Welcome to Membership Class

Isolation. We all hate it, but amazingly too many of us live lives characterized by it. Whatever the reason: fear, insecurity, past hurts, disappointments or frustrations, we too often live lives far from deeply connecting with others. We are humbled that you are willing to take the initiative to find out what it might mean to "connect" with us.

Here are a few quick things you ought to know about us:

1. We don’t have a perfect pastor or staff.
2. We are not a perfect church.
3. We have a perfect mission.
4. We take seriously the opportunity we have to serve our Lord, world and each other.

If we didn’t lose you on numbers 1 or 2, we look forward to sharing with you what we mean by numbers 3 and 4.

We’re grateful for this opportunity for you to get to know who we are, what we are about, why we do what we do and hopefully make you some friends who can join you in your journey ahead.

Thanks for allowing us the privilege of getting to know you as you get to know us. May you find this time to be encouraging, authentic, open, honest, helpful and, I hope, full of laughter and light. Let us know how we can continue to serve you as you consider what it means to connect with us as we pursue—as recklessly and passionately as possible—the greatest life on earth.

Expectantly, your imperfect but passionate Pastor,

Todd Wagner
CONTENTS

I. Overview
   Objectives - 3
   Outcomes - 3

II. Heart and Values
   Our Heart - 4
   Our Calling - 5
   Core Values - 6
   Our Name - 7
   Our History - 8

III. Our Approach
   Our Mission - 9
   Our Ministries - 10

IV. Joining our Family
   What Scripture Says about Belonging to the Body - 13
   Community at Watermark - 14

V. Appendix
   Our Name, History, and Governance - 16
   Doctrinal Statement - 22
   Our Approach to Resolving Conflict - 26
   Membership Covenant - 32
MEMBERSHIP CLASS PROCESS

Objectives:
To help you understand:
1. OUR HEART: The heart of Watermark, who we are, and our values
2. WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: Our strategy
3. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

Potential Outcomes:
1. Take steps to join and connect at Watermark
2. Decide Watermark is not for you
3. Address unanswered questions with our leadership team

Becoming a Member:

If you decide to move forward with membership, we invite you to take the following steps:

1. Make a written statement of his faith in Christ and his intent, with God’s help, to pursue a life that will bring glory to God;
2. Meet face to face with a member of our testimony team to have your testimony confirmed.
3. Agree to the Beliefs and Governance of Watermark Community Church;
4. Attend the church’s New Member Class;
5. Become part of a community group;
6. Choose and commit to an area of service; and
7. Sign the Membership Covenant.

Your membership is renewed annually by completing a Spiritual Growth Assessment in January of each year.
THE HEART OF WATERMARK:

Acts 2:42-47

“And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Our Mission:

To call all people to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

A fully devoted follower of Christ is someone who is growing continually in three relationships: love for God, love for believers, and love for unbelievers.
Too often, people evaluate a church in much the same way they choose a cruise ship.

**CRUISE SHIP:**
- Do I like the music they play in the ballroom?
- Do I like the captain and staff?
- Do I get good service & are my needs met?
- Is it pleasant and comfortable?
- Do I like the experience enough to sail with them again?

At Watermark we believe a more appropriate metaphor for a church is a **BATTLESHIP**, and the right questions to ask are:

- Is the ship flying the right flag & fighting for a clear, noble mission?
- Does the captain understand that he and his staff serve a higher authority? Do they gladly take their orders from Him?
- Do the officers create opportunities for all crew members to be prepared & successful on their tour of duty?
- Is each individual given an opportunity to contribute in a significant way to the mission?
- Is every individual cared for, developed and honored in their efforts?

*In short, as a part of the body of Christ, God calls us to be Contributors not Consumers.*

**OUR CALLING:**

As a church our purpose is to call all people to be fully devoted followers of Christ. Calling implies both introduction to and encouragement in a life of full devotion to Christ. We exist to reach the uncommitted, unchurched, de-churched, dead-churched and unmoved and to encourage, equip, serve and sustain those already devoted to Christ.

**UNCHURCHED**—those who have never been exposed to biblical community

**DE-CHURCHED**—those who have previously been in a church environment but have left it

**DEAD-CHURCHED**—those involved in a church that is not pursuing biblical Christianity

**UNMOVED**—those nominally involved with Christ or His purposes
OUR CORE VALUES

We unashamedly and uncompromisingly strive to be:

**BIBLICALLY BASED** - God’s Word is our guide, authority and conscience in everything. We stand firm where it stands firm and remain flexible where it is flexible. (2 Timothy 3:16)

**FULLY DEVOTED TO CHRIST** - We measure our success by our ability to be and make disciples. Full devotion to Jesus is normal for every believer. (Luke 9:23)

**GROUNDED IN GRACE** - We acknowledge our complete dependence on the goodness and grace of God. We have benefited from the kind intention of His will; therefore, we eagerly extend it to others. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

**PASSIONATE ABOUT PRAYER** - We believe the attitude and action of prayer is essential to everything we do. (Colossians 4:2)

**AUTHENTIC IN OUR WALK** - Authenticity, integrity, openness, and sincerity will define us. “The goal of our instruction is love, from a good conscience, a pure heart, and a sincere faith.” (1 Timothy 1:5)

**COMMITTED TO THE UNCOMMITTED** - We believe that lost people matter to God; therefore, they matter to us. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and has left us here, in part, to do the same. Our individual lives and corporate efforts will reflect this conviction. (Luke 19:10)

**RELEVANT & INNOVATIVE** - The Bible does not tell us to use only certain styles of music, or to present our message only through words. The Bible does make it clear, however, that we are to find ways to effectively bring the message “into all the world” in order to make disciples. We believe this will require careful scrutiny of everything we do – new practices and old – and a willingness to change when necessary within biblical parameters, in order that we, “by all possible means might save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22)

**COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY** - Belonging to our community requires a commitment to being intentionally involved with others in accountable, encouraging relationships. We believe life-change happens best in the context of relationships. In clusters of caring people, participants share and encourage each other toward spiritual growth. Here people can experience both the benefits of a larger church and enjoy the kind of relationships that only develop in small, safe settings. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

**FOCUSED ON MINISTRY & SERVICE** - We believe that each believer has received a special gift and should employ it in serving others, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Spiritual giftedness and maturity determines where and how a believer serves. We believe excellence honors God and reflects His character. We strive for excellence without compromise in all areas of our ministry and lives. (1 Peter 4:10; Colossians 3:17)
OUR NAME
Why are we called Watermark Community Church?

**People are drawn to authenticity.** A *watermark* is a symbol of authenticity. We want to be an authentic people known for our transparency, integrity and sincerity of heart. We want to serve Christ together by creating an environment that allows others to be who they are as they are first introduced to and then grow into the image of Jesus Christ. When people know us well (hold us up to the light of time and intimacy), we want them to say “this is a group of people with a sincere faith and an authentic relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ.”

