



pella communities

Pella Communities

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Est. 2020

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pella communities

Table Of Contents

ARTICLE I- NAME

ARTICLE II – MISSION STATEMENT

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE IV – SENIOR PASTOR

ARTICLE V – MINISTRY STAFF

ARTICLE VI – ELDERS

ARTICLE VII – DEACONS

ARTICLE VIII – MEMBER MEETINGS

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

ARTICLE X - AFFILIATIONS

ARTICLE XI – ORGANIZATION OF THE CORPORATION



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ARTICLE 1- NAME

This organization shall be known as Pella Communities.

ARTICLE 2 – MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

A- FAITH AND CULTURE

Please see the separate document entitled “Faith and culture of Pella communities.”

B – MISSION STATEMENT

Pella Communities exist as a gathering body of believers to make disciples of Jesus Christ, living for the kingdom of God, through gospel proclamation and community presence.

C – CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Pella Communities is Elder governed, Member regulated, and Pastor led.

ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP SECTION

A – QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS

1. This Church shall consist of born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been baptized by immersion, who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and hold to the Scriptural doctrines as stated in the statement of faith.

B – MANNER OF RECEIVING MEMBERS

1. All membership applications shall be referred to the Membership Committee (Led by an elder). Upon evaluating the membership requirements and existing members' relational input, the list of prospective members will be presented to the Elders for consideration and approval.



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- If a new believer must attend new believers class and member class
 - Anything other than a new believer must attend a membership class
 - Elders will decide on special situations
2. All members must sign and agree to the membership covenant. (See separate document)
 3. Dual Membership. Church members may retain dual membership with Pella and another church if they fall into one of the following categories:
 - Winter visitors who wish membership at Pella but want to retain their membership at their home church
 - Students attending a local college who wish membership at Pella but want to retain membership in their home church

C – INACTIVE MEMBERS

1. Any member who does not attend the regular services of the Church (Corporate gathering and community) for a period of six months or more, except if the absence is attributable to illness, unusual employment conditions, being out of town, or other excusable circumstance, shall be placed on the inactive member roll. At which point, they will be informed. The member list will be reviewed by the elders in congruence with the deacons every eight weeks.
2. A member placed on the inactive member roll shall not have a vote in any Church proceeding and shall not be counted in any tally of the Church Membership.

An inactive member may be returned to active membership upon request to the Elders and Elder affirmation.

D – DISCIPLINE

1. Whenever a member has an issue that is affecting others in the fellowship or the ministry, the following procedure shall be carried out in accordance with *Matthew 18* and *I Corinthians 5*:
 - An Elder and appointed Deacon shall meet with the individual and try to resolve the issue.
 - If the issue remains unresolved, one or two other mature members shall attempt resolution with the individual as often as the Elders deem necessary.
 - At this point, the issue is brought before the deacons (by name) for prayer and consideration
 - If the resolution is not achieved in a reasonable amount of time, then the issue shall be taken to the members (not by name) for consideration, prayer, and, if



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necessary, for discipline. Elders will continue to work with the individual during this time.

- Then the member is brought a second time again (by name) to members. Members are encouraged to reach out to this member.
 - If a resolution still is not achieved, membership is removed.

In all instances, the goal will be to secure repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, if at all possible.

2. A dismissed member may be restored to membership by a three-fourths vote of the Elders, after the appropriate resolution of the issue that caused dismissal and upon request.

E – TRANSFER AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Transfer – A member may transfer membership to another church in the following ways:
 - Upon written request from the member, approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the Elders, or;
 - Upon written request from the other church, approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the Elders
2. Termination – Membership may be terminated in the following ways:
 - Active self-removal – A member may voluntarily remove membership at any time by providing written notice of termination to the Elders. This termination is effective immediately upon receipt of the written request.
 - Inactive Members – A member who is inactive for a period of two years or more may be removed from membership by a three-fourths majority vote of Elders.
 - Discipline – Membership may be terminated as a result of disciplinary action (as stated above).

ARTICLE 4 – SENIOR (Lead) PASTOR SECTION

Senior Pastor

A – QUALIFICATIONS AND CALL

1. The Senior Pastor shall meet all qualifications as deemed by the elders, minister of



pella communities

exemplary Christian character who conforms to the qualifications for the office as set forth in *1 Timothy 3:1-7* and *Titus 1* and who has accepted the Doctrinal Statement and the Covenant of this Church.

