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BY-LAWS WEST DIGHTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH DIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ARTICLE 1 NAME

This church shall be called the West Dighton Christian Church. (Incorporated name shall be The West Dighton Christian Church Society.)

ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that God has revealed Himself through the Bible. We believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only Inspired, Inerrant, Infallible, and Authoritative Word of God.

We believe in One God, infinite in Wisdom, Goodness, and Love. We believe that He is eternally existent in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. We believe that for us and our salvation He took on human form, that He was born of a virgin, that He lived a sinless life, that He performed miracles, that He died on the cross for our sins, that on the third day He was bodily resurrected, and that He ascended to the right hand of God the Father. We believe in His second coming in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful mankind, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. He takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us, renewing, comforting and inspiring our souls. We believe that only by His indwelling power and fullness are Christians enabled to live a godly life in this present sinful world.

We believe that Jesus Christ will raise up all the dead, give eternal life and everlasting joy to believers, and condemn unbelievers to eternal punishment.

We believe that the unity of the Church can only be brought about by a common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

ARTICLE 3 COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and having been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

We believe the Biblical understanding of the Church, as the Body of Christ, teaches us that Church membership be expressed consistently through a life of active discipleship. With this in mind we promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

- To walk together in brotherly love, exercising Christian care and watchfulness over each other, sharing in each others' joys and sorrows and at all times showing forth a spirit of Christ-likeness.
- To strive to meet God daily in times of prayer and Bible study both personally and with other family members.
- To assemble with other believers at regularly scheduled and special services of the Church for worship, prayer, and edification.
- To seek and pray for the spiritual growth, harmony, and prosperity of this Church.
- To contribute cheerfully of our means, as God has prospered us, for the support of a faithful ministry and the spread of the Gospel both near and far.
- To utilize the gifts of service which the Holy Spirit has given to us as members of Christ's Body, while recognizing that these gifts are to be discovered, developed, and confirmed within the context of the church.
- To seek to grow in love for other Christians and all people everywhere and to express that love in action.
- To strive for Christ-like maturity in all our behavior and attitudes, striving to be obedient to the Biblical call for personal holiness.
- To witness in our daily life, work, and words as to who God is and what He has done and is able to do in the lives of others who come to Him in saving faith.
- To pray regularly for the pastor, leaders, members and friends of this Church fellowship.
- To do our part to advance the Kingdom of God here on earth in obedience to Christ's commandments found in Matthew 22:37-40 and Matthew 28:18-20.

- To promise that when we remove from this place, we shall as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this Covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE 4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The central purpose of this Church is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to glorify God by constantly seeking His Righteousness, displayed to us in the glory of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Savior and example; the image of the invisible God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God's Word, this Church is bonded to Him by faith and committed to each other by covenant to love, serve, and worship God together as Jesus declared; to submit to God's will in our lives; to love, serve, and submit to one another; to encourage and edify one another; and to spread the good news of salvation in our local community and ultimately to the world, for the praise and glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 5 POLITY

The government of this Church is vested in its members. It is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Congregational churches.

ARTICLE 6 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications

We believe that the spiritual unity of the church can only be brought about by a common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Church as defined by the Scriptures is made up of believers. The members of this Church therefore, shall consist of those baptized persons who have professed their faith in and love for Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This faith and love is demonstrated by members both through their acceptance of the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this Church, as well as through their commitment to live according to God's Word in a spirit of faith, hope, and love.

Section 2: Duties and Privileges

God's Word directs us in Hebrews 10:25 "not to give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." Therefore, let us fully understand that membership is not a matter of money or good works but a matter of attitude, and we are instructed as a Church to exhort and encourage those who have forsaken the assemblies of the Church.

To this end, every member shall be expected to seek by consistent Christian living to be a testimony to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to seek to acquire spiritual knowledge and wisdom for self, family and fellow Church members; and to progress in grace and spirituality, as expressed throughout Scripture, particularly in 2 Peter 1. To this end, members shall be faithful to the spiritual duties essential to Christian life; attend faithfully the services, functions, and programs of the Church; and take advantage of the many ministries provided by the Church.

Members shall be expected to support the Church with their presence and participation and to honor its Statement of Faith and Covenant.

Every member in regular standing shall be expected to act and vote on all transactions of the Church.

Section 3: Categories of Membership

God's Word exhorts us to make our commitment to Church membership with authenticity and to protect the Church from the influence of the world. To this end, two categories of membership shall exist.

A. Active Member

Active members demonstrate their interest in our Church through their involvement with the Church body as well as in the corporate worship of God. This involvement consists in part in faithful and habitual attendance at the services and functions of this Church, and the diligent sharing in the work of this congregation as well as the Christian Church around the world. To this end, members shall be encouraged to discover, develop and use the gifts, talents, and abilities that God has given to each one for the purpose of building-up the body of Christ, fulfilling the Lord's great commission, and bringing glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

B. Inactive Membership

God's Word directs us in Hebrew 10:25 "not to give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." Therefore, let us fully understand that membership is not a matter of money or good works but a matter of attitude, and we are instructed as a Church to exhort and encourage those who forsake the assemblies of the Church. To this end, the Board of Deacons may, by a majority vote, place on the inactive list those individuals who for one year have not faithfully fulfilled the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, or who are without valid reason for habitual absence and thereby have not been faithful to the services of the Church.

Every faithful effort shall be made on the part of the Pastor and Deacons to contact, restore and bring back into fellowship, those persons being considered for placement on the inactive list.

Members who are dropped from membership must reapply as new members and be received back into fellowship.