**Excellence honors God and inspires people.** A *watermark* is a symbol of quality or excellence. Cheap paper does not have a watermark. You expect quality and a commitment to excellence when you see a watermark. We want to be known as a body committed to excellence because we believe our Lord, and those He has left us here to serve, are both worthy of the best we can offer.

The continual presence of *water* at a certain level leaves a mark long after it is gone. Similarly, it is our passion that long after we are gone evidence that we, God’s people, have been here will remain.

When people ask, "Why are you called Watermark?" we have an opportunity to share:

- Our heart;
- How we believe the Lord intends to use us;
- How we want to live in response to His great love.
OUR HISTORY

The major events leading up to the founding of Watermark Community Church are as follows:

• In the summer of 1998, a group of friends began to meet and consider what it would look like if they prayerfully pursued a life of faithfulness to scriptures as they devoted their lives to Christ together in Dallas.

• As they prayed and studied God’s Word, it became increasingly clear that the best way to accomplish God’s purposes for them was through the formation of a new local gathering of God’s people.

• After months of prayer, planning and agreement on purpose and values, the core group grew from eight families to dozens more. On October 30, 1999, 150 prayerful, passionate people covenanted together to serve Christ and His purposes in Dallas as Watermark Community Church. They spent their first evening together discussing, praying over and agreeing that the beliefs, purposes and values in the following pages would guide them to be faithful servants of Christ’s purposes in their city.

• On November 7, 1999, Watermark Community Church held its first corporate gathering and began intentionally ministering to the unchurched, dechurched, dead-churched and unmoved.
Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40)

OUR MISSION...

Helping People become fully devoted followers of Christ

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CONTINUUM:

OUR STRATEGY

“The 4 B’s”

BELIEVE in Christ
(John 3:16)

BELONG to His body
(Heb. 10:24-25)

BE TRAINED in truth
(1 Timothy 4:7-8)

BE STRONG in ministry & worship
(Col. 1:28-29)

CORE EXPECTATIONS:

• Believe in Christ
• Membership
• Spiritual Disciplines
• Serving

• Community Involvement
• Equipping
• Financial Stewardship
• Evangelism

• Membership
• Equipping
• Apologetics
MINISTRIES @ WATERMARK

LIFE-STAGE MINISTRIES

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY – Serving children from birth – 5th grade
• Starting Blocks – birth – Pre-K
• K-1 Race – kindergarten – 1st grade
• On Your Mark – 2nd – 3rd grade
• Crossroads45 – 4th – 5th grade
• The Dash – 1st – 5th grade

WATERMARK STUDENT MINISTRIES – Serving students 6th – 12th grade
• Wake – 6th – 8th grade
• Shoreline – 9th – 12th grade

ONE28 – College ministry

SINGLE ADULTS – offering single adults the opportunity to engage with God and others through worship, Bible study and fellowship

ONE28 – College ministry

MARRIAGE MINISTRY –
• Premarital – an 8-session class for seriously dating or engaged couples and two-on-two counseling for engaged couples
• Foundation Groups – small groups for couples married 0 – 3 years
• re|engage – a weekly group for couples and individuals seeking to strengthen their marriage
MINISTRIES @ WATERMARK (CONTINUED)

OTHER MINISTRIES FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC AREAS

• **Arts** – helping others worship and engage through music, drama, visual media, etc.

• **Careers in Motion** – offering encouragement and networking opportunities for people going through job transition

• **Click and Pray Ministry** – praying for people inside and outside the Watermark family

• **Community Team** – connecting people with community at Watermark

• **Membership Class Team** – helping people learn more about the vision, values and heart of Watermark

• **DivorceCare Ministry** – offering help and encouragement to people who are separated or divorced

• **Equipping** – helping people learn from, live by, and lead with the Word of God (Ezra 7:10) through individuals and small group Bible Studies

• **Great Questions** – offering a safe environment for people to ask questions and discuss issues that are keeping them from taking the next step in faith in Christ

• **External Focus** – helping Watermark members to serve others and transform our community. We connect Watermark members with opportunities to serve at organizations such as Union Gospel Mission, Mercy Street, Vickery Kids Club, Prison Fellowship, 2nd Saturday, Union Gospel Mission, Brother Bill’s Helping Hand, Cornerstone Dallas and other ministries serving people in need throughout our city.

• **Frontlines** – serving, greeting and welcoming people on Sunday morning

• **GriefShare** – walking alongside people through grief and loss

• **Information Technology Ministry** – developing tools and resources to help equip, inspire and inform others about God’s Word
• **Join the Journey** – encouraging the study of God’s Word through daily Bible reading tools and an email devotional series

• **Kaleidoscope** – providing a great Sunday morning experience for kids with special needs

• **Military Ministry** – offering prayer, community and support to people serving in the military and their families

• **Moneywise** – helping others to apply practical, usable techniques for handling the resources God has provided

• **Prodigal Ministry** – offering encouragement and fellowship to anyone who has a child who has strayed

• **re:engage** – providing couples a safe place to reconnect in marriage re:generation – recovery in Christ when life is broken

• **Shelter** – helping sexual abuse survivors in the journey toward recovery

• **Shiloh** – caring for people who desire a child or have experienced infertility or miscarriage

• **Single Parent Family Ministry** – connecting single parents with others who can encourage them spiritually and support them as they love their families

• **Someone Cares** – reaching out to women hurt by past abortions

• **Square One** – offering first-time moms an opportunity for relationship-building, mentoring and support

• **Summit** – a men’s Bible study that calls men to be the leaders God created them to be. At Summit, men LEARN what the Bible teaches about how to LIVE fearlessly today and LEAD ourselves, our families, workplaces, and neighborhoods in a way that honors God.

• **Tapestry** – adoption ministry

• **The Nest** – providing parents of preschoolers training, encouragement and relationshipbuilding opportunities.

• **Women’s Bible Studies** – offering an inductive Bible study for women in all life-stages.
WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS ABOUT BELONGING TO THE BODY

TRUTH THAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS TO US:

• The church is a family.
• If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, God expects you to be a member of a church family.
• A believer without a church family is an orphan.

SCRIPTURE SAYS THE BODY OF CHRIST IS...

