education, have general supervision of the Sunday School and submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**Assistant Superintendent**

 The assistant superintendent shall:

* Be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting to serve for one year; and
* Assist the superintendent in any way possible.

**Secretary**

 The secretary shall:

* Be elected by the Board of Education to serve for one year;
* Keep an accurate record of attendance and finances received; and
* Keep an accurate record of all Board of Education proceedings and record the minutes meetings.

**Treasurer**

 The treasurer shall:

* Be elected by the Board of Education to serve for one year;
* Keep an accurate account of all finances received and disbursed by the Board of Education;
* Present the books for audit prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting; and
* Present a financial report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**Librarian**

 The librarian shall:

* Be elected by the Board of Education to serve for one year;
* Codify the literature and keep a file of books borrowed and returned; and
* Present a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

 **4. Teachers**

 The teachers shall:

* Be members of the Church with a vital interest in Christian growth; and
* Be selected by the Board of Education from the teacher training program and be amenable to the Board of Education.

 **5. Children's Director**

 The children's director shall:

* Be a member of the Church who loves children;
* Be selected from the teacher training program;
* Be elected annually by the Board of Education and be amenable to it;
* Present an annual program to the Board of Education for children in the Church and direct the Vacation Bible School; and
* Present a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

 **6. Youth Advisor**

 The youth advisor shall:

* Be a member of the Church who understands and is sympathetic with youth;
* Be selected from the teacher training program;
* Be elected annually by the Board of Education and be amenable to it;
* Present an annual program to the Board of Education; and
* Present a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**Article IV.**

**PAID PERSONNEL**

**A. The Minister**

 Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a Pulpit Committee to seek a candidate.

 **1. Rights**

 The minister shall:

* Be free to preach the truth in love as it is revealed to him;
* Receive a ministerial contract written by the Board of Trustees. The contract shall be ratified by two-thirds vote of the congregation present at the Annual Congregational Meeting;
* Be notified when the Board of Trustees meet in closed session; and
* Be a non-voting member of all boards and committees.

 **2. Responsibilities**

 The minister shall:

* Oversee the spiritual life and programs of the Church in accordance with the constitution and bylaws;
* Be responsible for the stated services of the Church;
* Serve in an advisory capacity on all boards, committees and organizations;
* Give support to all activities of the Church;
* Visit the sick, the hospitalized, members and prospective members, counsel as needed, marry those who are prepared (in accordance with the Statement on Marriage and Sexuality which follows),and conduct funeral services;
* Conduct membership classes to inform candidates for membership concerning the government and policy of the Church, the expectations of membership and their opportunity for service;
* Keep an accurate record of the membership in a permanent record book;
* Submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting;
* Participate in community activities as a representative of the Church, as appropriate; and
* Give the Board of Trustees a three months notice if he wishes to dissolve the relationship with the Church.

 Weddings performed by the minister shall be in keeping with the Biblical principle that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman and in accordance with the Statement on Marriage and Sexuality which follows.

 The minister's decision to perform or not perform a wedding is considered to be final.

**Statement on Marriage and Sexuality**

 We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one consenting man and one consenting woman age 18 or older in a single, exclusive union, as provided for in Scripture.

 We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex is sinful and offensive to God.

 We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement of Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

 We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

**B. The Custodian**

 The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the hiring and the supervision of the custodian on an annual contract basis.

 The custodian shall maintain the general cleanliness of the Church building.

**C. The Choir Directors**

 The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the hiring and the supervision of the choir directors. The choir directors shall cooperate with the minister.

**D. The Musicians**

 The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the hiring and the supervision of the musicians. The musicians shall cooperate with the minister and the choir director.

**Article V.**

**COMMITTEES**

Committees may be established upon approval of the Board of Trustees for carrying out the work of the Church.

**A. Audit Committee**

 The audit committee shall:

* Consist of persons appointed by the president of the Board of Trustees; and
* Audit the books of each treasurer in the Church just prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**B. Home Missions Committee**

 The home missions committee shall consist of three members of the Church. One member shall be elected each year for a term of three years.

 The home missions committee shall:

* Meet the month following the Annual Congregational Meeting and elect a president and secretary-treasurer;
* Seek out and meet human need within the Church and in the community;
* Cooperate with other agencies in the community; and
* Submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**C. Finance Committee**

 The finance committee shall consist of the treasurer, the financial clerk and one member of the Board of Trustees appointed by the president of the Board who shall serve as chairperson.

 The chairperson shall appoint from the Church membership such persons as he may desire to assist the committee.

 They shall submit an annual budget to the Board of Trustees, which shall in turn be submitted at the Annual Congregational Meeting for approval.

**D. Missionary Committee**

 The missionary committee shall:

* Consist of three members of the Church. One member shall be elected each year for a term of three years;
* Meet the month following the Annual Congregational Meeting and elect a president, secretary and treasurer;
* Promote and quicken the missionary interest of the Church in the community and throughout the world; and
* Submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**E. Historian**

 The historian shall:

* Be a member of the Church and shall be elected each year for a term of one year;
* Record the significant events in the life of the Church that occur throughout the year; and
* Submit a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**F. Nominations Committee**

 The nominations committee shall consist of the presidents of the various boards and organizations of the Church.

 The minister shall be the chairman.

 They shall elect a secretary and submit a ballot of nominees for all the officers to be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

**G. Pulpit Committee**

 The pulpit committee shall consist of persons appointed by the Board of Trustees.

 They shall recruit and interview candidates to preach a trial sermon and arrange for an interview of the candidate with the Board of Trustees.

**Article VI.**

**FELLOWSHIPS**

 The Choir, Bible Class, Ladies Guild, Men's Club, Willing Workers Class, Youth Fellowship, Ladies Discipleship, Promise Keepers, and any other fellowships approved by the Board of Trustees shall form their own constitution and bylaws and elect their own officers in conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake.

 Each of these fellowships are amenable to the Congregation and to the Board of Trustees. An annual report shall be submitted at the Annual Congregational Meeting by the president and treasurer of each fellowship.

**Article VII.**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

 This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended or changed only by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the Annual or Special Congregational Meeting.

 An announcement shall be made two successive Sundays in both Sunday School and Church services prior to the date of the meeting.

 This announcement shall include the nature of the proposed amendment or change.

**Article VIII.**

**Appendix to the Constitution & Bylaws**

**A. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We, the members of First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio, 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.

We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union.

**B. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

We, the members of First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio, believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: The uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; and Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of First Community Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the Church's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by First Community Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of this Church.

**C. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE**

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the Pastor and staff of First Community Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of First Community Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

**D. STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

We, the members of First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio, believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

**E. STATEMENT OF FINAL AUTHORITY FOR MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Pastor, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, is the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

**F. STATEMENT ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

The threefold purpose of Church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local Church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a Biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local Church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and is to follow the Biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this Church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this Church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to Church discipline.

Discipline will follow the stated Biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the Church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this Church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this Church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, as required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of Church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this Church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been concluded as determined by the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

**G. STATEMENT ON MEDIATION**

Members of the Church agree to submit any legal dispute with the Church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon, Christian mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries, or a similar Christian organization. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the Church, and are contrary to Biblical and Church teaching. Mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a Biblical fashion (1 Corinthians 6:1-7)

**ATTESTATION**

We, the undersigned officers of the Board of Trustees, attest that this revised edition of the constitution and bylaws of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake was unanimously approved by the voting members in attendance at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, October 13, 2013.

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President Date

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Vice President Date

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Secretary Date