Section 4: Admission to Membership

Admission to membership of this Church is based on those criteria stated in Section 1 above. To this end, people desiring to become members of this Church Family shall meet with the Pastor, who will evaluate the applicants' acceptance of and commitment to the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Bylaws of this Church. If the Pastor finds that they meet the membership requirements, he shall recommend them to the Deacons for membership. If the Pastor finds that the applicants are not acceptable, they shall be encouraged to meet with the Pastor until such time as he and the Deacons are willing to accept these people into membership. Membership shall be conferred by the unanimous vote of the Board of Deacons.

Public acceptance of the Statement of Faith and the Covenant shall be made by new members at a Communion Service. The Pastor and Deacons shall at that time extend to new members the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the Church.

Section 5: Discipline

The purposes of church discipline are the restoration of the erring individual to the Lord and to prevent evil that may destroy the purity and peace of the Church, thus enabling the Church to maintain the power of the Holy Spirit and thus a high standard of Christian faith and conduct. The Board of Deacons shall act as the discipline committee, and in all matters of discipline involving Church members shall adhere to the guidelines established in Matthew 18:15-17, and thus shall have as their primary goal the restoration of lost souls and the bringing back into fellowship those who are under disciplinary consideration.

Any one of the following actions or attitudes shall be considered by the discipline committee:

1. Propagation of unscriptural doctrine.
2. Promotion of strife among members of the church by gossip or false accusation.
3. Practice of any conduct detrimental to the cause of Jesus Christ and thus the primary interest of this Church.
4. Needless, unexplained, and habitual absence from the stated worship services of this Church.
5. Persistent breach of the covenant vows.

The following passages of Scripture shall form the basis for all matters under disciplinary consideration:

Matthew 18:15-17

Romans 1:18-32

1 John 3:9-10

James 3:2

Proverbs 6:16-19:

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

2 Thessalonians 3:6

1 Timothy 5:19-21

Titus 1:10-13

Titus 3:10

The Pastor shall also be subject to discipline for actions or attitudes described above, however charges brought against the Pastor shall be in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19, and such charges shall be brought in writing and signed, to the Board of Deacons.

Any charges brought against members of this Church shall first meet the conditions established in Matthew 18:15-17 and such charges shall be made in writing and signed, to the Board of Deacons. Members so accused shall have opportunity to read all charges and evidence against them, to know all accusers, and to

answer to those charges in a meeting with the Board of Deacons. If, in the opinion of the Deacons, the charges are disproved, the case shall be dropped and the members cleared. If a majority of the Deacons vote that the accused are guilty of specified offenses, and do not show repentant spirits, they shall recommend to the Church that the offending members' names be excluded from the Church rolls. A majority, ballot vote of those present at a duly called Congregational Meeting shall be necessary to confirm the recommendations of the Board of Deacons. The accused parties shall be given opportunity to present their case before the Church prior to a vote.

Section 6: Termination/Dismissal

Dismissal from membership in this Church shall be granted by letter, written on behalf of members in good standing, upon request for such a letter by the members' new Church.

When members fail to live up to their covenant vows and exhibit a lack of Christian interest through their willful absence from the stated worship services of the Church (except for reasons of age or infirmity) or through negligence in observing the principles of this Church over a period of one year, such members shall be placed on a list of inactive members (see Section 3B above), and shall be dropped from the membership after a period of one year on this list. Notification that members have been dropped from the membership list shall be made by the Board of Deacons in writing.

Membership in this church may also be removed when the Church, in the exercise of its rightful authority and discipline, has withdrawn such membership from a person for reasons stated in the Section 5 above.

ARTICLE 7 PASTOR

Section 1: Preamble

We, the members of the West Dighton Christian Church, are hereby resolved and covenant together to select, maintain, provide for, and support a Pastor on a full time basis. We further resolve that the primary responsibility of our Pastor shall be to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Our Pastor, being full of wisdom and The Spirit, and exhibiting the qualities expressed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, shall first and foremost be a man who, in his personal spiritual life, is devoted to the Lord

Jesus Christ and to the fulfillment of God's Will by exhibiting the qualities expressed in Romans 12:1-2.

To this end, we hereby resolve and covenant together, in accordance with Acts 6:1-7, to support our Pastor in his primary responsibility to serve the Lord Jesus Christ through prayer and through meaningful study of and reflection upon the Word of God.

Our Pastor's primary relationship, like that of all of us who are here joined together in covenant, and in accordance with the promises of 2 Peter 1:3-11, is with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Duties and Responsibilities

Our Pastor is the undershepherd of his family and of this flock. He shall, through the power of the Holy Spirit, guide them and direct them such that they shall "no longer be foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

In response to God's call (Ephesians 4:11), our Pastor shall strive to serve the Lord and to serve this flock, in accordance with 1 Peter 5:1-4, and "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

As undershepherd, our Pastor shall watch over himself and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made him overseer, protecting the flock from false doctrine and distortions of the Truth, in accordance with Acts 20:28-32.

We maintain that with the above firmly rooted and established, our Pastor, by virtue of his call, is first in the Church, both in dignity and in usefulness (1 Timothy 3:1). Provision of his family and this flock with the spiritual food of God's Word in his preaching, teaching, and counseling ministries is recognized as an important aspect of the fulfillment of his call. His duty is to be reverent and prudent, to be an example to his family and to this flock, and to oversee with diligence the Body of Christ as it seeks to fulfill its mission and purpose, and as it seeks to fulfill the Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation, and shall have in his care the stated worship services and administration of ordinances/sacraments of Baptism and The

Lord's Supper. He, along with the Diaconate shall be responsible for the selection and instruction of candidates for membership.

The recovery of those who are lost to this congregation, and visitation of those who request spiritual counseling, including the aged and infirm, shall also be a responsibility of the Pastor and the Diaconate. Along with the Diaconate, the Pastor shall be responsible for the pulpit supply during his absence. The Pastor shall make annual and quarterly reports to the congregation at its duly called meetings.