Part of who you are:
It is a part of what identifies individuals as genuine followers of Christ. (Eph. 2:19; Rom. 12:5)

God’s provision for you:
It provides you a spiritual family that can support, encourage and care for you in your walk with Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 10:24–25; 1 Cor. 12:26–27)

It provides you the community and accountability necessary to grow and live out in obedience God’s design for His people. (2 Thes. 3:14–15; Eph. 5:21)

Part of His protection:
It places you under the spiritual protection of Godly leaders. (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28–29; 1 Peter 5:5)

A place for ministry:
It gives you a place to discover and use the gifts that the Lord has entrusted you with for ministry. (1 Cor. 12:4–27)

While we acknowledge that all true believers in Jesus Christ are positionally members of the church universal, membership in this local body requires participation in, and commitment to:

• the Beliefs & Governance of this church;
• intentional community with members of this local body; and
• the use of whatever gift(s) he has received to serve others, in order that he may do his part in faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

As a result, we acknowledge two types of membership at this church:

1. Positional Membership—which includes all true believers in Jesus Christ; and
2. Participatory Membership—which includes true believers in Jesus Christ who have committed themselves to this local body as outlined above (hereinafter “Members”).
COMMUNITY GROUPS @ WATERMARK

THE PURPOSE:
Connecting people in authentic relationships that lead to spiritual transformation

Watermark Community Groups:
As leaders, we believe that by maintaining, at a minimum, the following identifiable criteria, we will be more effective in our shepherding role in your lives:

Single Community Groups: Each community group should include a minimum of three people, three of which should be Watermark members. "A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." (Eccl. 4:12)

Married Community Groups: Each married community group should include a minimum of three couples that are all Watermark members. As couples are added to the group, the majority of the group must be current members. "Know well the condition of your flock and pay attention to your herds." (Prov. 27:23)

We ask that at least one member has participated in training from our Community Staff and remains in contact with our Community Team (email: community@watermark.org).

Authentic relationships include . . .
- **Encouragement** - “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- **Acceptance** - "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:7)
- **Accountability** - “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)
- **Care** - "so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Spiritual transformation (growing and helping others grow in these areas)
- **Believe in Christ** - "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)
- **Belong to his body** - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24–25)
- **Be trained in truth** - "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:7–8)
- **Be strong in worship and ministry** - "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)
WHY COMMUNITY?
In a world of loneliness, pain, and daily challenges, life can be extremely hard. The good news is we were never meant to carry life’s burdens or even celebrate its joys alone. God gave us community. You don’t have to do life alone. In fact if you think you are surviving just fine without community, you could be thriving beyond belief with it. We are created for community, called to it and changed by it.

1. We were created for community
   - “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

2. God has called us to community
   - “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:24-25)
   - “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:2)
   - “He who separates himself [from God and others] seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom.” (Proverb 18:1--Amplified, NASB)

3. We are changed by community. It is one of the most effective ways for a believer at any point in his/her spiritual journey to grow closer to Christ.
   - “As iron sharpens iron so does one man sharpen another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

HOW DO I GET STARTED?
1. **Organic Connection** - If you have a group of people who you’d like to do community with, contact them about forming a group together. You’ll need to contact the community team at Watermark by e-mailing community@watermark.org so we can assist and guide you in forming your own group.

2. **Existing Connection** - If you know of an existing group you want to join, contact the leader or the person you know in the group. Ask them if they would be open to adding a member(s) to their group. Find out when they meet and if there is anything you need to do to get on the same page as the group.

3. **New Connection** - Attend GroupLink. GroupLink is a quarterly meeting where people who are interested in community get connected with others in their same stage of life.
   
For further information, contact community@watermark.org
WATERMARK COMMUNITY CHURCH

ARTICLE I—OUR NAME & HISTORY

SECTION 1: The Meaning Behind Our Name
People are drawn to authenticity. A watermark is a symbol of authenticity. We want to be an authentic people known for our transparency, integrity and sincerity of heart. We want to serve Christ together by creating an environment that allows others to be who they are as they are first introduced to and then grow into the image of Jesus Christ. When people know us well (hold us up to the light of time and intimacy), we want them to say “this is a group of people with a sincere faith and an authentic relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ.”

Excellence honors God and inspires people. A watermark is a symbol of quality or excellence. Cheap paper does not have a watermark. You expect quality and a commitment to excellence when you see a watermark. We want to be known as a body committed to excellence because we believe our Lord, and those He has left us here to serve, are both worthy of the best we can offer.

The continual presence of water at a certain level leaves a mark long after it is gone. Similarly, it is our passion that long after we are gone evidence that we, God’s people, have been here will remain.

When people ask, “Why are you called Watermark?” we have an opportunity to share:
• Our heart;
• How we believe the Lord intends to use us;
• How we want to live in response to His great love.

SECTION 2: History
The major events leading up to the founding of Watermark Community Church are as follows:

• In the summer of 1998, a group of friends began to meet and consider what it would look like if they prayerfully pursued a life of faithfulness to scriptures as they devoted their lives to Christ together in Dallas.
• As they prayed and studied God’s Word, it became increasingly clear that the best way to accomplish God’s purposes for them was through the formation of a new local gathering of God’s people.
• After months of prayer, planning and agreement on purpose and values, the core group grew from eight families to dozens more. On October 30, 1999, 150 prayerful, passionate people covenanted together to serve Christ and His purposes in Dallas as Watermark Community Church. They spent their first evening together discussing, praying over and agreeing that the beliefs, purposes and values in the following pages would guide them to be faithful servants of Christ’s purposes in their city.
• On November 7, 1999, Watermark Community Church held its first corporate gathering and began intentionally ministering to the unchurched, dechurched, dead-churched and unmoved.
ARTICLE II—OUR MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: Membership
We acknowledge two types of membership at this church:
1. Positional Membership—which includes all true believers in Jesus Christ; and
2. Participatory Membership—which includes true believers in Jesus Christ who have committed themselves
to this local body as outlined above (hereinafter "Members").

SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTICIPATORY MEMBERSHIP
Individuals may present themselves for Membership upon making a profession of personal faith in the Lord
Jesus Christ. Each potential new Member shall: 1) make a written statement of his faith in Christ and his
intent, with God’s help, to pursue a life that will bring glory to God; 2) meet face to face with a member of
our testimony team to have your testimony confirmed. 3) agree to the Beliefs and Governance of Watermark
Community Church; 4) attend the church’s New Member Class; 5) become part of a community group; 6)
choose and commit to an area of service; and 7) sign the Membership Covenant.

SECTION 3: PARTICIPATORY MEMBERSHIP ROLLS
A person is a Member of this church only as long as he lives within this community of faith and is actively
pursuing the Calling, Convictions and Commitments of this church. It is the Elders’ responsibility to
"know well the condition of the flock," to encourage steadfastness of all individual Members and to advise
Members of the consequences of not abiding by their commitments as Members, including eventual removal
from Membership.

SECTION 4: CARE AND CORRECTION OF PARTICIPATORY MEMBERS
It is the responsibility of the Board of Elders, as described in Acts 20:28, to "be on guard for themselves
and all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers to shepherd the church of God which
He purchased with His own blood." Shepherding includes both the care and correction of the sheep. As a
consequence, the Board of Elders may separate a member of the flock from Membership for:

- departure from his previously expressed agreement with "Our Beliefs";
- conduct that mars the testimony of the church or evidences a continued unrepentant departure from
  biblical morality;
- manifesting disinterest and/or inactivity in the life of the church;
- or other reasons as set forth in the Scriptures.

