

# **Atlee Community Church**

## **Structure of Ministry**

### **Article I**

#### **Name & Principal Office**

The name of the church is Atlee Community Church (ACC). The structure of ministry described in this document is designed for ACC. Atlee Community Church maintains its principal office at 7171 Verdi Lane, Mechanicsville, VA 23116. The Spiritual Management Team (SMT) shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another. This article may be amended, without a membership vote, to state the new location.

### **Article II**

#### **Purpose**

To be a biblically functioning community which seeks to turn unbelievers (and unchurched people) into fully devoted followers of Christ.

### **Article III**

#### **Achievement of Purpose**

ACC seeks to achieve its purpose through the following seven step strategy:

1. Building Bridges of Relationship with unchurched people. *Luke 7:34; John 17:18.*
2. Personally Communicating our Faith. *1 Peter 3:15.*
3. Providing a Service for “Seekers”. *Luke 5:27-32; Acts 2:47.*
4. Facilitating Small Groups. *John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47.*
5. Providing Worship for Believers. *Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 3:16.*
6. Helping people learn how to become good managers of their gifts, talents, and resources. *Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12 & 14; 2 Corinthians 8:7.*
7. Helping people grow in leadership and service. *Matthew 20:25-27; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12.*

## **Article IV**

### **Statement of Faith**

A living Christian faith must be continually interpreted. This statement of faith is not to be regarded as complete or infallible. It is the purpose of this statement to state in clear terms, the Christian teachings we believe. Scripture references found at the end of each paragraph, while not exhaustive, give more detailed statements concerning these truths.

#### **1. God:**

We believe there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each of Whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created the world and all that is in it out of nothing. God manifests and demonstrates His power, wisdom, and goodness as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the universe. God is just, yet loves us and offers us forgiveness. God the Father operates throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes. *Genesis 1:1; Exodus 15:11-14; Exodus 20:1-6; Psalm 19:1-3; Matthew 6:9-10; John 14:6-13; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6; Hebrews 11:6.*

#### **2. Jesus Christ:**

Jesus Christ, God's son, is both fully God and fully human. He was united with true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body in which He lived and died. He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He is the only Mediator between God and humanity. He will come again to the earth, personally and visibly, to fulfill God's eternal plan and conclude human history. *Isaiah 53; Matthew 1:18-23; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:1-6; Luke 1:35; Luke 24:46-47; John 1:1-18; John 11:25-27; John 14:7-11; John 20:1-20; Acts 2:22-24; Romans 3:23-26; Romans 5:8-21; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3; Hebrews 4:14-15; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21-25; Revelation 1:13-17; Revelation 5:11-14.*

#### **3. The Holy Spirit:**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to humanity the saving work of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit awakens in us an awareness of our sin, and our need for a Savior. At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer and becomes the source of comfort, strength, wisdom, and assurance of salvation. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of

Christlike character and to bring glory to God the Father. He also gives every believer at least one spiritual gift for the building up of the body of Christ. *Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7-10; Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 28:19-20; John 4:24; John 14:16-17, 26; John 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 1:13-14.*

#### **4. The Bible:**

The basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe the Scripture originated with God and was written and recorded by men divinely inspired by God. The Bible thus speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. The message of the Bible is complete truth, gives us God's instruction for living, and shows us the way to salvation through Jesus Christ. The Bible is the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice. *Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalm 19:7-10; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 40:8; Luke 24:44-46; Romans 15:4; Romans 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

#### **5. Salvation:**

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, humans defied God, and chose to go their own way. They were separated from God and suffered the corruption of their nature. Sin entered the world early in human history and all individuals since have suffered and are thus in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of humanity is wholly the work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part of human works or goodness. Every individual must personally appropriate salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation. *John 3:3-21; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3:23-24; Romans 6:22-23; Romans 8:1-3; Romans 8:28-30, 38-39; Romans 10:9-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Colossians 3:10-17; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 1:5-9; Revelation 3:20.*

#### **6. Human Destiny:**

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all humanity, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. Believers will be received into eternal communion with God. *Luke 16:19-20; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:18; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27.*

#### **7. The Church:**

There is one true universal church, known as the body of Christ in scripture, composed of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior. The Scripture commands believers to regularly gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, and fellowship. Baptism and communion are observed as the ordinances established by Jesus Christ. Service to the body of Christ and outreach to the world are accomplished through the development and use of gifts and talents.