Section 3: Calling

When the pastorate becomes vacant, the Pastoral Search Committee (see Article 12 below) shall present the name of one candidate at a duly called church meeting called specifically for this purpose. A $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend the call to the recommended candidate.

The Pastor shall serve an unspecified term, and he and his wife shall be active members of this church, subscribing, in writing, to its Statement of Faith, Covenant, Mission Statement, and Bylaws. While the Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all boards and committees, he shall not be required to attend all board/committee meetings.

The financial package, vacation time, and sabbatical for the Pastor, as well as living arrangements, shall be negotiated by the Pastor with the Board of Trustees (see Article 8, Section 12 below).

Section 4: Resignation, Discipline and Termination

The Pastor, in as much as possible and practical, shall give the church 90 days written notice of the date on which he intends to terminate his relationship with this congregation.

Any charges brought against the Pastor shall first be made in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17, and secondly in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19. Failure to reconcile at this point shall result in the charges against the Pastor being brought, in person and in writing, to the Deacons. Such charges shall be made according to Article 6, Section 5 above. Additionally, the persons bringing the charges, the Pastor, and the Deacons shall attempt to reconcile the grievance at a Deacon's meeting called specifically for this purpose. Reconciliation of the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned parties, and requiring the unanimous vote of the Deacons, shall result in the grievance being dropped. If in the Pastor or Deacons' minds the issue has not been resolved, it is suggested that the Pastor

or Deacons, at this time, seek prayer and council from the Denomination or Association affiliated with the Church at that time. Either the persons bringing the charges against the Pastor or the Deacons may, if the issue is not resolved, call for a special congregational meeting, at which they shall present their charges against the Pastor. At this meeting, the persons bringing the charges shall present their case. The Pastor will have the opportunity to respond to those charges, and the Deacons shall present their views. The congregation may, by a 2/3-ballot vote cast at this duly called meeting, terminate its relationship with the Pastor.

The congregation, in as much as possible and practical, shall give the Pastor 90 days written notice of the date on which it intends to terminate its relationship with him.

ARTICLE 8 BOARDS and COMMITTEES

Section 1: Qualifications for Service

- A. Members of boards and committees shall first be accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ in the spirit expressed in Romans 12:1-2; the Book of Ephesians; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 6:3 and secondly to the Congregation.
- B. In accordance with the concepts expressed in Acts 6:3, board and committee members shall be those who are full of the Spirit and Wisdom, and as such shall be devoted to prayer and reflection in terms of board or committee matters, with the understanding that much of the work of boards and committees takes place not only during the meetings, but between meetings as well.

Section 2: Nomination, Election and Terms of Office

- A. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, all boards and committees shall consist of not more than 5 members, nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation at its annual meeting, or other duly called meeting.
- B. Persons nominated for a board or committee position shall be active members of this Church and shall give prayerful consideration and reflection to the qualifications required for the position; the gifts of the Spirit that the person has received; and the calling of the Lord to that person in terms of the position. Such nominated persons are encouraged to

meet with Pastor and/or the Chairperson of the board or committee for the purpose of receiving prayer and counsel in this regard.

- C. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, board and committee members shall serve an unspecified number of three year terms which shall be so arranged as to have not more than two terms expire at the same time.
- D. Unexpired terms of office on boards and committees shall be filled as soon as possible and practical, given the above considerations, through the nominating and election processes described in this Article. Those persons filling unexpired terms shall serve for the remainder of said term.
- E. The congregation, at a duly called meeting, may create new boards and committees in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws, define their tasks and specify their terms of office, including ad hoc committees. As with all other offices, committees and boards, members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

Section 3: Organization and General Procedures of All Boards and Committees

- A. As soon as possible after the Annual Meeting, all boards and committees shall organize their group, electing a Chairperson and Secretary. Additionally, a Treasurer shall be elected by those boards and committees that require one. Unless otherwise noted below, boards and committees shall meet at least once each month, with special meetings called by the Chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. In the absence of the Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer, the group shall elect a person on a temporary basis to fulfill that role.
- B. Boards and committees are encouraged to read and discuss annually the Church Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Mission Statement.
- C. Boards and committees shall keep accurate meeting minutes, including the names of members present and absent, and submit a copy of the minutes for the office files.
- D. If a member of a board or committee cannot attend a scheduled meeting, it is the responsibility of the member to inform the chairperson of such.

- E. All board or committee decisions shall be made by majority (consensus) of the members of the board or committee.
- F. All meeting items should be considered confidential, and as such should not, under ordinary circumstances, be discussed outside of the meeting.
- G. The chairperson is the spokesperson for all boards and committees. Persons wishing information that applies to or involves a particular board or committee shall contact the chairperson. No one board or committee member should speak for the entire board, and caution should be taken when speaking to non-board or committee members about issues currently facing the board or committee unless a vote has been taken or a consensus clearly established, in which case it is the chairperson who should do the speaking.
- H. In order to function well, it is important that non-board and non-committee members who have a concern or idea for a board or committee:
 1. Commit themselves to prayer with respect to the issue.
 2. Call the chairperson of the board or committee which is most directly involved with the issue and schedule agenda time for the purpose of addressing the stated issue. Board and committee meetings are open to all church members, but courtesy and efficiency require that persons wishing to speak to the board or committee be scheduled for that purpose in a timely fashion.
 3. Shall speak of the stated concern only to those boards or committees that can do something about the issue; and if the concern involves another church member, speak privately to that member first, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18; James 1:19-22: 2:1; and 3:1-2.

Section 4: Moderator

The Moderator shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual church meeting. The Moderator shall serve a one-year term, with six consecutive terms being the limit. The Moderator shall preside at all annual, quarterly, and special church meetings. When the Moderator is unable to fulfill this function, another person shall be elected for a particular meeting by a majority of those present and voting.