The separation process shall follow that laid out in Scripture. By applying for and accepting Membership in
this church, all Members submit themselves to the care and correction of the Board of Elders, and may not
resign from Membership in an attempt to avoid such care and correction.

SECTION 5: TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATORY MEMBERSHIP
Membership may be terminated by any of the following actions:

1. Voluntary termination of Membership is available to any Member in good standing upon written request
   of that Member. Where appropriate, upon request, Members may be granted a letter of transfer to the
evangelical church of their choice. The Board of Elders may reinstate voluntarily terminated Members upon satisfactory fulfillment of the new Member process and approval.

2. At the discretion of the Board of Elders, Members who move from the Dallas area may be removed from Membership. Involuntary termination may result if a Member fails to submit himself to the Board of Elders and when in the sole opinion of the Board of Elders, it is necessary for the care or correction of the church or the terminated Member. The Board of Elders, in its sole discretion, may communicate to the congregation the fact of, and reason for, involuntary termination of a Member.

ARTICLE III—OUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

This church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is an autonomous body of believers voluntarily submitting themselves to a form of government that we believe is in accordance with the Scriptures. The official offices of this church, through which all of its powers are administered, are covered in subsequent sections of this document. These offices shall be occupied by men, or women where specifically permitted, who are raised up by the Holy Spirit, called by the personal conviction of God and appointed by the Board of Elders. The responsibilities of these offices are also defined and described in subsequent sections of this document.

ARTICLE IV—OUR OFFICERS

SECTION 1: GENERAL
We believe that holding office in the church is by:

- the calling of God by the Holy Spirit;
- the conviction of the will of God on the part of the candidate; and
- the approval of the Board of Elders.

The officers in this church shall be the Elders and those to whom the Board of Elders delegates authority and designates as officers. Selection of new Elders, Deacons and the Pastoral Elder shall be by appointment of the Board of Elders. The Pastoral Elder shall appoint all pastoral and ministerial staff (other than the Pastoral Elder), and as there is wisdom in the counsel of many, consult with his fellow Elders on major hires.

SECTION 2: THE BOARD OF ELDERS
Description of the Office
Our church is Elder led. The Board of Elders governs, corrects, cares for (shepherds) and oversees the spiritual interests of this church. An Elder must be a member of this church and lead a life that meets the qualifications of Scripture and embodies the “Calling, Convictions and Commitments” of Watermark Community Church.

The Board of Elders shall be comprised of not less than three (3) nor more than ten (10) men. The number of Elders must be limited by the number of qualified men that the Lord raises up and the ability of the Board of Elders to maintain intimate, deep and growing relationships between its members. It is imperative that the Board of Elders model accountability, care and every other aspect of authentic biblical community. Great care should be taken as to the effects of the number of Elders on the Board of Elders’ intimacy and
the integrity of relationships among the members of the Board of Elders.

Responsibilities
The responsibilities of the Board of Elders include:

- providing spiritual leadership for the church;
- directing the affairs of the church;
- receiving and dismissing members;
- making provision for teaching during worship services;
- praying for and with the people and watching over their spiritual and physical needs;
- leading the church’s outreach to a lost world;
- providing care and correction for Members; and
- executing on behalf of the church, deeds, notes, deeds of trust, releases and any other instruments or contracts as may be necessary to comply with God’s leading for the church as to real property belonging to, or being acquired, improved or sold by the church.

Calling Elders
Elders are raised up by God to provide spiritual leadership for the church. They are called by the existing Elders to serve in the office of Elder for the benefit of the church.

A prospective of Elder will be examined as prescribed below to determine:

- his personal knowledge and comprehension of the Word of God, especially as it relates to his being sound in doctrine and his knowledge as to the qualifications for an Elder;
- his personal philosophy concerning the purpose of the local church and his responsibility as a leader within the church;
- his agreement with the Beliefs & Governance of this church, in its entirety;
- his ability and willingness to serve and participate actively as an Elder, to attend faithfully the services and programs of the church and to support the various programs and activities of the church;
- his ability to teach and his desire to cultivate this ability for the Lord; his life of making disciples for Christ;
- and his history of being in biblical community including accountable, caring, submissive and enduring relationships with other believers. The Elder selection process shall generally follow the process described below.

Elder Selection Process
The selection of a new Elder shall, at a minimum, follow the four (4) steps below:

1. Candidate Identification—Any potential elder shall be identified by the Board of Elders as a man fitting the biblical qualifications of an elder of the church and shall be submitted to a period of prayerful consideration by the existing Board of Elders.
2. Notification of the Potential Elder—Following a season of prayer, the Board of Elders, upon initial confirmation of the potential elder, shall notify the potential elder that he is being considered to hold the office of Elder at the church. The potential elder shall submit himself to a time of prayer concerning God’s call upon his life and his possible service as an Elder of the church.
3. Validation—Upon the confirmation by the potential elder of God’s call on his life, the Board of Elders
shall begin a validation process which, at a minimum, consists of: the potential elder’s completion of a “Potential Elder Questionnaire” to determine whether he meets the qualifications of an elder as set forth above; a re-affirmation that the potential elder is in agreement with the Beliefs and Governance of the Church and various interviews with third parties concerning the potential elder’s character, life and Christian witness.

4. Confirmation—Upon satisfactory completion of the Validation process, the potential Elder shall be presented to the congregation for its comment on his character, qualifications or any other issue which would affect his suitability to serve as an Elder of the church.

Removal
No person can be removed from the Board of Elders except for just cause as determined by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders (exclusive of the Elder whose removal is being considered). Just cause includes, but is not limited to: an elder being under the care and correction referred to in Article IV - Section 4 of this document; events that would disqualify him as set forth in this Article VI – Section 2; or behavior, schedule or stage of life the affects his ability to maintain biblical community with the other members of the Elder Board. If any Elder fails to maintain biblical community with the other members of the Elder Board, he should be informed and asked to make immediate adjustments to his schedule or voluntarily resign his office. The Board of Elders will accept the written resignation of an Elder whenever submitted.

SECTION 3: THE PASTORAL ELDER
The Pastoral Elder is the vocational spiritual leader of the church and has oversight of the spiritual life of the church in conjunction with the Board of Elders. The Pastoral Elder should be fully prepared for his ministry as required by the Board of Elders. He should live a consistent Christian life, ruling his own house well and having a good testimony with non-Christians.

Responsibilities of the Pastoral Elder
The Pastoral Elder is accountable to the Board of Elders for the oversight of the Beliefs and Governance of the church. He is responsible for leading the staff and church body in carrying out the purpose and values of the church and overseeing the church’s ministries.