2. The call of a Senior Pastor shall come before the Church at a specially called members meeting, after a two-week notice of such a meeting and its purpose has been given in accord with a three-fourths majority of all members present and voting by ballot shall constitute an election.
3. The Senior Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by senior pastors' resignation at any time by giving thirty days' written notice or by mutual agreement of both parties. The Church cannot give such notice except by a three-fourths majority vote of the Church members at a regular or specially called business meeting by a two weeks' notice to the members, and a three-fourths elder vote.
4. Should the Senior Pastor be guilty of gross and habitual sin in violating *1 Timothy 3:1-7* or *Titus 1*, the pastor may be removed by a three-fourths affirmative vote by the members. In any such case, the charges and dismissal shall be handled by the Board of Elders.
5. If the Senior Pastorate position becomes vacant for any reason, an interim pastor may be voted in immediately by a three-fourths vote of the Elders. This pastor can only hold said interim position for one year, at which point there must be a three-fourths vote by members for continuing action.

In a case where the Senior Pastorate is vacant or the Pastor designated as his successor is deemed by Ministry staff, Deacons, and Elders to be unsuitable to serve as the Senior Pastor, the elders shall bring before the Church, at a regular or specially called business meeting, and motion to form a Pulpit committee to fill the Senior Pastor position. A three-fourths majority of all members present and voting by ballot shall be required to approve the motion to form a Pulpit Committee. The Elders, in conjunction with two (2) members of the Ministry Staff, shall appoint a Pulpit Committee to contact and interview ministers who are potential candidates for the office of Senior Pastor.

- The Pulpit Committee shall consist of 10 members comprising three Deacons, two elders, two Ministry Staff, and three Church members at large in good standing and representative of the Church membership as a whole.
- The Chairman of the Elders shall serve as Chairman of the Pulpit Committee or appoint a Chairman.
- The Chairman of the Pulpit Committee shall report the recommendation of the committee to the elders. At which time there shall be a vote by all elders and deacons. There must be a three-fourths vote for continuing action.
- When the elders are ready to make a recommendation to the Church concerning the calling of a Senior Pastor, they shall call a meeting as outlined in (Article 4.A.2)



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B – DUTIES OF SENIOR PASTOR

1. The Senior Pastor shall be the recognized leader in carrying out the work of the Church in all its phases, perform with all fidelity the functions of his office as a “Good Minister of Jesus Christ,” preach the Word of God regularly, the Covenant and the Doctrinal Statement of this Church, shall oversee the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion, and shall tenderly watch and pray over the membership and the spiritual interests of the Church, provide vision and leadership to the Church and to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ for the best possible service. – Ephesians 4:12.
2. The Senior Pastor shall be an *ex officio* member of all boards, committees, and departments of the Church.

The Senior Pastor may delegate supervisory responsibility to such Ministry Staff Members as may be called, who shall assist in the implementation of their particular field of service. He shall assign and supervise the work of all Ministry Staff, as shall be designated in a job description.

ARTICLE 5 – MINISTRY STAFF

In addition to the Senior Pastor, the Ministry Staff of this Church shall consist of all personnel who may be called to various ministry positions in the Church.

A – QUALIFICATIONS AND CALL

1. Should have training in Bible, ministry-related training, and where appropriate, a field of specialty, but need not be ordained. However, the Pastor designated to fill the role of the Senior Pastor shall be ordained. They shall be of exemplary Christian character who conforms to the qualifications of the office set forth in *1 Timothy 3:1-7* and *Titus 1* and who accept the Doctrinal Statement and Covenant of this Church.
2. The call of director level (or above) ministry Staff shall be approved first by the lead pastor, then brought before the elders, then before the members at a specially called business meeting and by a three-fourths majority of all members present and voting by ballot shall constitute an election.
3. Ministry Staff shall be called for an indefinite term. This relationship may be dissolved at any time by the Lead pastor and three-fourths of Elder approval.
4. Should a Ministry Staff Member be guilty of conduct violating *1 Timothy 3:1-7* or *Titus 1*, the Ministry Staff Member may be dismissed at once in accordance with the Employee



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Handbook. This dismissal shall be appropriately communicated to the Deacons and to the Church in a timely manner.

5. Should the senior pastor feel ministry staff is not a good fit, he may remove the ministry leader with a three-fourths elder vote.