Section 5: Clerk

The Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual church meeting. The Clerk shall serve a one-year term, with six consecutive terms being the limit.

The Clerk shall keep a register with the addresses of all members and the modes of their reception and dismissal. The Clerk shall attend to the correspondence relative to letters of transfer, church meetings, election of officers and appointment of committees. At the direction of the Board of Trustees, the Clerk shall also serve as Financial Secretary, being responsible for the collection, accounting of weekly worship plate collections and shall furnish a bond, for which the church shall bear the cost. The Clerk shall also see to the safekeeping of the church records, and perform such other duties as pertain to the office of Church Clerk.

Section 6: Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual church meeting. The Assistant Clerk shall serve a one-year term, with six consecutive terms being the limit. The Assistant Clerk shall assist in counting and recording of weekly and special collections.

Section 7: Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual church meeting. The Recording Secretary shall serve a one-year term, with six consecutive terms being the limit.

The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of all proceedings at annual, quarterly, and special church meetings, and see to the safe keeping of church minutes.

Section 8: Treasurer*

The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual meeting, for a term of one year and may serve no more than six consecutive terms. In the absence of the Treasurer, the duties of the treasurer shall be assumed by the Assistant Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall receive, hold, deposit and disburse all church monies, and keep suitable books and accounts. The Treasurer shall furnish a bond, for which the church shall bear the cost, and shall

keep the church funds in such banking institutions as shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is authorized to pay the regularly recurring expenses of the church.

The Treasurer shall report an account of all church finances, quarterly and annually in detail, and at other times as required, at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

**see Amendment #4*

Section 9: Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual church meeting. The Assistant Treasurer shall serve for one year, and may serve no more than six consecutive terms. Whenever possible, the election of an Assistant Treasurer who is new to the position shall be arranged so as to not coincide with the election of a treasurer who is new to the treasurer's position. The Assistant Treasurer shall assume the duties of the treasurer in the Treasurer's absence and shall otherwise assist the Treasurer as requested and at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

Section 10: Auditors

Two Auditors shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual meeting as described below. The Auditors shall serve a three- year term, with two consecutive terms being the limit before a one-year hiatus is required. Whenever possible and practical, one auditor shall be nominated and elected each year, such that one of the auditors is finishing his second year of service while the other auditor is beginning his first year of service.

The Auditors shall make an annual audit of the books of the Church Treasurer, Clerk, Youth Groups, Cemetery Committee, Deacon's Fund, and any other groups holding funds under the auspices or name of this church. Further audits by the Auditors shall be carried out at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

The Auditors shall report their findings, in writing, at the February quarterly church meeting.

Section 11: Deacons

A. Purpose

The Board of Deacons shall, with the Pastor, be the spiritual leaders of the Church and as such, shall first and foremost be concerned for the spiritual welfare of the members of the

West Dighton Christian Church. Secondly, Deacons shall be concerned for the temporal welfare of the church members.

B. Qualifications

Deacons shall be those persons who are known to be full of wisdom and the Spirit (Acts 6:3), as exhibited by the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in their individual lives. They shall be those persons displaying the qualities listed in 1Timothy 3:8-13, whose primary life focus is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ for the praise and glory of His Name. As such, Deacons shall be those persons who, displaying the qualities expressed in Romans 12:1-2, actively seek God and desire to know and fulfill His will in their individual lives, and in the life of this Church.

C. Number and Election

There shall be no more than seven deacons who shall serve a three-year term. Two successive terms may be served. Nominations for the position of deacon shall not be made from the floor of any congregational meeting.

D. Duties

- 1. Spiritual Duties:** With the Pastor, the Deacons shall be primarily concerned for the spiritual well being of the members of this church. As such, and under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, and the leadership of the Pastor the focus of deacon ministry shall be to:
 - a. Establish a church vision and mission, the primary focus of which is to evangelize the unsaved and disciple saved members of this church and the community.
 - b. Establish policy and direction for the Church respect to its vision and mission.
 - c. Develop programs and activities that move the Church in the direction of its vision and mission.
 - d. Under the guidance, enabling and direction of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with Romans 12 and the talents and gifts apportioned to each one, the Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the fulfillment of his duty to develop the laity for ministry. Thus directed

and enabled by the Holy Spirit, the Deacons shall under the leadership and guidance of the Pastor, assist him in fulfilling his call “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12-13)

- 2. Temporal and Administrative Duties:** In accordance with the concepts expressed in Section A above, the Deacons shall strive to meet some of the temporal needs of the people of this Church. The primary focus of the activities listed below shall be to minister the word of God and to remove the encumbrances from the Pastor, in accordance with Acts 6:1-7, such that the Pastor’s time can be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Such duties include, but are not limited to:
- a. With the Pastor, and in accordance with Article 6, Section 4, inquiring into the qualifications of all candidates for church membership.
 - b. Annual review of the church roll for the purpose of determining active versus inactive church membership status (See Article 6, Section 3).
 - c. Caring for the indifferent and the stranger with the hope of strengthening their relationship with The Lord and bringing them back into fellowship with this congregation.
 - d. Encouraging new believers and those who are ministering, both quietly and publicly, in the Name of the Lord.
 - e. Arrange for pulpit supply for Sunday services when the Pastor is unable, and to welcome and introduce guest speakers to the Church.
 - f. Take responsibility for all devotional meetings in the absence of or at the request of the Pastor.
 - g. Wise stewardship and accounting of the Deacon’s Fund, with a general report of the fund made at the annual church meeting.
 - h. Visitation of the sick and needy, and helping them when possible.
 - i. In accordance with Article 6, section 5, to serve as the church discipline committee.