Calling the Pastoral Elder
The Board of Elders shall call a Pastoral Elder. When the Board of Elders desires the church have a new Pastoral Elder, it may appoint a search committee to assist in identifying qualified candidates or search for a qualified candidate on its own. Ultimate responsibility and authority for calling a Pastoral Elder rests in the Board of Elders. Since the Pastoral Elder will serve as an Elder of the church, at a minimum, the Elder selection process shall be followed.

Removing a Pastoral Elder
When the Pastoral Elder resigns or is removed by the Board of Elders, the Board of Elders may call a meeting to inform the congregation of the reasons for the removal or resignation, so far as is honoring to God, the Pastoral Elder and the congregation. When the Pastoral Elder resigns, the Board of Elders shall accept his resignation. When the Pastoral Elder resigns or is removed from that office, the Board of Elders
shall make provision for the interim fulfillment of the Pastoral Elder's responsibilities. In that event, an Interim Pastor may be appointed by the Board of Elders as a minister to carry on the pastoral duties while the church is without a Pastoral Elder.

SECTION 4: OTHER CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Description of Office
The Board of Elders may appoint participatory members within the church to positions of leadership. Their appointment may be to key areas of responsibility in the Operating and Ministry Committees of the Church, provided that such appointments shall be made in accordance with the mandates of the Holy Scripture as relates to positional differences between men and women.

Qualifications
These positions of servant leadership shall be occupied by men or women of spiritual maturity, exemplary lives, good reputation, sound judgment and who, in their God-ordained roles, serve their own houses well.

Ministerial Staff
The Pastoral Elder shall appoint all pastoral and ministerial staff (other than the Pastoral Elder) and, as there is wisdom in the counsel of many, consult with his fellow Elders on major hires. The Pastoral Elder may appoint pastoral and ministerial staff as required to provide care, teaching, counseling and administration to the congregation. The number and types of Ministers required will vary from time to time, depending on church growth, financial resources available and discerned need.

ARTICLE V—OUR WORKERS (ORDINATION & COMMISSIONING)

It is our confidence that God will raise up Spirit-filled and gifted men and women from among us who will be called to a life of proclaiming the Gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ. Such men and women may be given a commission to lead God’s people, as is appropriate in scripture and share in the privileges and responsibilities thereof. The Board of Elders shall determine the process, requirements, timing and forms leading to ordination. The Board of Elders may also commission Members to serve as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ under its authority, while they are Members in good-standing at this church.

ARTICLE IV—OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Elders may delegate to individuals, committees or organizations the right to transact any of its business or to exercise any of its powers, but the exercise of such delegation shall be subject to the supervision and control of the Board of Elders.

Article VII—Amendments to Our Beliefs And Leadership Structure

Our Beliefs & Leadership Structure may be amended by the unanimous approval of the Board of Elders. Copies of any amendment(s) must be made available to Members not more than thirty days following such amendment(s).
WATERMARK DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

ARTICLE I—OUR CALLING, CONVICTIONS, COMMITMENTS & CORE VALUES

OUR CALLING
As a church our purpose is to call all people to be fully devoted followers of Christ. Calling implies both introduction and encouragement to remain in a life of full devotion to Christ. As such, we exist to reach the unchurched, dechurched, dead-churched and unmoved, and to encourage, equip, serve and sustain those already devoted to Christ.
• The unchurched—those who have never been exposed to biblical community.
• The dechurched—those who have previously been in a "church" environment but have left it.
• The dead-churched—those involved in a "church" that is not pursuing biblical Christianity.
• The unmoved—those nominally involved with Christ or His purposes.

OUR CONVICTIONS
A healthy church intentionally and zealously pursues a balanced ministry. Such a ministry, through the power of the Holy Spirit, results in:
• New converts to Christ through the work of the ministry
• New commitments to the local body and the cause of Christ
• New growth in the grace & knowledge of Christ
• New leaders for tomorrow’s harvest for Christ

Stated another way, our desire is to call others to:
• Believe in Christ
• Belong to His body
• Be trained in truth
• Be strong in ministry

OUR COMMITMENTS
We commit to measure our success only by our ability to realize our conviction of being and making disciples. (Disciples are individuals who understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ into a life of worship, fellowship, sacrifice, service and yielding to the Spirit.)

In summary, we are in the business of changed lives. We live to turn the uncommitted and opposed into unashamedly committed, fully devoted followers of Christ. Everything we do is measured by its usefulness, effectiveness and contribution toward this purpose.

OUR CORE VALUES
We unashamedly and uncompromisingly strive to be:
• Biblically Based – God’s Word is our guide, authority and conscience in everything. We stand firm where it stands firm and remain flexible where it is flexible. (2 Timothy 3:16)
• Fully Devoted To Christ – We measure our success by our ability to be and make disciples. Full devotion to Jesus is normal for every believer. (Luke 9:23)
• Grounded In Grace – We acknowledge our complete dependence on the goodness and grace of God. We have benefited from the kind intention of His will; therefore, we eagerly extend it to others. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
• **Passionate About Prayer** - We believe the attitude and action of prayer is essential to everything we do. (Colossians 4:2)

• **Authentic In Our Walk** - Authenticity, integrity, openness, and sincerity will define us. "The goal of our instruction is love, from a good conscience, a pure heart, and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5)

• **Committed To The Uncommitted** - We believe that lost people matter to God; therefore, they matter to us. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and has left us here, in part, to do the same. Our individual lives and corporate efforts will reflect this conviction. (Luke 19:10)

• **Relevant & Innovative** - The Bible does not tell us to use only certain styles of music, or to present our message only through words. The Bible does make it clear, however, that we are to find ways to effectively bring the message “into all the world” in order to make disciples. We believe this will require careful scrutiny of everything we do – new practices and old – and a willingness to change when necessary within biblical parameters, in order that we, "by all possible means might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22)

• **Committed To Community** - Belonging to our community requires a commitment to being intentionally involved with others in accountable, encouraging relationships. We believe life-change happens best in the context of relationships. In clusters of caring people, participants share and encourage each other toward spiritual growth. Here people can experience both the benefits of a larger church and enjoy the kind of relationships that only develop in small, safe settings. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

• **Focused On Ministry & Service** - We believe that each believer has received a special gift and should employ it in serving others, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Spiritual giftedness and maturity determines where and how a believer serves. We believe excellence honors God and reflects His character. We strive for excellence without compromise in all areas of our ministry and lives. (1 Peter 4:10; Colossians 3:17)

### ARTICLE II—OUR BELIEFS

#### SECTION 1: THE BIBLE
We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, and the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 17:17).

#### SECTION 2: THE TRINITY
We believe there is one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each God, and that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each a distinct person (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; see also 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 2:9 & Acts 5:3-4).