B – DUTIES

1. Each Ministry Staff representative is an ex-officio member of any committee related to his or her primary function.
2. Each Ministry Staff representative will be responsible for carrying out duties prescribed in a Job Description prepared by the Senior Pastor or his designee and approved by the Board of Elders.
3. Each Ministry Staff representative will cooperate with the Senior Pastor in relieving him of a major phase of the Church's ministry.

ARTICLE 6 – Elder

A – QUALITIES OF ELDERS:

- A. Elders must consistently demonstrate the qualities described in *1 Timothy 3:2-7* and *Titus 1:6-9*.
- B. In addition to godly character, elders must demonstrate competency (the skills involved in leading ministry) and commitment.
- C. Must be a community group leader (or similar role) for at least one year.

B – RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Oversee the Church. (*1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 5:17*)
 - a. Guard the church's Doctrine, Mission, Vision, and Values.
 - b. Maintain responsibility for the financial integrity of the church through review and approval of top-level budget expenditures
 - c. Engage in the long-range planning for facilities
- B. Shepherd. Tend to the Needs of the Flock (*Acts 20:28*)
 - a. Regularly attend worship gatherings and be involved in the mainstream flow of church life (community groups, special events, ministries, etc.)
 - b. Pray regularly for the church
 - c. Pray for the sick as requested
- C. Protect. Be on Watch for Trouble (*Acts 20:29-31; Hebrews 13:17*)



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- a. Individually be grounded in the Scripture and connected to the Spirit so that we know what trouble looks like
 - b. Exercise church discipline on unrepentant members of Pella Communities

C – LENGTH OF COMMITMENT:

- A. Elders should have the heart to serve the church on the elder team as long as they are able, effective, and can do it energetically. Thus, an elder should have the humility and wisdom to willingly remove himself from the team if he is no longer able to effectively serve on the team.
- B. Elders will commit to one-year terms, which may be renewed indefinitely. Men who anticipate that they will only be elders for a short time would be wise to avoid the process altogether.
 - a. The annual assessment of the elder team will happen at the same time each year.

D – GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FUNCTIONING:

Culture

- A. Mutual submission.
- B. Unity is a High Priority.
- C. Big-Picture Leadership.
- D. For Your Wife, Ignorance is Bliss.

E – PROCESS:

- 1. Establish an Observable Track Record
 - Establish a known track record serving, leading, and giving at Pella Communities with demonstrated leadership skills and observable fruit in ministry, marriage, and family life.
- 2. Nomination Phase
 - The elder team may approach certain men whom the team thinks should prayerfully consider being an elder. Additional recommendations may also come from members.
 - When a member senses an internal call from the Holy Spirit to serve as an elder/pastor, he should make his desire known to the current elder team. Those men will confirm the calling and give further direction.
- 3. Applicant Phase
 - The elder team will assign each applicant a supervising elder, who will answer



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- questions and be the primary point of contact for the applicant.
- The Application Phase is to be completed with an assessment interview of the applicant and his wife (usually over dinner) by the supervising elder and at least one other elder to determine if the candidate continues with the eldership process after reviewing the above documents. All elders must approve applicants.
4. At a quarterly leadership meeting, the Elders and Deacons will vote on each man to enter into the Candidate phase. A three-fourths of Elders and three-fourths of deacons' written ballot vote must approve nominees to enter the Applicant Phase. Then they can enter the Candidate Phase.

E – Candidate Phase

1. Once a man has had his qualifications confirmed by the elders, he may enter a phase of study and preparation for the specific work of eldership. This phase involves intentional mentorship by the current elders and careful biblical, theological, and philosophical study regarding the roles, responsibilities, and functions of elders. The time required to complete this phase will vary by individual.
2. This phase also may include:
 - a. Guided self-study (actual content depends on the individual)
 - b. Careful study of Pella's doctrinal statement, cultural document, London Baptist confessional, and ByLaws.
 - c. Invitation to elder meetings for observation purposes.
 - d. Follow-up on any issues raised during the assessment interview.
3. When the supervising elder senses that the candidate is ready, he will recommend him for the Approval Phase. All elders must approve candidates to enter the Approval Phase.