The local expression of the church is realized wherever God's people meet in obedience to this command. Members are to work together in love and unity, under the watchcare and guidance of the appropriate leadership, with the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ. *Matthew 16:15-19; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 14:22-26; Acts 2:41-42, 47; Acts 9:31; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 4:11-12; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 5:1-3.*

## **8. Faith & Practice:**

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. ACC leaves room for honest differences of opinion as to biblical interpretation on doctrines which are not essential to salvation. ACC recognizes that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where Scripture is silent. Each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible. However, all members will refrain from advocating doctrines that are not included in the Statement of Faith in such a way as to cause dissension.

We believe that God has given every believer unique gifts, talents, and resources. As a matter of faith and practice it should be the goal of every believer to follow Christ fully, managing these gifts wisely and joyfully using them in ministry. *Romans 1:8-12, 17; Romans 3:21-26; Romans 14:19-23, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:15-18; Hebrews 10:22-25; Hebrews 11; James 1:2-6; James 2:14-18, 24-26.*

## **Article V** **Affiliation**

ACC is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing the benefits of cooperation with other churches and organizations, ACC voluntarily affiliates with the Virginia Baptist General Association, the Dover Baptist Association, the International and North American Mission Boards, and the Willow Creek Association. Future affiliations and cooperations may be authorized by the SMT.

## **Article VI** **Membership**

In accordance with the corporate laws of Virginia, ACC will have a voting membership. Although ACC freely extends fellowship to all individuals, membership is open to those who have personally received Christ as their Savior, experienced believers baptism, expressed a desire to become committed to ACC as a local body of believers, and who have worked prayerfully through the following process:

1. Consistent participation in the life of the church.

2. Completion of the ACC membership orientation.
3. Personal Interview. Upon completion of membership orientation, those individuals desiring membership shall meet with a member of the SMT or leader appointed by the SMT to verbalize their personal testimony, and their desire to be committed to ACC as a local body of believers.
4. Agreement with the church's purpose, core values, seven step strategy, membership responsibilities, and this structure of ministry document.

## **Article VII**

### **Termination of Membership**

Persons may be removed from membership for the following reasons:

1. By personal request of the member.
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. Death.
4. Dismissal by the Spiritual Management Team according to the following conditions:

The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with this structure of ministry document in such a way that the member hinders the ministry of the church.

Procedures for dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18:15-17 as summarized in Appendix 1: Scriptural Procedures and Principles for Confrontation and Conflict Resolution.

## **Article VIII**

### **Restoration of Members**

Members dismissed by the Spiritual Management Team shall be restored by the SMT according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their life-styles are in accordance with the structure of ministry document. Members who transferred their membership or requested removal may seek to have their membership reinstated through a personal interview with a member of the SMT or leader appointed by the SMT.

## **Article IX**

### **Membership Meetings**

1. Place. Membership meetings shall be held at such place designated by the SMT.
2. General meeting. A general meeting of the membership shall be held during the fourth quarter of each year at a time determined by the SMT. This general meeting shall be the annual meeting, in which each member shall be afforded an opportunity to review the church's budget for the coming year, to approve Trustees when necessary, and to become acquainted with new members of the Spiritual Management Team and other officers. The SMT may also request that certain other issues be presented in the general meeting, such as the disposition of church assets, the merger or dissolution of the church; the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness; changes to this Structure of Ministry document or any successor document, and the hiring or removal of certain key staff members.

Meetings will be convened by a moderator who is appointed by the SMT. The SMT will develop, revise, and maintain guidelines concerning the format and procedures of membership meetings.

Each member 18 years of age or older is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited. Members will be notified two weeks in advance of the meeting. Notification will be given to those persons who are members as of the date of the notification in any or all of the following ways: Notification posted in the church office, printed in the Sunday service program, announcement in a Sunday service, announcement in a church newsletter, or delivery by the United States mail service.

3. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called at any time by the SMT for any purpose by giving at least a one week notice, except in cases of extreme emergency, then the meeting may be held with even less notice. Notification of special meetings will be given in any or all of the following ways: Notification posted in the church office, printed in the Sunday service program, announcement in a Sunday service, announcement in a church newsletter, or delivery by the United States mail service.

4. Quorum. Those members present at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

**Article X**  
**Trustees**

ACC shall have three trustees at all times. All trustees must be members of ACC. The trustees, nominated by the SMT, shall be approved by the membership to three year terms, which may run consecutively. Trustees shall be elected at the annual membership meetings and shall serve for three years or until a successor is elected. In the event of resignation, death, or removal of a trustee, a replacement may be elected at a special called meeting in advance of the next annual meeting. The trustees of ACC shall be empowered as follows:

1. To hold legal title to the real and personal property of ACC; to acquire and dispose of such property and additional property as directed by the SMT; to enter into binding contracts on behalf of the church; and to take such action as necessary to protect and/or maintain the assets of, compromise claims for or against, and enter into litigation on behalf of ACC.
2. To borrow money and incur indebtedness on behalf of the church at the direction of the SMT.
3. To serve as legal representatives of ACC in financial, business, and other matters and transactions as directed by the SMT or required by the laws of Virginia.
4. To recommend staff salaries and work in conjunction with the SMT in the development of the annual budget.
5. To provide financial accountability and counsel to the SMT.
6. To coordinate an annual audit of the financial records.
7. To exercise all other powers conferred by the applicable Virginia laws.