- j. When needed (and at least once a year), meeting and working with the Trustees, Christian Education Committee, and other groups as appropriate, for the purpose of discussing:
 - 1. Where the Church has been in the past.
 - 2. Where the Church is today.
 - 3. Where the Lord wants the Church to be in the future.
- k. Prepare for and assist the Pastor in the observance of the sacraments/ordinances.
 - l. Provide an example to and encourage the members of the Church to be responsible members of the local community.
- m. Meeting at least once a month for the purpose of the above, and additionally as needed.

Section 12: Trustees

A. Purpose

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the provision, safeguard and maintenance of the church facilities; for operating procedures and systems, and for sound and efficient financial and business controls within the Church.

B. Number, Qualifications, Election

The Board of Trustees shall be five in number elected from the active membership of the Church, who exhibit such characteristics as found in Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8- 13; and Titus 1:5-9. They shall be elected at the Annual Church Meeting, for three-year terms, with two consecutive terms being the limit. Should a Trustee vacate his office before completing his term, a successor shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the next Church meeting to complete the unexpired term.

C. Duties

- 1. To acquaint themselves when necessary, with the laws and ordinances of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of Dighton pertaining to churches to see that the Church is in compliance with same.

2. To have the general direction and management of all Church property, real and personal, administering same in keeping with these bylaws and also be responsible for all insurance policies in regards to Church property.
3. The Trustees are not permitted to make a disposition of any Church land or buildings, not to purchase any such property except as directed by the Church.
4. To oversee and provide for the proper maintenance and repairs to Church buildings, furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
5. To represent the Church in all legal matters, including the employing of legal counsel, and to take custody and oversight of important papers and documents, such as deeds, leases, agreements, insurance policies, etc.
6. To oversee the collecting counting, recording and reporting of all offerings and Church funds, including the supervision of auditing, as well as investments of all funds as consistent with and as designated by these bylaws.
7. To approve disbursement of Church funds with the exception of the deacon and missions funds. They shall authorize the Church Treasurer to make regular payments, general and missionary, etc. The Board of Trustees' approval shall be sufficient for the expenditure of up to \$750.00; any larger amount will require the approval of the Church. The Board of Trustees shall engage all paid staff, except pastoral staff, as needed, and determine their compensation, as approved by the Church.
8. Trustees, along with the Pastoral Search Committee and Deacons, shall negotiate the initial financial package with the pastoral staff, after which the yearly financial packages of the pastoral staff shall be negotiated by the Trustees, subject to approval by the Church.
9. To see that the Church Clerk gives due notice of all Church business meetings.
10. To submit a detailed report to the annual church meeting, quarterly meetings, or at such other times as requested by the Church.
11. The Board of Trustees shall submit the annual budget for approval at the annual meeting.

Section 13: The Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of five members to be elected for three-year terms. They shall have general direction of the educational work of the Church, and with the Pastor, shall act as an advisory committee for Christian education work in all Church organizations. They shall prepare an annual budget to be submitted to the trustees by October 1.

The Christian Education Committee shall have charge of the Church Sunday School and shall submit to the Nominating Committee a recommendation for Sunday School Superintendent. The term for Sunday School Superintendent shall be one year, from June to June, to be voted upon at the May Church quarterly meeting. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the Christian Education Committee, and shall be accountable to the Christian Education Committee.

Section 14: Music Committee

With the Pastor, this committee shall be responsible for the general planning and supervision of the musical activities of the Church.

This committee shall see to the effective use of spiritually oriented and scripturally accurate music that is conducive to worship and edification.

This committee shall be responsible for the acquisition and supplying of suitable music for the Organist, Pianist, and Church Choir. They shall have the responsibility of tuning instruments. Additionally, this committee shall recommend hymnals for the Church.

This committee shall, when requested, assist the Christian Education Committee in planning and implementing music for the Sunday School program.

This committee may, subject to the approval of Pastor and Deacons, plan and present musical programs.

This committee shall recommend to the congregation for its approval the names of those to fill the positions of Organist and Choir Director when those positions become vacant.

The Choir Director and Organist shall work under the direction of the Music Committee, and they shall serve as ex officio members of this committee.

This committee shall submit to the Trustees an annual budget request.

Section 15: Missions Committee

The Missions Committee shall consist of from three to five members, nominated by the Nominating Committee. Their term of office shall be three years. They shall cooperate with the Pastor in carrying forward a program of missionary education and promotion for the Church. At the annual church meeting, the Missions Committee shall recommend specific missionary causes for Church adoption and approval.

Section 16: Nominating Committee

This committee shall consist of five members: one trustee, one deacon, and three members at large. Their term shall be one year, with two consecutive terms being the term limit, after which a one-year hiatus is required.

The Nominating Committee, through prayer, shall solicit the guidance of the Holy Spirit when considering persons to serve on all boards and committees. The following guidelines shall be considered by this committee:

- a. A leading of the Holy Spirit.
- b. The guidance of the Pastor.
- c. The spiritual walk of the person under consideration, as evidence by the fruit of the Spirit in his/her life.
- d. The spiritual gifts, talents, and devotion required for the position, as stated or implied in Scripture and these bylaws.

Given the above, the duties of the nominating committee shall be:

- a. Present to the church at the annual meeting a slate of officers for the ensuing year.
- b. Present names as soon as possible for all vacancies which may occur during the course of their tenure.
- c. At least two weeks prior to needing an answer from the person, inform prospective nominees that they are being considered for the position and strongly encourage him/her to:
 1. Give prayerful consideration to the ministry and listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Meet with the Pastor and/or Chairperson of that board or committee.
 3. Prayerfully read and meditate on the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Mission Statements of this Church.