#### SECTION 3: JESUS CHRIST
We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God, fulfill prophecy and redeem sinful man. We believe He accomplished our redemption through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, burial and bodily resurrection. We believe our redemption and salvation are guaranteed by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is the only means of salvation (John 1:1, 14, 18; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24-26; 4:25; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 2:5).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, and the Head of the church. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God where, as High Priest to His people, He serves as our Advocate and intercedes for us (Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 1:3; 3:1; 7:23-25; 1 John 2:1-2).
SECTION 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT
We believe God the Holy Spirit is a person who restrains evil in the world and convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgment. He dwells in all who believe in Jesus. From the moment of belief in the Son, the Spirit baptizes believers into the body, seals them for salvation, regenerates them to new life, bestows spiritual gifts on each one, and is fully present to continually fill (control and guide) His own (John 16:7-11; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13; John 14:16-17; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Some gifts of the Holy Spirit, however, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of miraculous healing, were given to certain individuals as authenticating signs for the early church (Acts 8:14; 10:44-48 & 11:15-18; 19:1-6) and not as final evidence of God’s presence in a believer’s life nor as confirmations of a "second blessing" or subsequent filling of the Spirit. Furthermore, we believe the gift of tongues in the New Testament always presents itself as a known language (Acts 2:6-13) and not as a private prayer language.

SECTION 5: ANGELS, FALLEN AND UNFALLEN
We believe angels are spiritual beings who were created as sinless personalities and that they occupy different orders and ranks. They presently exist in both fallen and unfallen states, the former including Satan and his angels (Hebrews 1:13-14; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 7:12).

We believe Satan, by his own choice the enemy of God and His people, is the originator of sin, that he led our first parents into sin and now rules as "the god of this world." We believe he was judged at the cross and that ultimately he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 3:1-19; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

SECTION 6: MAN
We believe God created all things in heaven and earth and that they exist by His power (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16-17). We believe man was created innocent and in the image and likeness of God but that he sinned, bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and his posterity. We believe man inherited a sinful nature, is alienated from God, can do nothing to merit God’s favor, and is therefore, in need of salvation (Genesis 1:27; 2:17; 3:19; Ephesians 2:1-3).

We believe that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually and biologically different, but with equal personal dignity. It is inconsistent with God’s design for a follower of Christ to in any way practically live or physically seek to change, alter, or disagree with their obvious biological sex which has been assigned by God (Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that marriage is a union ordained by God and intended as a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33). In keeping with the Bible’s clear teaching on marriage as a union between one man and one woman, we will not conduct nor host wedding ceremonies inconsistent with Scripture.

SECTION 7: SALVATION
We believe salvation is a sovereign gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe man is justified by grace through faith apart from works (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:4-5 & 2:8-10). We believe that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation and that no one is saved apart from a conscious and personal decision to trust in Christ as his or her one and only Savior (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-10). We believe all true believers elect of God, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever (Romans 8:1, 29-30, 38-39; John 10:27-30).
SECTION 8: SANCTIFICATION

We believe sanctification, which is a setting apart unto God, is positional, progressive and ultimate. Positionally, it is already complete since the believer is in Christ and is set apart unto God as Christ is set apart unto God. Since the Christian retains his sinful nature, however, there is need for progressive sanctification whereby he grows in grace by the power of the Spirit. Ultimately, the child of God will be set apart from sin in his practice (as he is now in his position in Christ) when he is taken to be with Christ and shall be like Him (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14).

SECTION 9: THE CHURCH

We believe the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism, made up of all born-again persons of this present age. We believe the Church began at Pentecost and that a believer is placed into the Church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Church is distinct from Israel (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12-13; 10:32).

We believe the local church is an assembly of professed believers in Jesus Christ who are voluntarily joined together in one locality for the purposes of worship, study of the Word of God, observance of the ordinances, Christian fellowship, equipping for and practice of Kingdom service, specifically stewarding our lives for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 16:18; 28:19-20).

SECTION 10: THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

We believe Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, both of which are to be observed by believers until He returns (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

We believe by water baptism a believer publicly identifies with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. We believe that infants of believing parents may be dedicated to the Lord but should not be baptized until they can personally articulate their faith and the purpose of baptism.

We believe the Lord’s Supper is a memorial of Christ’s death and an expression of our faith in His future coming that is to be continually practiced by all believers. We believe every Christian has a right to partake of the elements of the Lord’s Supper but that participation must always be preceded by solemn self-examination.

SECTION 11: THE END TIMES

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Church. This event, commonly called the rapture, will be followed by great tribulation on earth and will culminate in the visible and bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth, commonly called the Second Coming, to rule the nations and establish His millennial kingdom (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Philippians 3:20; Matthew 24:15-31; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-21, 20:1-6).

SECTION 12: THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe the souls of believers in Jesus Christ do, at death, immediately pass into His presence, and there remain with Him until the resurrection of our earthly bodies at His coming for the Church, when our souls and imperishable bodies shall be with Him forever in glory. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain after death in constant misery in Hades until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15).
WATERMARK’S COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

The Peacemaker’s Pledge

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict. We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ. Therefore, in response to God’s love and in reliance on His grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

GLORIFY GOD – Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will seek to please and honor God – by depending on His wisdom, power, and love; by faithfully obeying His commands; and by seeking to maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.

GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR OWN EYE – Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, we will take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts – confessing our sins, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.

GO AND SHOW YOUR BROTHER HIS FAULT – Instead of pretending that conflict doesn’t exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will choose to overlook minor offenses, or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.

GO AND BE RECONCILED – Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation – forgiving others as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences.

By God’s grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an opportunity, not an accident. We will remember that success, in God’s eyes, is not a matter of specific results but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers brings praise to our Lord and leads others to know His infinite love.

These principles are so simple that they can be used to resolve the most basic conflicts of daily life. But they are so powerful that they have been used to mediate and arbitrate bitter divorce and child custody actions, embezzlement situations, church divisions, multi-million dollar business disputes, malpractice lawsuits, and terrible sexual abuse cases. These principles are briefly discussed below. For a more detailed explanation, please see The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, by Ken Sande (Baker Books, 2nd ed. 1997).
1. AT THE TRAILHEAD: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

SEE CONFLICT AS AN OPPORTUNITY
Conflict is not necessarily bad or destructive. Even when conflict is caused by sin and causes a great deal of stress, God can use it for good (see Rom. 8:28-29). As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, conflict actually provides three significant opportunities. By God’s grace, you can use conflict to:

- Glorify God (by trusting, obeying, and imitating Him)
- Serve other people (by helping to bear their burdens or by confronting them in love)
- Grow to be like Christ (by confessing sin and turning from attitudes that promote conflict)

These concepts are totally overlooked in most conflicts because people naturally focus on escaping from the situation or overcoming their opponent. Therefore, it is wise to periodically step back from a conflict and ask yourself whether you are doing all that you can to take advantage of these special opportunities.

GLORIFY GOD
When the Apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to live "to the glory of God," he was not talking about one hour on Sunday morning. He wanted them to show God honor and bring Him praise in day-to-day life, especially by the way that they resolved personal conflicts (1 Cor. 10:31).

