

Constitution and By-Laws Pepperell Christian Fellowship

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Article 1 – Name

This church shall be known as Pepperell Christian Fellowship.

Article 2 – Organization

Pepperell Christian Fellowship shall be organized as an independent local church in accordance with the New Testament principles of the Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

The church shall be incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The church shall be registered with the United States IRS as a tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code, 501(c)3.

Article 3 – Purpose

The purpose of the church is to glorify God through the activities of worship, instruction in the Bible, evangelism, service, and the building up of believers.

Article 4 – Doctrinal Statement of Faith

The Word of God

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, complete in the 66 books of the Bible, to be the only inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak.

The Trinity

We believe in One God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, divine guidance, and redemption.

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, the sovereign, eternal, personal Spirit, omnipotent and omnipresent, unchanging, perfect in Holiness, Wisdom, Justice and Love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin and spiritual death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

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Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's Eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfection as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only True God, but True Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. We believe that in the Incarnation He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine Essence, either in degree or kind. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement by His shed blood, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, visible return from heaven.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His divine personality and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation. He is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same Nature. His ministry is to convict of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness. We believe that He is the Author of the Holy Scriptures. He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony. He is the life-giving agent of the New Birth, bringing God close to us through His indwelling presence within the believer. He seals, empowers, guides, comforts, teaches, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

Man

We believe God created man, male and female, in the image of God, for the purpose of enjoying fellowship with Him and exercising dominion over His created order. Created free from sin, man voluntarily disobeyed God and fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind is now of a sinful nature, and they sin, not by constraint, but by choice, and are therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse, resulting in both spiritual and physical death. We also believe that those who repent of sin and turn to Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, reconciled to God and restored to true fellowship with Him.

Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace through Jesus Christ. This salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God and was purchased through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, by the shedding of His blood on the cross and is received by man through faith apart from any human merit, works or ritual. This free gift is available to any person who will repent of sin, believe and receive Jesus Christ. We further believe that anyone who trusts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit, has a right standing before God, has received eternal life, and will be kept in his salvation by the power of God forever.

The Church

We believe that the Church is the spiritual Body of which Christ is the head. We believe that the True Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that this Body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have named Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and have associated themselves for the purpose of glorifying God through worship, instruction in God's Word, evangelism, service, and the building up of the saints. We believe the ordinances of the local Church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that God gives unique and spiritual gifts to each member of the Body of Christ. We also believe that it is scriptural for local assemblies of the True Church to cooperate with each other for the purpose of contending for the Faith, mutual edification and the furtherance of the Gospel.

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Believer's Baptism

We believe that Believer's Baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality. That it is an ordinance entered into after one has received the free gift of salvation. We believe that participation in believer's baptism is commanded by Scripture.

The Lord's Supper

We believe that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a proclamation of His death on the cross. We believe that the observance of this ordinance should not be taken lightly, that each individual should examine themselves so that they do not take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. Instituted by the Lord himself, we join in the Lord's Supper in order to express our association with and acceptance of, Jesus Christ as Savior.

Christian Conduct

We believe that the supreme task of every believer is to glorify God in their life. We believe that a desire to be obedient to the Word of God will be found in every believer, and that through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God. The believer should become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ, yearning to realize for themselves the full stature of maturity in Christ.

Man's Eternal Destiny

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Saved and the Lost. The righteous will rise to eternal life in heaven, and the unrighteous will rise to eternal condemnation, punishment, and separation from God in hell.

The Devil or Satan

We believe that Satan was an angel who once enjoyed heavenly honors. Through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he fell and drew after him a host of angels. He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the Saints, the ruler of all false religions, the chief power in back of the present apostasy, the lord of the anti-christ, and the ruler of all powers of darkness. We believe however, that he was defeated at the cross of Christ and there doomed to an eternal justice in Hell, the place prepared for him and his angels.

Article 5 – Government

1. Governance

Pepperell Christian Fellowship is governed according to a form of church government known as "Elder-led congregational government."

The Elder Board is responsible to God for the church. It is the responsibility of the Elders to lead the congregation according to their understanding of God's will and leading, consistent with God's Word, the Bible. Authority for decisions belongs to the membership.

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2. Boards

- The Board of Elders is responsible for the spiritual health of the church as described in the By-Laws.
- The Board of Deacons is responsible for the physical oversight of the church and its assets as described in the By-Laws.