F – Approval Phase

1. At the beginning of the Approval Phase, members will be presented candidates via postal mail, email, or other means to the entire active membership not less than two weeks prior to the meeting. Members will be urged to evaluate the lives and conduct of the potential elders. If a member is aware of any disqualifying sin or character flaw in an elder candidate, he or she will be urged to make the matter known to the existing elders, who will investigate the claim. Members will have a 4-week window in which to bring any concerns.
2. After reviewing member feedback, and the passing of the 4 week period, the candidate will be voted on at the next assigned member meeting. The installation will only take place only if a three-fourths vote by written ballot is confirmed



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G – Installation

1. Following the satisfactory completion of all requirements, new elders will be installed publicly at a Pella Communities worship gathering.

ARTICLE – 7 DEACONS

A – Installation

1. The Deacon shall be nominated by an existing Deacon, brought before the elders, and then at a member meeting be voted on.
2. A majority of the members present and voting at a meeting shall be considered sufficient for election.
 - a. Elections to fill deacon vacancies shall be handled likewise.
3. Deacons shall commit to a 2-year term with the option to re-up every two.
4. A Deacon must have been a member for at least two years (Ordinarily)

B – Responsibilities and Roles:

1. A Deacon shall commit to leading a Community Group or major ministry within Pella.
2. All deacons shall report to the community pastor, under the authority of the lead pastor.
3. A deacon is the most “on ground” version of leadership Pella has. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Regularly discipling the people of Pella.
 - b. Hospital visits when necessary
 - c. Having people in their home
 - d. Pray for their group members regularly.
 - e. Create environments for fellowship & relationship building between group members.
 - f. Provide responsive care and ongoing support for group members as needed.
 - g. Lead group in outward-focused opportunities, including serving the community, serving that specific community's mission, and praying for the lost.
 - h. Identify and help raise up new leaders within your group who can plant new communities.
 - i. Engage in an ongoing relationship with Elders through:
 - i. Having elder pour into their life at Elders discretion
 - ii. Join monthly or bi-monthly deacon cohorts



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4. A Deacon must lead the Normal Christian Life (*Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:3*), Modeled through:
 - a. Devotional disciplines to God
 - b. Family life
 - c. Vocational life
 - d. Church life
 - e. Financial stewardship

ARTICLE 8 - MEMBER MEETINGS

SECTION A – MODERATOR OF MEETINGS

1. The lead pastor and Chairman of the elders shall be the Moderators and shall preside at all business meetings of the Church.
2. All meetings must be given a minimum of 4 weeks notice to all active members

SECTION B – ANNUAL MEETINGS

1. The Annual Budget shall be considered and adopted at the Annual Budget Meeting.
 - a. This will require a majority vote from present members.
 - b. Members must be given a chance to ask questions for a minimum of 15 min and a maximum of 45 min.
 - c. At the end of the questions, the vote must take place.
2. The annual budget meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in October. 3. Members meetings must always be called and voted with a three-fourths ballot vote on 4 items:
 - a. The hiring or firing of the lead pastor
 - b. The addition or removal of an elder
 - c. The annual budget
 - d. The purchase of land

(Please note that it is not possible to move forward with any item in Article 8.B.3 without a voting member meeting, either annually planned or specifically called)

SECTION C – SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Special Business Meetings for matters of major importance which cannot be
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postponed until the Annual member meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or the elder chair. Such meetings can only be called after written notice, stating the purpose of the meeting, has been transmitted via postal mail, email, or other means to the entire active membership not less than seven days prior to the meeting date, and a pulpit announcement has been made before the Church on at least two consecutive weekends.

2. No matter shall be considered at any Special Business Meeting other than that stated in the call of the meeting.

SECTION D – QUORUM

Fifty members present and voting at any business meeting conducted by the proper officers of the Church shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

- **Voting**

- Absentee ballots must be picked up and signed for in person at the Church office during regular business hours. They will also be available through the mail upon written request. Absentee ballot usage will be limited to active members who are unable to attend the election due to one of the following reasons: work conflict, health, vacation conflict, service conflict, and transportation problems.
- When distributed, the absentee ballot will be accompanied by an envelope that will provide a designated space for the voter's signature. The signature on the envelope must correspond to that given at the time of the written request or sign out at the Church office. Shut-in members, who alone may phone in their request, are exempt from any signature registration and validation process.
- The absentee ballot must be received in the Church office prior to the eve of the election.

The absentee ballot shall be validated by the Church Moderator prior to inclusion in the general vote tally.

ARTICLE 9 – AMENDMENTS

These Articles and Sections of this Constitution may be changed or amended at a Special Business Meeting by a three-fourths affirmative ballot vote of all members present and



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voting provided. The Doctrinal Statement, however, cannot be changed.