4. Prayerfully read the section of these bylaws that apply to the position.
5. Prayerfully consider his/her gifts, talents, devotions and time as they relate to service on that board or committee.

Section 17: Nursery Committee*

This committee shall consist of three persons who shall serve for three-year terms. This committee shall oversee the ministry of the nursery, including having responsibility for assigning weekly volunteers, setting policy guidelines for the nursery, and keeping the nursery room and outdoor play areas safe and appropriately supplied. The Nursery Committee shall submit a budget request to the Trustees by October 1 of each year

**see Amendment #5.*

Section 18: Cemetery Committee*

This committee shall have responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the church cemetery, including opening and closing graves, selling plots, and determining prices.

The Cemetery Superintendent shall be appointed by the Cemetery Committee, and under their direction, shall have overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the cemetery.

Compensation for the Cemetery Superintendent shall be established by the Cemetery Committee, subject to approval by the congregation. The Superintendent of the cemetery shall be an ex officio member of the Cemetery Committee.

The Cemetery Committee shall hire outside help as it deems appropriate.

All cemetery funds shall be held in a separate account and be accounted by the Cemetery Committee Treasurer who under the direction of the Cemetery Committee shall submit to the Board of Trustees, Church Treasurer and Auditors a complete financial statement on or before January 15. They shall be subject to the same auditing procedures required for all funds held under the auspices of this Church.

The Cemetery Committee shall submit a report at the annual church meeting in November and all other regular church meetings.

**see Amendment #3*

ARTICLE 9 MEETINGS*

The annual meeting of the Church shall be held on the second Tuesday of November to elect officers and to transact any other business that may legally come before it. Additional regular meetings are to be held on the second Tuesday of February and May. Special meetings may be called by the clerk upon the direction of the Moderator, the Pastor, or upon written request of five members. Notice of a business meeting shall be publicly announced and posted in the vestibule of the church at least two Sundays before the meeting is held. Twenty members of the Church shall constitute a quorum and only active members shall be eligible to vote.

**see Amendment #2*

ARTICLE 10 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE 11 MEMORIAL FUND

The Trustees shall accept and administer, in a separate account, all trust and memorial funds under the provisions of the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the benefit of this Church, upon such terms and conditions as the donors or grantees may direct. All such funds shall be invested, and the yearly balance, expenditures, and interest earned reported to the congregation at its annual meeting. Memorial and trust funds shall be subject to the same auditing procedures that are carried out for all other funds held and administered under the auspices of this Church. Expenditure of memorial and trust funds shall be by majority vote of the congregation, and unless otherwise specified by the donors/grantees, may be used for whatever purpose the congregation desires.

ARTICLE 12 PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Section 1: Purpose

The Pastoral Search Committee is a special committee, established when required. The purpose of the committee shall be to search for a candidate to fill the role of Pastor of our Church. The committee shall search for a candidate who meets the qualities described in the section on Pastor (Article 7) above.

Section 2: Make-up of the Committee

This committee shall consist of 2 Deacons, 1 Trustee and two active members at large. They shall be nominated by the Nominating committee and elected by the Congregation at a duly called meeting.

Section 3: Duties

- a. The committee shall select a Chairperson and Secretary.
- b. The committee shall secure the names of applicants to screen, interview, and hear preach.
- c. After prayerful consideration, the committee shall call for a special congregational meeting and there present the name of the candidate it has unanimously chosen.
- d. If the candidate is not approved by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the congregation, the committee shall resume the search process and at a subsequent, specially called meeting, present the name of another candidate.
- e. The duties of this committee shall be considered completed upon an affirmative vote of the congregation, at which time the Pastoral Search Committee shall become the Pastoral Relations Committee and serve for an additional six months in facilitating and accommodating the transition of the new Pastor to our church.
- f. Expenses incurred in the performance of the above duties shall be paid by the Church.

ARTICLE 13 REPORTS

Reports from the Pastor and all affiliated Church boards, committees and organizations will be due in writing, at the annual and quarterly church meetings. Any group having funds shall include a review of same in their report.

ARTICLE 14 AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Auxiliary organizations, whose aim is to more fully develop the program of the church, may be formed. They shall require the approval of and be responsible to, the Board of Trustees and Deacons.
- B. The president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer of the auxiliary organizations shall be active members of this Church.

- C. The following groups shall be included as auxiliary organizations: Junior and Senior High Youth Groups. West Dighton Christian Church Woman’s Guild, and other organizations that may form in the future, in accordance with these bylaws.
- D. Auxiliary organizations shall give financial reports and their books shall be audited in accordance with these bylaws.
- E. The Pastor shall be an advisor to all auxiliary organizations.

**ARTICLE 15 AFFILIATIONS WITH
 OUTSIDE GROUPS**

God’s Word admonishes us to be united in the Spirit and united in the Body, His Church. (I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:3-6) While there is diversity in the parts of the body as well as in the function of those parts, all of the parts nevertheless belong to the one body, working for and under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ as shepherd, the Pastor as undershepherd, and the levels of organization established by the Church in accordance with the Scriptures. “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:4-5)

To that end and with that in mind, this Church recognizes and acknowledges no association or affiliation with any groups or organizations which operate under the name of this Church which are not included in these bylaws.

ARTICLE 16 OFFICIAL PAPERS

All official documents (i.e.) deed, insurance policies, historical record, official minutes of all church meetings, and any other legal papers related to West Dighton Christian Church shall be on file with the Church Clerk. They will be held in the church office or church safe deposit box. Any documents not so held shall be null and void by these bylaws, which supersede all other bylaws.

ARTICLE 17 AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting, providing notice of the proposed amendment is given in time to be posted with the call of the meeting.