As mentioned above, you can glorify God in the midst of conflict by trusting Him, obeying Him, and imitating Him (see Prov. 3:4-6; John 14:15; Eph. 5:1). One of the best ways to keep these concerns uppermost in your mind is to regularly ask yourself this focusing question: "How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?"

The Fight Before The Fight
GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR OWN EYE

One of the most challenging principles of peacemaking is set forth in Matthew 7:5, where Jesus says, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

There are generally two kinds of logs you need to look for when dealing with conflict. First, you need to ask whether you have had a critical, negative, or overly sensitive attitude that has led to unnecessary conflict. One of the best ways to do this is to spend some time meditating on Philippians 4:2-9, which describes the kind of attitude Christians should have even when they are involved in a conflict.

The second kind of log you must deal with is actual sinful words and actions. Because you are often blind to your own sins, you may need an honest friend or advisor who will help you to take an objective look at yourself and face up to your contribution to a conflict.

When you identify ways that you have wronged another person, it is important to admit your wrongs honestly and thoroughly. One way to do this is to use the Seven A’s of Confession:
• Address everyone involved (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:8-9)
• Avoid if, but, and maybe (don’t make excuses; Luke 15:11-24)
• Admit specifically (both attitudes and actions)
• Apologize (express sorrow for the way you affected someone)
• Accept the consequences (Luke 19:1-9)
• Alter your behavior (commit to changing harmful habits; Eph. 4:22-32)
• Ask for forgiveness

The most important aspect of getting the log out of your own eye is to go beyond the confession of wrong behavior and face up to the root cause of that behavior. The Bible teaches that conflict comes from the desires that battle in your heart (James 4:1-3; Matt. 15:18-19). Some of these desires are obviously sinful, such as wanting to conceal the truth, bend others to your will, or have revenge. In many situations, however, conflict is fueled by good desires that you have elevated to sinful demands, such as a craving to be understood, loved, respected, or vindicated.

Any time you become excessively preoccupied with something, even a good thing, and seek to find happiness, security or fulfillment in it rather than in God, you are guilty of idolatry. Idolatry inevitably leads to conflict with God (”You shall have no other gods before me”). It also causes conflict with other people. As James writes, when we want something but don’t get it, we kill and covet, quarrel and fight (James 4:1-4).

There are three basic steps you can take to overcome the idolatry that fuels conflict. First, you should ask God to help you see where your have been guilty of wrong worship, that is, where you are focusing your love, attention, and energy on something other than God. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”(Psalm 139:23-24) Second, you should specifically identify and renounce each of the desires contributing to the conflict. Third, you should deliberately pursue right worship, that is, to fix your heart and mind on God and to seek joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction in Him alone.

As God guides and empowers these efforts, you can find freedom from the idols that fuel conflict and be motivated to make choices that will please and honor Christ. This change in heart will usually speed a resolution to a present problem, and at the same time improve your ability to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

2. BEGINNING THE JOURNEY:
HITTING THE TRAIL TO LOVE YOUR FRIEND

GO AND SHOW YOUR BROTHER HIS FAULT

Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff

OVERLOOK MINOR OFFENSES

Another key principle of peacemaking involves an effort to help others understand how they have contributed to a conflict. Before you rush off to confront someone, however, remember that it is appropriate to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11). As a general rule, an offense should be overlooked if you can answer "no" to all of the following questions:

• Is the offense seriously dishonoring God?
• Has it permanently damaged a relationship?
• Is it seriously hurting other people?
• Is it seriously hurting the offender himself?
Don’t Spread the Big Stuff

TALK IN PRIVATE
If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, an offense is too serious to overlook, in which case God commands you to go and talk with the offender privately and lovingly about the situation (see Matt. 18:15). As you do so, remember to:

- Pray for humility and wisdom (1 Peter 5:5)
- Plan your words carefully—think of how you would want to be confronted (Prov. 15:1-2; 16:23)
- Anticipate likely reactions and plan appropriate responses—rehearsals can be very helpful (Prov. 20:18)
- Choose the right time and place—talk in person whenever possible (Prov. 16:21; 27:12)
- Assume the best about the other person until you have facts to prove otherwise (Prov. 18:17)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)
- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person (Prov. 18:2)
- Trust God (Psalm 37:3)

Don’t Stop if You’ve Been Stiffed

TAKE OTHERS ALONG (MATT. 18:17)
If an initial confrontation does not resolve a conflict, do not give up. Review what was said and done, and look for ways to approach the other person more effectively. Then try again with even stronger prayer support.

If you have done all you can to share your concern and the matter is still unchanged in that it is “too serious to overlook,” you should ask one or two other people to meet with you and the person you have approached to help you resolve your differences. (Matt. 18:16-20)

DON’T STOP IF IT GETS STICKY
As unfortunate as it is, there are times when the only solution left is to expand the circle of accountability and wisdom to include an even wider community within the body of Christ. It is imperative that the process is not stopped short of any Scriptural admonition to diligently preserve the unity which the Lord intends. Where conflict persists, it is the job of the wider community of faith to speak boldly into the matter and where necessary separate itself from hard hearts that refuse to deal with matters “too serious to overlook.” (Matt 18:17a; 1 Cor. 5:1-2) even when that includes necessary separation until such a time as sin issues creating the conflict are acknowledged and dealt with.

GO AND BE RECONCILED
One of the unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though followers of Christ have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. To cover up our disobedience we often use the shallow statement, “I forgive her—I just don’t want to have anything to do with her again.” Just think, however, how you would feel if God said to you, “I forgive you; I just don’t want to have anything to do with you again?”

Praise God that He never says this! Instead, He forgives you totally and opens the way for genuine reconciliation. He calls you to forgive others in exactly the same way: “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:12-14; see also 1 Cor. 13:5; Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25). One way to imitate God’s forgiveness is to purpose to live with these actions and attitudes when you forgive someone:

- I will not dwell on this incident.
- I will not revisit this incident or use it against you.
- I will not talk to others about this incident.
- I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.
Remember that forgiveness is a spiritual process that you cannot fully accomplish on your own. Therefore, as you seek to forgive others, continually ask God for grace to enable you to imitate His wonderful forgiveness toward you.

**NEGOTIATE IN A BIBLICAL MANNER**

Even when you manage to resolve personal offenses through confession and forgiveness, you may still need to deal with substantive issues, which may involve money, property, or the exercise of certain rights. These issues should not be swept under the carpet or automatically passed to a higher authority. Instead, they should be negotiated in a biblically faithful manner.

As a general rule, you should try to negotiate substantive issues in a cooperative manner rather than a competitive manner. In other words, instead of aggressively pursuing your own interests and letting others look out for themselves, you should deliberately look for solutions that are beneficial to everyone involved.

As the Apostle Paul put it, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4; see Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 7:12).