3. Membership

A. Qualifications

To qualify as a member of Pepperell Christian Fellowship a person must confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and accept the Membership Commitment found in Appendix A of this document.

B. Admission

Any qualified regularly attending adult may request admission to the membership of the church.

The Elders shall be responsible for determining a person's qualifications for membership.

Upon the recommendation of the Elders and a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering, a person shall be accepted into the membership of the church.

C. Resignation of Membership

Any member may terminate his or her membership by requesting in writing to the Clerk that he or she be removed from the membership of the church.

D. Removal from Membership

A person shall be removed from the membership role following discipline as described in the By-Laws.

The decision to remove a person from membership is expressed by a 2/3 vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

The person facing removal from membership is prohibited from voting on any matter at the All Church Gathering.

4. Church Meetings

A. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is an All Church Gathering, held in either December or January for the approval of the church budget for the coming year. The Deacons shall set the date for the Annual Meeting by December 1. A quorum of 10 members is required to act on any business.

The budget shall be approved by a simple majority vote of those present.

A notice announcing the Annual Meeting must be posted in the church building two weeks prior to the meeting, and announced during the Sunday service at two services prior to the meeting. Any additional items requiring action must be listed on the notice for the meeting and announced in the services.

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B. All Church Gathering

An All Church Gathering is a meeting of the members of Pepperell Christian Fellowship. The All Church Gathering shall be moderated by the President or by his designate. A quorum of 10 members is required to act on any business. Any items requiring action must be posted in the church building two weeks prior to the meeting and announced at two Sunday services prior to the meeting.

The Elders may call an All Church Gathering at any time. The Elders may call a meeting at which no action is required for informational purposes.

The Deacons may call an All Church Gathering for action or informational purposes on items of finance or physical oversight at any time.

Any ten members may call an All Church Gathering to act on items described in the By-Laws. The ten members must submit the request for the meeting and the item or items requiring action to the Clerk, who will post the action item and schedule the meeting.

Action required at an All Church Gathering shall require a vote specific to the action as described in the By-Laws.

C. Rules for Church Meetings

Church meetings shall be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order.

All votes at church meetings are of those present. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

Article 6 - By-Laws

1. Officers

A. President

i) Election and Term

The President shall be selected by the Elders from among the current non-pastoral Elders. The President may serve until the end of his term on the Board of Elders.

ii) Duties

In addition to his duties as a member of the Board of Elders, the President shall:

- Chair meetings of the Elder Board, or designate a chair in his absence
- Chair official church meetings, or designate a chair in his absence
- Be authorized to act on behalf of the corporation consistent with the Articles of Organization

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iii) Dismissal

The President shall be dismissed:

- Upon his departure from the Board of Elders
- By a majority vote of the Board of Elders

B. Treasurer

i) Election and Term

The Treasurer shall be a member of the church nominated by the Board of Deacons and confirmed by the membership. The Treasurer shall serve a term of two years. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms the Treasurer may serve.

The confirmation of the membership is expressed by a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

ii) Duties

The duties of the Treasurer shall include:

- The receiving and counting of all offerings at all services, aided by the Assistant Treasurer or designated delegates.
- To deposit these receipts to the credit of Pepperell Christian Fellowship.
- To disburse funds for all approved expenses.
- To maintain financial records.
- To prepare quarterly or as needed reports.
- To prepare receipts of contributions for the calendar year by January 31st.
- To prepare of the annual budget for the annual meeting.
- To serve on the Board of Deacons

iii) Dismissal

The Treasurer may be dismissed by a majority vote of either the Board of Deacons or the Board of Elders. The Treasurer shall be dismissed upon removal from the membership of the church.

C. Assistant Treasurer

i) Election and Term

The Assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the church nominated by the Board of Deacons and confirmed by the membership. The Assistant Treasurer shall serve a term of two years. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms the Assistant Treasurer may serve.

The confirmation of the membership is expressed by a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

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ii) Duties

The duties of the Assistant Treasurer are:

- To assist in the receiving and counting of all offerings at all services, aided as needed by designated delegates.
- To fulfill all the duties of the Treasurer as needed.
- To serve as a member of the Board of Deacons

iii) Dismissal

The Assistant Treasurer may be dismissed by a majority vote of either the Board of Deacons or the Board of Elders. The Assistant Treasurer shall be dismissed upon removal from the membership of the church.