AMENDMENT #1

ARTICLE 9 MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the church shall be held on the second Tuesday of November to elect officers and to transact any other business that may legally come before it. An additional meeting is to be held on the second Tuesday of May. Special meetings may be called by the Clerk upon the direction of the Moderator, the Pastor, or upon written request of five members. Notice of a business meeting shall be publicly announced and posted in the vestibule of the church at least two Sundays before the meeting is held. Twenty members of the church shall constitute a quorum and only active members shall be eligible to vote.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting May 31, 1998

AMENDMENT #2

ARTICLE 9 MEETINGS

The annual meeting of the Church shall be held in November to elect officers and to transact any other business that may legally come before it. An additional meeting is to be held in May. Special meetings may be called by the Clerk upon the direction of the Moderator, the Pastor, or upon written request of five members. Notice of business meeting shall be publicly announced and posted in the vestibule of the church at least two Sundays before the meeting is held. Twenty percent of the active members shall constitute a quorum and only active members shall be eligible to vote.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting January 28, 2001

AMENDMENT #3

ARTICLE 8 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

SECTION 18: CEMETERY COMMITTEE

- A.** The name of this cemetery shall be the “The West Dighton Christian Church Cemetery.”
- B.** Cemetery Committee

1. Preamble

A permanent cemetery committee shall exist and operate under the auspices and at the direction of The West Dighton Christian Church. As such, the Cemetery Committee shall have the responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the Church cemetery, including opening and closing graves, selling plots, and determining prices. The cemetery committee shall hire outside help, as it deems appropriate.

All cemetery funds shall be held in a separate account and be accounted by the Cemetery Committee Treasurer who under the direction of the Cemetery Committee shall submit to the Board of Trustees, Church Treasurer and Auditors a complete financial statement on or before January 15. They shall be subject to the same auditing procedures required for all funds held under the auspices of this Church. The Cemetery Committee shall submit a report at the annual church meeting in November and all other regular church meetings.

2. Membership on the Cemetery Committee

The church voted a Cemetery Committee of five members at large on May 8, 1979. The present Cemetery Committee exists in accordance with the bylaws of the West Dighton Christian Church. Future Cemetery Committee Members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee of the West Dighton Christian Church, and elected by the members of said Church, in accordance with Article 8, Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the bylaws of the West Dighton Christian Church.

C. Officers and Their Duties

1. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meeting of the Committee and shall, along with a quorum of Cemetery Committee Members, sign all orders for payment of money. The Chairperson shall call meetings and discharge all other duties pertaining to the office.

2. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall be invested with the power and charged with the duties of the Chairperson during the absence of the Chairperson.

3. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep records of the proceedings of the meetings of the committee. Such records shall, as soon after each meeting as practical, be copied and submitted to each Committee member, Cemetery Superintendent, Pastor and the Church Secretary for the office files. The Secretary shall conduct appropriate correspondence at the direction of the Committee.

4. Treasurer/Clerk

The Treasurer/Clerk shall be bonded in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Trustees of the West Dighton Christian Church. Payment for said bond shall be encumbered by the Cemetery Committee.

The Treasurer/Clerk shall serve notices, record all orders for payment of money, collect all money due the committee, pay all expenses of said committee and at the direction of said committee, give and take receipts thereof, keeping a full and correct account of all monies received and paid out during each quarter and at the direction of the committee.

The Treasurer/Clerk shall invest all funds in accordance with the directions specified by the committee. He or she shall arrange for the sale of burial rights and care of the lots. The Treasurer/Clerk shall prepare and give a full financial report to the Cemetery Committee as well as to the

congregation of the West Dighton Christian Church at its annual Congregational Meeting.

Additionally, the Treasurer/Clerk shall prepare and submit a full financial report to the Church Auditors at the time designated by said Auditors. He or she shall discharge all other duties pertaining to the office and at the direction of the Committee.

D. Meetings

1. There shall be quarterly meetings of the Cemetery Committee. In as far as possible and practical, said meetings shall occur within two weeks after the end of March, June, September, and December. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chairperson or another officer of the Committee.
2. A majority of the Cemetery Committee members shall be required for the transaction of the business of the Committee.

E. Grounds

1. The Cemetery Committee shall plot the West Dighton Christian Church Cemetery. Copies of the plot plans shall be kept up to date, with copies being held by the Superintendent, Treasurer/Clerk, Church Office Files, as well as other locations as determined by the Committee or as required by law.
2. The Committee shall determine specifications for foundations for stones.
3. All markers and ornamentation shall be approved by the Committee, which reserves the right to remove unsuitable objects and planting from gravesites.
4. The Cemetery Superintendent shall be appointed by the Cemetery Committee, and under their direction, shall have overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the cemetery. The Committee may hire a Superintendent, whose compensation shall be established by the Cemetery Committee subject to the approval of the congregation. The Superintendent of the cemetery shall be an ex officio member of the Cemetery Committee.

F. Lots

1. Perpetual care includes the care and cutting of the grass in

the lots, the preservation of the proper grades of lots, and removal of plants and flowers when necessary. Perpetual care does not include major expenditures for improvements to the property, putting in foundations, the removal or repair of stones, or the interments or removal of bodies.