ARTICLE 10 – AFFILIATIONS

1. At this time, Pella Communities is not affiliated with any denomination or network (Oct. 2020)
2. It is understood that these affiliations for fellowship in the Lord and in giving forth the Gospel shall never bind the Church in a monetary, legal or political manner contrary to that which is in accord with the Doctrinal Statement of the Church, or that which the congregation, in accordance with the leading of the Lord, believes is the will of God for its beliefs and current activities.

ARTICLE 11 – ORGANIZATION OF THE CORPORATION

SECTION A – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be composed of the Board of Elders.

SECTION B – PRESIDENT

The lead pastor shall be the President of the Corporation.

SECTION C – VICE PRESIDENT

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be the Vice President of the Corporation.

SECTION D – TREASURER

The Treasurer of the Board of Elders shall be the Treasurer of the Corporation.

SECTION E – SECRETARY

The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be the Secretary of the Corporation.

SECTION F – TIME OF ELECTION



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All of the above-named Officers of the Corporation shall be elected at the first meeting of the Board of Elders, acting as the Board of Directors, held following the Annual Election of the Church.

SECTION G – DUTIES

The duties of the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation shall be to transact all legal business on behalf of the Church, as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws, or laws or regulations, or as directed by the Church meeting in a qualified business session.

SECTION H – SIGNATURES

All legal documents for the Corporation shall be signed by the President, Vice President, Treasurer, or the Secretary of the Corporation.

Preamble

Having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior from sin, having subsequently been baptized in obedience to Him, desiring to pattern our lives after Him with all that we are and have, and being in agreement with Pella's values and stated beliefs, we covenant together in the following ways.

First:

- **We covenant together to deliberately protect Pella Communities' unity.**
 - By fulfilling Christ's commandment to love one another
 - By dealing with each other in humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance
 - By refusing a negative, critical, or divisive spirit
 - By being responsive followers of Pella's leadership

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another" (John 13:34)

"...endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29)

"...with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2)



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“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”
(Hebrews 13:17)

Second:

- **We covenant together to assume personal responsibility toward Pella Communities.**
 - By praying faithfully
 - By giving generously
 - By attending regularly
 - By growing spiritually

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2)

“Honor the LORD with your possessions...” (Proverbs 3:9)

“...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25)

“...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

Third:

- **We covenant together to serve through the ministries of Pella.**
 - By discovering how God has uniquely gifted each of us for ministry
 - By developing our spiritual gifts and abilities
 - By cultivating the heart of a servant
 - By accepting a suitable place of service

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

“...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”
(Ephesians 4:12)

“...but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

“from whom [Christ] the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share” (Ephesians 4:16)



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Fourth:

- **We covenant together to further the ministry and witness of Pella.**
 - By living godly lives.
 - By readily, naturally telling others about the Lord Jesus
 - By inviting the unchurched to attend
 - By warmly receiving guests who attend

“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27)

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15)

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8)



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Membership Covenant

Pella Communities leadership commits to the above bylaws in the care for you as a follower of Christ and the faithful witness to the watching world.

Your commitment:

1. I am a Christian who has been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ. I have been, or intend to be, baptized to give testimony of my identification with the body of Christ and obedience to the Scriptures.
2. I have read the Bylaws and the faith and cultural Documents and agree not to be divisive on these issues. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership. (Hebrews 13:7; Ephesians 4: 1-3).
3. I will endeavor to maintain a close relationship with the Lord through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. I commit to using the spiritual gift(s) God has given me for the building up of the church universally. (1 Peter. 4:10-11; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12: 7-13).
4. My journey in Christ will be evident through my regular participation in the corporate worship services, and consistent involvement in a biblical community (Psalms 119:97, 105; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).
5. I will strive to properly manage the resources God has given me, including my time, body, gifts and talents, attitudes, finances, and possessions (Eph. 5:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 4:1-16; Gal. 5:22- 26; Proverbs 3:9-10). This includes regular giving to Pella communities that are both sacrificial and cheerful (2 Corinthians 8 and 9).
6. I covenant to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline and submit myself to discipline if the need should ever arise (Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-5).
7. I covenant to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119: 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
8. My responsibility will be to notify the leadership if at any time, I can no longer commit to this covenant or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Pella communities.

Members Name: _____ Date: _____

Elders Name: _____ Date: _____