**Article XI**  
**Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be appointed by the SMT for a three year term (renewable). The treasurer shall prepare a quarterly financial report for the Trustees and the SMT, and prepare an annual financial report for the church.

## **Article XII**

### **The Spiritual Management Team**

In keeping with the Biblical pattern of leadership, the SMT is modeled after elders found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and 1 Peter 5:2-3. The SMT is to “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” (See appendix 3: How Is The Church Led?)

The role of the SMT is to assist the senior pastor and staff in the spiritual management of the church. Specifically, the SMT, will shepherd, lead (vision & planning), teach, exhort, recommend trustees for church approval, and appoint the treasurer (see descriptions in Articles X and XI). The SMT shall refute those who contradict truth, and deal with conflict resolution in the church (see appendix 1: Scriptural Procedures and Principles for Confrontation & Conflict Resolution). The SMT shall also handle any matters of church leadership deemed necessary by the SMT, including removal of a staff member, a trustee, or ministry team member. The SMT will report on their activities at the annual membership meeting, and from time to time as might be necessary.

The SMT shall consist of no less than five (5), nor more than twelve (12) members. The senior pastor of ACC shall be a permanent member of the SMT. The other SMT members shall be elected at the annual membership meeting (after being nominated by the existing SMT), and serve one year renewable terms, subject to review by the SMT.

## **Article XIII**

### **Ministry Teams**

ACC shall have ministry teams in place to carry out the necessary ministries of the church. These teams will be teams of gifted people dedicated to a specific ministry. Some teams will be in place in order to accomplish specific tasks and ministries necessary for a certain time period, while others will seek to fulfill the function of servants (deacons) as recorded in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12. (Examples include: music team, drama team, extension ministry team, community care team, set-up teams, etc.). Teams will change as ministry needs change. Ministry teams will operate under the direction of the appropriate staff person or the person appointed by the SMT.

**Article XIV**  
**Senior Pastor**

1. The role of the Senior Pastor. Consistent with the New Testament concept of spiritual gifts, it is evident that the senior pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to minister within areas of giftedness.

The senior pastor is primarily responsible for providing visionary leadership and teaching of the Word of God - the Bible. The senior pastor is to lead, teach, and exhort by precept and example. The senior pastor's goal is to help seekers understand the truths of the Bible and teach in such a way that they may come to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The senior pastor's goal is also to help mature believers through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, equipping them to be true "ministers" in the body. As a teacher the senior pastor must stress both the understanding and application of God's truth.

As shepherds of the church, it is one of the roles of the SMT to appoint other leaders with complementary gifts to undertake areas and aspects of ministry that cannot be filled by the senior pastor.

2. Selection of the Senior Pastor. In the event of the vacancy in the office of senior pastor, the SMT shall be responsible to conduct a search for candidates to fill the position. Once the SMT has selected a candidate, that candidate shall be presented to the Staff Ministry Team for affirmation. If affirmed, the candidate shall be selected by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any special or regular membership meeting.

3. Removal of the Senior Pastor. The removal of the senior pastor must first be recommended and approved by the SMT before going to the membership for a vote. The senior pastor may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any special or regularly called membership meeting.

**Article XV**  
**The Staff**

The specific roles and job descriptions for each staff ministry team member shall be approved by the SMT upon the recommendation of the senior pastor or other appropriate staff. The SMT shall be responsible for personnel policies and the overall watchcare of the staff ministry team, including staff selection and dismissal, when necessary. Each staff member shall have an annual review with his or her supervisor. A written summary shall be placed in the employee's personnel file and given to the Trustees and the SMT. Staff salaries shall be recommended annually by the Trustees and approved by the SMT.

**Article XVI**  
**Procedure for Amendment**

Should the need to amend this document arise, a proposal for revision may be initiated by the SMT at its discretion, or submitted to the SMT by any church member. After prayerful consideration, the amendment may be approved or denied by the SMT. The text of any proposal wherein formal input from the church membership is necessary will be mailed to ACC members at least two weeks in advance of amendments being ratified.