2. The lot holder shall have the privilege of having a stone erected, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Lots must be paid for in full before improvements and foundation work will be allowed on any lot or grave.
 - b. As a guarantee of good work, and as a protection to all lot holders, and for the general welfare and safety of all, the committee reserves the right to excavate for and build all foundations. Such work must be paid for in advance. The location for a foundation must be approved jointly by the lot holder and the Cemetery Committee.
 - c. Should any memorial, curbing, or other structure become unsightly, dilapidated, or a menace to visitors, the Cemetery Committee has the right to either correct the condition or to remove it, at the expense of the lot holder. Prior to taking corrective measures, the Cemetery Committee shall, in the above instances and whenever practical, make every effort to notify the lot holder that such conditions exist. The committee reserves the right to take immediate corrective measures in the event that the condition of a lot poses a safety hazard to visitors to the cemetery.
 - d. Only competent monument workers may erect stones. Determination of competency for such work shall be the right of the Committee.
 - e. Foundations must be placed under all stones and markers, subject to the approval of the Committee.
 - f. There shall only be one headstone on a lot, unless otherwise approved by the Committee. Headstones shall conform to others in the same section of the cemetery, at the discretion and judgment of the Committee. All headstone foundations are to be flush with the ground, subject to the approval of the Committee.
3. All work done on lots by order of the lot holder shall be under the supervision of the Caretaker who will approve all work and the location of all plantings. The Cemetery Committee and its designees disclaim any responsibility for

damage to headstones from mowing in the ordinary course of operation. The Cemetery Committee and its designees also disclaim any responsibility for damage to headstone, shrubs, etc. as the result of vandalism or any other cause.

4. All lot holders, visitors within the cemetery and all lots sold shall be subject to these rules and regulations and subject further to such other rules and regulations, amendments or other changes as shall be adopted from time to time by the Cemetery Committee. Reference made in the “Deed to the Burial Rights” to the “Rules and Regulations” shall have the same force and effect as if set forth in full herein.
5. All “Deeds of Burial Rights” in the cemetery shall be signed by the Treasurer/Clerk and the seal of the committee affixed thereto. Execution of the signature and seal shall be witnessed by a Notary.
6. The sale, transfer or assignment of any lot is not valid without the consent of the Cemetery Committee executed on a “Deed of Burial Rights.” Filing and recording of the “Deed of Burial Rights” by the Committee in its records shall be the only evidence of title recognized.

G. Records

1. Copies of “Deeds of Burial Rights” shall be kept by the Treasurer/Clerk, with one additional copy to be filed with the Church Secretary in the Church Office. Additional copies of “Deeds of Burial Rights” may be kept, at the direction of the Committee or as required by law.
2. A card index record shall be kept for each lot. Included in the card index shall be the lot number, location, lot holder, names of those deceased and buried in the lots, and other information at the direction of the committee. The card index shall be kept by the Treasurer/Clerk, with copies held by the Superintendent and Church Secretary in the Church Office. Additional copies of the card index may be kept at the direction of the Committee or as required by law.
3. Plot plans shall be kept for the cemetery. The plot plans shall designate the location of occupied and unoccupied gravesites as well as relevant information from the card index, as determined by the Committee or as required by law. Plot plans shall be kept up to date, with copies held by the Treasurer/Clerk, Superintendent, and Church Secretary in the Church Office. Additional copies of the plot plans

may be kept at the direction of the Committee or as required by law.

H. Funds

1. All donations, bequests, and collections of money by the Committee may be applied to the general expenses or perpetual care accounts of the West Dighton Christian Church Cemetery, as determined by the Committee.
2. Any expenditure of over \$500 per year for perpetual care (See Section VI, Item 1) and normal maintenance performed by either the superintendent or members of the Cemetery Committee will be brought before the Church Trustees for approval. These do not include fees paid to the superintendent for burials and the installation of footings.
3. A full accounting of all funds received and disbursed by the Committee shall be made to the Congregation of the West Dighton Christian Church at its annual meeting and to the Auditors of the West Dighton Christian Church.

I. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the West Dighton Christian Church.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting, December 12, 2001

AMENDMENT #4

ARTICLE 8

Section 8: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual meeting, for a term of one year. In the absence of the Treasurer, the duties of the treasurer shall be assumed by the Assistant Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall receive, hold, deposit and disburse all church monies, and keep suitable books and accounts. The Treasurer shall furnish a bond, for which the church shall bear the cost, and shall keep the church funds in such banking institutions as shall be

approved by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is authorized to pay the regularly recurring expenses of the church.

The Treasurer shall report an account of all church finances, quarterly and annually in detail, and at other times as required, at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting September 24, 2003

AMENDMENT #5

ARTICLE 8

Section 17: Childcare Committee

This Committee shall consist of up to three persons who shall serve for three year terms. This committee shall oversee the ministry of childcare, which includes having responsibility for assigning weekly volunteers, setting policy guidelines for the childcare ministry including the nursery room and playground. This includes keeping the nursery room and outdoor play areas safe and appropriately supplied. This Childcare Committee shall submit a budget request to the Trustees by October 1 of each year.

NOTE: Approved at Annual Congregational Meeting on November 17, 2010

AMENDMENT #6

ARTICLE 8

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

SECTION 12: TRUSTEES

C. Duties

7. To approve disbursement of Church funds with the exception of the deacon and missions funds. They shall authorize the Church Treasurer to make regular payments, general and missionary, etc. The Board of Trustees' approval shall be sufficient for the expenditure of up to \$1500.00; any larger amount will require the approval of the Church. The Board of Trustees shall engage all paid staff, except pastoral staff,

as needed, and determine their compensation, as approved by the Church.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting on December 15, 2013

ADDENDUM #1

MARRIAGE POLICY

West Dighton Christian Church believes that marriage is an institution ordained by God for the mutual benefit of a husband (male) and a wife (female), and for the procreation of children (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 1:20). The marriage bond between a husband and a wife is to reflect the love and relationship that Christ, the divine bridegroom, has for his bride, the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Believing these things to be the unchangeable Word of God, this church will not recognize any marriage or union between people of the same gender. Neither will the church nor any of its pastors or members solemnize such marriages or unions or permit the facilities or grounds of the church to be used to perform the same. No person united to another person of the same gender by any civil or religious ceremony will be considered for membership in the church.

NOTE: Approved at Special Congregational Meeting on December 15, 2013