A biblical approach to negotiation may be summarized in five basic steps, which we refer to as the PAUSE principle:

- Prepare (pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options)
- Affirm relationships (show genuine concern and respect for others)
- Understand interests (identify others’ concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears)
- Search for creative solutions (prayerful brainstorming)
- Evaluate options objectively and reasonably (evaluate, don’t argue)

If you have never used this approach to negotiation before, it will take time and practice (and sometimes advice from others) to become proficient at it. But it is well worth the effort, because learning the PAUSE principle will help you not only resolve your present dispute but also negotiate more effectively in all areas of your life.

**3. ENDURING DIFFICULTIES ON THE JOURNEY: WHAT TO DO WHEN THE TRAIL GETS ROUGH**

**BE PREPARED FOR UNREASONABLE PEOPLE**

Whenever you are responding to conflict, you need to realize that other people may harden their hearts and refuse to be reconciled to you. There are two ways you can prepare for this possibility.

First, remember that God does not measure success in terms of results but in terms of faithful obedience. He knows that you cannot force other people to act in a certain way. Therefore He will not hold you responsible for their actions or for the ultimate outcome of a conflict.

All God expects of you is to obey His revealed will as faithfully as possible (see Rom. 12:18). If you do that, no matter how the conflict turns out, you can walk away with a clear conscience before God, knowing that His appraisal is, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Second, resolve that you will not give up on finding a biblical solution. If a dispute is not easily resolved, you may be tempted to say, “Well, I tried all the biblical principles I know, and they just didn’t work. It looks like I’ll have to handle this another way” – meaning, the world’s way.

A follower of Christ should never close the Bible. When you try to resolve a conflict but do not see the results you desire, you should seek God even more earnestly through prayer, the study of His Word, and the counsel of His church. As you do so, it is essential to keep your focus on Christ and all that He has already done for you (see Col. 3:1-4). It is also helpful to follow five principles for overcoming evil, which are described in Romans 12:14-21:

- Control your tongue (“Bless those who curse you” see also Eph. 4:29)
- Seek godly advisors (identify with others and do not become isolated)
At the very least, these steps will protect you from being consumed by the acid of your own bitterness and resentment if others continue to oppose you. And in some cases, God may eventually use such actions to bring another person to repentance (1 Sam. 24:1-22).

Even if other people persist in doing wrong, you can continue to trust that God is in control and will deal with them in His time (see Psalms 10 and 37). This kind of patience in the face of suffering is commended by God (1 Pet. 2:19) and ultimately results in our good and His glory.

GET HELP FROM ABOVE

None of us can make complete and lasting peace with others in our own strength. We must have help from God. But before we can receive that help, we need to be at peace with God Himself.

Peace with God doesn’t come automatically, because all of us have sinned and alienated ourselves from Him (Isa. 59:1-2). Instead of living the perfect lives needed to enjoy fellowship with Him, each of us has a record stained with sin (Matt. 5:48; Rom. 3:23). As a result, we deserve to be eternally separated from God (Rom. 6:23a). That’s the bad news.

The good news is that “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Believing in Jesus means more than being baptized, going to church, or trying to be a good person. None of these activities can erase the sins you have already committed and will continue to commit throughout your life. Believing in Jesus means, first of all, admitting that you are a sinner and acknowledging that there is no way you can earn God’s approval by your own works (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8-9).

Second, it means believing that Jesus paid the full penalty for your sins when He died on the cross (Isa. 53:1-12; 1 Peter 2:24-25). In other words, believing in Jesus means trusting that He exchanged records with you at Calvary—that is, He took your sinful record on Himself and paid for it in full, giving you His perfect record.

When you believe in Jesus and receive His perfect record of righteousness, you can really have true peace with God. As you receive this peace, God will give you an increasing ability to make peace with others by following the peacemaking principles He gives us in Scripture, many of which are described above (Phil. 4:7; Matt. 5:9).

If you have never confessed your sin to God and believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, Lord, and King, you can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer:

Lord Jesus,
I know that I am a sinner, and I realize that my good deeds could never make up for my wrongs.
I need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and I want to turn away from them.
I trust you now to be my Savior, and I will follow you as my Lord and King, in the fellowship of your church.

If you have prayed this prayer, it is essential that you find fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is faithfully taught and applied. This fellowship will help you to learn more about God, grow in your faith, and obey what He commands, even when you are involved in a difficult conflict. Let us know how Watermark might be able to serve you as your place of fellowship.

GET HELP FROM THE CHURCH

As God helps you to practice His peacemaking principles, you will be able to resolve most of the normal conflicts of daily life on your own. Sometimes, however, you will encounter situations that you do not know how to handle. In such situations, it is wise and appropriate to turn to others in your community or to spiritually mature persons around you who can give you advice on how you might be able to apply these principles more effectively.

When individual advice does not enable you to resolve a dispute, you should ask one or two mutually respected friends to meet with you and your opponent to help you settle your difference through mediation or arbitration (Matt. 18:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).
MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having trusted in Christ alone as my Lord and Savior, and being in agreement with the Calling, Commitments, Convictions, Core Values, Beliefs and Governance of Watermark Community Church, I now am called to unite with the Watermark family. In doing so, I commit myself to the Lord and to the other members of the family to protect our unity, share in, serve and support the ministry of my church family through pursuing:

BELONGING TO HIS BODY...

• by living life as a fully devoted follower of Christ.
• by attending faithfully.
• by dealing biblically with conflict and refusing to gossip.
• by following the leadership (See "Leadership Structure" on pg. 18) in submitting myself to the care and correction of leadership should the need arise.
• by praying for its health and impact.
• by warmly welcoming those who visit Watermark and committing myself to community with those who attend.
• by having a community group that will know me and help me as I seek to love God, love believers, and love unbelievers.

HELPING OTHERS BELIEVE IN CHRIST...

• by developing relationships with the unchurched, de-churched, dead-churched and unmoved.
• by sharing my story of grace with others.
• by praying for the salvation of non-believers with whom I have a relationship.

BEING TRAINED IN GOD’S TRUTH...

• by committing myself to read, understand and apply the Bible.
• by affirming the inspiration, infallibility and authority of God’s Word, as well as the other core doctrines found in Watermark’s Statement of Beliefs. (See “Our Beliefs” on pg. 23)
• by availing myself to the tools and resources of the church which are designed to further my understanding of and deepen my commitment to applying God’s Word.
• by preparing myself to give a "ready defense" for my faith based on God’s Word.

BEING STRONG IN A LIFE OF MINISTRY AND WORSHIP...

• by serving others in ministry.
• by giving graciously as God has graciously given to me.
• by annually filling out my Spiritual Growth Assessment.

Name:                                  E-mail Address:

Membership Class Date:

Signature (full name):                  Date:

Let us know if you need help finding a place that will allow you to best use your "SHAPE" for ministry. Contact our Membership Team to let us know where you want to serve or where you are already serving at membership@watermark.org.