**Appendix 1**

## Scriptural Procedure & Principles For Confrontation & Conflict Resolution

Scripture encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being, and teaches them to confront in love where there is evidence of continual sin and an unrepentant spirit. Continual sin and an unrepentant spirit in the life of a believer obstructs his walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church. ACC acknowledges the following Biblical procedures and principles for such confrontation: *Luke 17:3; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 11:29; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 1:7.*

1. If an individual has knowledge of continual sin and an unrepentant spirit in the life of a fellow believer, he/she should go promptly and confront the individual in private. *Matthew 18:15*
2. If there is no expression of repentance, he/she should confront the individual in the presence of two or three witnesses. *Matthew 18:16*
3. If there is still no repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the church. In the ACC church structure, the matter should at this point be brought before the SMT, as representatives of the church. *Matthew 18:17*
4. If there is no evidence of genuine repentance after confrontation by the SMT, the SMT should bring the matter before the whole congregation. *Matthew 18:17*
5. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the individual should be removed from the body and believers should break fellowship with him, until such time as there is genuine repentance. *1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 3:10-11*

In addition to the above procedure, Scripture teaches that confrontation should be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern and humility, and should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to forgive and to seek to restore fellowship. *Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32*

The same Biblical principles and procedure for confrontation apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. In such cases Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly to his brother/sister when he has been offended, or when he has reason to believe that he may have done the offending. *Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 4:26-27*

## Appendix 2

### Mission, Vision, & Core Values

**Mission:** To be a prevailing church in Richmond, functioning as a biblical and relevant community of faith.

**Vision:** To turn unbelievers (and unchurched people) into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

**Core Values:** These core values were studied by the launch team of Atlee Community Church (January 1 - March 11, 1995). We believe them to be taught in scripture and they are a guiding force behind all that we do at Atlee Community Church.

\* We believe that teaching and worship is the catalyst for transformation in individual's lives and in the church. (*Romans 12:7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:23-25*)

\* We believe seekers matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church. (*Matthew 18:14; Luke 5:30-32; Luke 15*)

\* We believe the church should be culturally relevant while being doctrinally pure.

(*1 Corinthians 9:19-23*)

\* We believe followers of Christ should be authentic and long for growth. (*Ephesians 4:25-26 & 32; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 12:1*)

\* We believe the church should operate as a community of faith, using their spiritual gifts. (*Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12 & 14; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:9-10*)

\* We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life.

(*Luke 10:1; John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13*)

\* We believe that life change happens best through bible study, prayer and accountability in a small group setting. (*Luke 6:12-13; Acts 2:42-47*)

\* We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people. (*Proverbs 27:17; Col. 3:17*)

\* We believe the church should be led by those with leadership gifts. (*Acts 6:2-5; Romans 12:8*)

\* We believe that full devotion to Christ and His purpose is normal for every believer. (*2 Corinthians 8:7; Philippians 2:1-11*)

## Appendix 3

### How Is The Church Led?

“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given me, as a wise builder, I laid a foundation, another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.” (*1 Corinthians 3:9-10*)

God’s plan for leadership is revealed in Scripture. He launched the church by giving certain gifts to specific individuals “...apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.” (*Ephesians 4:11-13*) These believers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit initiated the Christian movement and brought local congregations into existence through teaching and preaching.

“For this reason I left you in Crete that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders (SMT) in every city as I directed you.” (*Titus 1:5*)

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among whom the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (SMT), to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (*Acts 20:28*)

As churches were established, and when more than one person became qualified, elders (SMT) were appointed to continue the pastor-teaching ministry in the local church. The elders (SMT) were given the ultimate responsibility for the management and oversight of that particular church body, and the shepherding of its members. (*Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; & 1 Peter 5:1-4*)

“Let the elders (SMT) who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.” (*1 Timothy 5:17*)

Some elders (SMT) would give more time to the spiritual leadership than others and would be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. They therefore would be worthy of “double honor” (usually understood as monetary compensation).

“And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, seven men of good repute, full of the spirit and wisdom, who we may put in charge of this task.” (*Acts 6:2-3*)

These leaders, along with all members of each local body form a unique organism...a visible and functioning expression of the universal church. ACC recognizes this Biblical pattern for plurality of godly leadership, under the management and oversight of overseers (The Spiritual Management Team).

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy, not grief, for this would not be profitable for you.” (*Hebrews 13:17*)

### **The Role of The Spiritual Management Team**

1. The Spiritual Management of the church. *1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:7*
2. Shepherding of the body. *Acts 20:28ff; 1 Peter 5:1-3*
3. To Teach & Exhort/encourage. *1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9*
4. Lead by example. *1 Peter 5:3*
5. Refute those who contradict truth & manage conflict. *Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9*