D. Clerk

i) Election and Term

The Clerk shall be a member of the church nominated by the Board of Deacons and confirmed by the membership. The Clerk shall serve a term of two years. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms the Clerk may serve.

The confirmation of the membership is expressed by a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

ii) Duties

Duties of the Clerk are:

- To be responsible for all official correspondence.
- To record the minutes of all church meetings and prepare minutes for review at the next church meeting.
- To approve and schedule a church meeting when requested by the membership
- To maintain the membership role of the church.
- To maintain records pertaining to this office.
- To provide a transcript of church meetings to the Treasurer in which authority of disbursement/transfer of funds is granted.
- To prepare the annual report.
- To appoint a designate as needed to assist in fulfilling these duties.
- Upon vacating the office, to provide to the successor or the Elders, all records, files, papers, and documents belonging to the church with all contents as complete to the date of surrender as possible.

iii) Dismissal

The Clerk may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Board of Deacons. The Clerk shall be dismissed upon removal from the membership of the church.

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2. Boards

A. Elders

i) Qualifications

An Elder shall be a man meeting the Scriptural guidelines put forward in 1 Timothy 3:1-3, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Matthew 23:11.

ii) Election and Term

An Elder shall be a member of the church nominated by the Board of Elders and confirmed by the membership . With the exception of a Pastoral Elder, an Elder shall serve a term of three years. There is no limit to the total number of terms an Elder may serve, but an Elder may serve at most two consecutive terms. After serving two consecutive terms, the former Elder may not be nominated to serve as an Elder for one year.

The confirmation of the membership is expressed by a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

iii) Responsibilities

The Elders will be responsible for the spiritual oversight and direction of the church. These responsibilities include oversight in the areas of:

- Prayer
- The Word of God
- Sound doctrine
- Ministry

The Elders will be directly responsible for:

- Shepherding the people of God at Pepperell Christian Fellowship
- Prayer for Pepperell Christian Fellowship and the people of God at Pepperell Christian Fellowship
- Church discipline
- The screening and recommendation of Elders, Deacons, and ministry leaders.
- All other matters requiring the necessary involvement of spiritual direction.

The Elders are responsible as the Board of directors for the corporation, and thus have oversight responsibility for all other Boards and officers of the corporation.

iv) Dismissal

An Elder may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- Failure to meet the qualifications of the office described above
- Failure to meet the responsibilities of the office

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An Elder may be dismissed by a majority vote of the other Elders. An Elder may also be dismissed by a majority vote of those present at a properly called All Church Meeting. An Elder shall be dismissed upon removal from the membership of the church.

B. Deacons

i) Qualifications

The Deacons shall be nominated on the basis of the Scriptural guidelines as put forward in 1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Matthew 23:11.

ii) Election and Term

A Deacon will be a member of the church nominated by the Board of Elders and confirmed by the membership. A Deacon shall serve a term of three years. There is no limit to the total number of terms a Deacon may serve, but a Deacon may serve at most two consecutive terms. After serving two consecutive terms, the former Deacon may not be nominated to serve as a Deacon for one year.

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall serve as members of the Board of Deacons during the term that they hold their office.

iii) Responsibilities

The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical oversight of the church. These responsibilities shall include:

- The purchase and maintenance of capital equipment, including facilities.
- Responsibility for upkeep and maintenance of church facilities.
- Expenditure and disbursement of finances.
- All other matters pertaining to the physical oversight of the church.
- Disbursement of the Deacons Fund
- Meeting the material needs of the church.

iv) Dismissal

For Deacons other than the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, dismissal may occur at any time at the discretion of the Board of Elders. A Deacon shall be dismissed upon removal from the membership of the church.

C. Pastoral Staff

i) Definition

Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ.

ii) Qualifications

A Pastor shall be a man meeting the Scriptural guidelines put forward in 1 Timothy 3:1-3, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Matthew 23:11, who has been called by God to serve in full time ministry at Pepperell Christian Fellowship.

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iii) Call and Term

A Pastor shall be called following a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders and confirmation by the membership.

The confirmation of the membership is expressed by a majority vote at a properly called All Church Gathering.

The confirmation of the membership also brings the Pastor into the membership of the church.

A Pastor shall serve a term without limit.

iv) Duties

Pastor shall serve based on his job description, which shall be set at the time of his calling. This job description may be changed by mutual agreement between the Pastor and the Board of Elders.

A Pastor shall serve as a member of the Board of Elders during the time of his ministry at Pepperell Christian Fellowship.

v) Dismissal

A Pastor may be dismissed by a unanimous vote of the other Elders. A Pastor may also be dismissed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present at a properly called All Church Gathering.

3. Discipline

Church discipline will be handled according to the principles of our Lord Jesus Christ as set down in Matthew 18:15-17.

4. Amendments

Any amendments and modifications to Doctrinal Statement of Faith and/or Statement of Faith require the unanimous approval of the Board of Elders and a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present at a properly called All Church Gathering.

Any amendments and modifications to this Constitution and By-Laws require the unanimous approval of the Board of Elders and a majority vote of those present at a properly called All Church Gathering.

5. Dissolution

Should the corporation dissolve, all assets will be donated to a non-profit Christian organization(s) as recommended by the Elder Board.

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Appendix A – Membership Commitment

Why we have church membership at PCF

The Christian life is an incredible adventure. It is full of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, successes and failures. Church membership expresses our desire to live this adventure together with other Christian brothers and sisters as part of a loving, welcoming, Jesus-centered community. It also expresses our desire to say to more and more people, ‘Come join us on this adventure!’

Being a Jesus-centered community is an awesome privilege and a demanding commitment. By entering into a membership community with one another, we are pursuing both the joy and the sacrifice of being involved in each other’s lives. We do this for the sake of our own souls and also because we believe that the more deeply we love each other the more we will advance our mission of displaying the worth of God to the world.¹ We don’t believe true membership tidies things up – on the contrary, it makes things messier as we really invest in each other’s lives. But that’s the kind of messiness the Bible urges us to enter into with each other.

Church membership is our effort to honor and live out four truths about the church taught in the New Testament. First, the New Testament affirms that a local church is a defined body of believers.² Second, the New Testament affirms that Christians should be deeply involved in each other’s lives for mutual encouragement and exhortation.³ Third, the New Testament affirms that the leaders of a local church are accountable to God to shepherd well the people in their care, and that those within the church should submit to their leaders as those leaders submit to God and obey his will.⁴ Finally, the New Testament affirms that local churches should make important decisions together as a church.⁵

At PCF, we are seeking to live ‘from the gospel and for the gospel.’ That means the foundation for our lives of Christian obedience is God’s free grace shown us at the cross of Jesus, who died as our substitute and bore God’s judgment for our sin. We don’t obey Jesus in order to earn God’s favor, because God has *already* forgiven us at the cross! Instead, we obey Jesus in order to promote the spread of the gospel and the glory of God. This is the spirit in which we approach the significant promises we make to one another in this Membership Commitment. Because we’re sinners, we don’t pretend we’ll always perfectly fulfill these promises, but nonetheless we make these promises with hope, because we are *forgiven, justified* sinners now filled with God’s Spirit.

¹ John 13.35

² Matthew 18.15-20; 1 Corinthians 5.1-13

³ Hebrews 3.13; 1 John 3.16

⁴ Acts 20.28; Hebrews 13.17; 1 Peter 5.1-4

⁵ Matthew 18.17; 2 Corinthians 2.6-7

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Statement of faith, doctrine, and mission

We ask all members of PCF to affirm the following:

- I have been led by God to repent of my sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone as my Savior and Lord, and have been baptized as a profession of my faith.
- I am in full agreement with the PCF statement of faith.
- I gladly commit to furthering the mission of PCF: ‘We exist to be a Jesus-centered community in Pepperell, speaking gospel words and doing gospel works to display the worth of God to the world.’

In the presence of God and relying on his help, I solemnly and joyfully enter into this membership commitment with the other members of PCF as one body in Christ.

The commitments of the PCF membership community to me

PCF commits to appoint Elders who meet the biblical qualifications of the office.⁶ PCF Elders will be men who joyfully shepherd, nurture, and watch over the souls of all the members of PCF as under-shepherds of Christ⁷ while setting an example in life and godliness.⁸ They will teach the Bible and sound doctrine and guard against doctrinal error.⁹ On the last day, at the return of Christ, the Elders of PCF will give an account to Jesus himself for the way they have cared for the souls of those under their charge.¹⁰

PCF commits to appoint Deacons who meet the biblical qualifications of the office.¹¹ PCF Deacons will be men and women who are ‘of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.’¹² They will seek to meet the practical and material needs of PCF¹³ and will serve as examples of glad-hearted, sacrificial service for the rest of the PCF members, *all* of whom are called to serve one another as Christ served us.¹⁴

The PCF membership community commits to be a body of believers where each one of us cares for the others. We recognize that we cannot know every PCF member with the same level of intimacy. Nonetheless, in ways appropriate to our individual relationships within the membership community, we will love one another¹⁵, admonish one another¹⁶, encourage one another¹⁷, and pray for one another.¹⁸ We will weep when others weep and rejoice when they

⁶ 1 Timothy 3.1-7; Titus 1.5-9

⁷ Acts 20.28; Hebrews 13.17

⁸ 1 Timothy 4.15-16; 1 Peter 5.1-3

⁹ 1 Timothy 5.17; Titus 1.9

¹⁰ Hebrews 13.17; James 3.1; 1 Peter 5.4

¹¹ 1 Timothy 3.8-13

¹² Acts 6.3

¹³ Cp. Acts 6.1-6 and 1 Timothy 3.8-13

¹⁴ Mark 10.43-45

¹⁵ John 13.34-35; 15.12; Romans 13.8; 1 Thessalonians 4.9; 1 John 3.11

¹⁶ Romans 15.14; 1 Thessalonians 5.14; 2 Thessalonians 3.15

¹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5.11; Hebrews 3.13

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5.16-18; James 5.16

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rejoice.¹⁹ When necessary, we will exercise loving discipline in order to rescue members who willfully persist in sin.²⁰ When we make decisions together as a church we will do so prayerfully, seeking the glory of God and the good of all concerned.

My commitments to the PCF membership community

Becoming more like Jesus happens best in Christian community. I want to live the Christian life together with my brothers and sisters at PCF, encouraging them and being encouraged by them. Because of this, I commit, by the power of the Holy Spirit²¹ and the guidance of God's Word²², to pursue personal holiness and Christ-like behavior, even when this life of discipleship requires personal sacrifice.²³ I know that this is the path to full and lasting joy, so I will seek to increasingly surrender every area of my life to Jesus, obeying the teachings of the Bible, so that God's worth will be displayed in my life. When I fail, I will repent, trust the amazing promise of the gospel for forgiveness, and seek again to follow Jesus. I will speak gospel words, as God provides opportunities, to those in my life who don't know Jesus.²⁴

I commit myself wholeheartedly to the PCF membership community. I will faithfully participate in PCF's weekly, gathered worship²⁵ and will meet regularly with other believers for biblical encouragement, prayer, and fellowship.²⁶ I will pray for my brothers and sisters at PCF²⁷ and will give of my time, money and giftedness in Christ-like service to them.²⁸ I will submit to the discipline of the Lord as it is lovingly and redemptively administered to me through the members of PCF.²⁹ I will respect, pray for, and follow the leaders God has given PCF as they follow Christ.³⁰ If I move from this area and am no longer able to be a member of PCF, I will become a member of another church where I can carry out the spirit of this membership commitment.

May God help us on this adventure as we wait *together* for our glorious future home, the new heavens and new earth, where righteousness dwells!³¹ 'Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'³²

¹⁹ Romans 12.15

²⁰ Matthew 18.15-20; 1 Corinthians 5.1-13

²¹ Romans 8.13

²² Psalm 1.1-3; 119.97-99; 2 Timothy 3.14-17

²³ Mark 8.34-38; Ephesians 4.17-24; 2 Timothy 3.12-13

²⁴ Matthew 5.14-16; Romans 10.14-15; Colossians 4.5-6

²⁵ Acts 20.7; 1 Corinthians 16.2; Hebrews 10.24-25; Revelation 1.10

²⁶ Hebrews 3.12-14

²⁷ Ephesians 1.15-23; 3.14-21

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 12.4-7; 14.12; 16.1-2; 2 Corinthians 9.6-7

²⁹ Matthew 18.15-20; 1 Corinthians 5.1-13; 1 Thessalonians 5.14

³⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5.12-13; Hebrews 13.17; 1 Peter 5.5

³¹ 2 Peter 3.13

³² Ephesians 3.20-21