

BYLAWS
of
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
of
NEWBURY PARK

Revised
12.8.2024
(Tentative – 12.7.25)

NOTES:

Significant changes are noted in red.

Recent By-law (2003 & 2004) are noted in blue.

The regular (black) text is similar but there have been some grammatical, and changes that do not impact the meaning of the current text.

Approved by Elder Board on 11/18/25

**BYLAWS
of
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH of NEWBURY PARK**

PREAMBLE (rev.2024)

This congregation accepts the Bible as its authority. These bylaws are intended to apply biblical principles to the establishment of the structure and function of this church body.

ARTICLE I (rev.2024)

The name of this congregation is First Christian Church of Newbury Park. It is a corporation under the laws of California. This congregation will be referred to as “this church” in the remainder of the bylaws.

ARTICLE II (rev.2024)

The purpose of this church is to develop fully devoted followers of Christ who help people find and follow Jesus. We do this by seeking to fulfilling the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20), guided by the great commandment (Matthew 22:36-40).

ARTICLE III

AFFILIATION & ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THIS CHURCH

This church is an independent body and maintains the right to govern its own affairs without any denominational control. However, this church recognizes the benefits of cooperation with other churches in carrying out the purpose of Christ’s Church. Historically Newbury Park First Christian Church has been affiliated with the Independent Christian Churches.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

BIBLE

- We believe the Bible is the Word of God. The 66 books were penned by people “carried along” by the Holy Spirit. We believe God has guided the preservation and translation of the Bible so that even today, we can trust what it says. The Bible is our only written revelation from God, and everything must be measured against its authority. (2 Timothy 3:14-17, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:21)

GOD

- We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – One in essence, purpose and love. He is holy. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. He is love and just – right and good in all He does. He is almighty creator, sustainer and definer of all things. God desires to have a relationship with every person. (Genesis 1:1; Psalms 145:17-18; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Pet 1:16; Rev 3:20)

JESUS CHRIST

- We believe that Jesus Christ is the one and only begotten Son of God, who took on true and full humanity through the miracle of a virgin birth. He lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to the Father's will, performed miracles, taught God's truth, was crucified, died and was buried. After three days He was raised back to life with a glorified human body and was seen by many witnesses. He returned bodily to heaven to prepare a place for all people who trust Him. He will return to the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to judge the living and the dead and usher in His eternal Kingdom. (Isaiah 53; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 15:1-8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

HOLY SPIRIT

- We believe the Holy Spirit lives within and empowers all those who put their faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches and guides us in God's truth; convicts us of our sin; and works to transform believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ and so empowering us to truly love God and people. The Holy Spirit also provides each believer with special abilities that help us serve others, build His church and advance His Kingdom. (John 14:16-20, 26-27; 16:7-16; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Romans 8:1-17; 26-27)

HUMANITY

- All people have been created in the image of God, by God and for God, and therefore have inherent value from the moment of conception. We were all designed to share in relationship with God and to manifest His presence in the world, both individually and collectively. However, humanity's sin has severed our relationship with God, making us lost and broken and in need of a savior. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23)

SIN & SALVATION

- We believe that sin is the rejection of God and His will and the choice to follow our own will. It is allegiance to the voice of the devil over and above the voice of God. The wages of sin is spiritual and physical death and separation from relationship with God both now and in eternity. (John 8:42-47; Romans 3:23, 6:23)
- After this life every person will live forever. Where we spend our eternity will depend on our relationship with God. Those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ will live eternally with God, and those who have not placed their trust in Jesus will spend eternity separated from God in a literal hell. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)
- As humans, we are incapable of saving ourselves, and we need a savior. Jesus Christ is that savior. He lived and died to fulfill God's righteous requirement and endure the punishment our sins deserve. Because of His love for us, God extends His free gift of salvation to every person. Each person must personally accept or reject His gift. We accept God's gift by faith in Jesus Christ - namely trust that Jesus is the eternal God in human form, that he lived the fully righteous life for us and then freely took our punishment by dying on the cross, that the Father raised him from the dead and He ascended into glory, and will do same for those who put their faith in Him. This faith is demonstrated when we:
 - Believe: Trust that Jesus is the Son of God, died to atone for our sins, and was resurrected. (John 3:16; Romans 3:22-26, Romans 10:9-10 Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10).
 - Repent: Recognize and turn away from our sin surrendering to His Lordship and seeking to conform our lives to God's will. (Acts 2:38, 2 Corinthians 7:10)
 - Confess: Publicly and freely proclaim allegiance to Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life. (Romans 10:9-10)

- Obey: Jesus said if you love me, you will obey my commands, which broadly stated are, be baptized, love God, love others, help others find and follow Jesus. (John 14:15; Luke 10:27, Matthew 28:18-20)
- We believe that each person, created by God, has willfully sinned against God and is consequently lost and without hope apart from Jesus Christ. Anything that is inconsistent with biblical teaching is considered sin. (Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23)
- We believe that salvation and the forgiveness of sins is achieved only by God's grace through the blood of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:8-9; I Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7)
- We believe that one receives God's grace by putting faith in Christ, repenting of sin, confessing Christ, and being immersed into Christ, but that none of these is sufficient in and of itself for the assurance of salvation. (Romans 5:1-2; 6:1-7; 10:9-10; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 10:32; Galatians 3:27)

CHURCH

- We believe that the Church is the body of Christ on earth. Not a building or organization but the community of people whose identity and allegiance are in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. Every member of the church is empowered by the Holy Spirit with special gifts that they are expected to use to fulfill God's purpose, which is to reach all people with the message of His love and grace. (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:1-16)
- We believe the Church is expressed in countless local bodies of believers throughout the world. And that all believers are called to be committed and contributing to a local church. (Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 2:14-47)

GOD'S BIBLICAL DIRECTIVES FOR THE CHURCH

- We believe that baptism (immersion) is a sacred act of faith that symbolically connects the Christian to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. (Romans 6:2-4)
- We believe that the Lord's Supper (communion) is a sacred act of the church that is an act of worship with the Lord Jesus and an expression of thanksgiving, remembrance, celebration and fellowship. (Matthew 26:26-29)
- We believe that marriage has been established by God and is defined by the Bible as the lifelong union of one man and one woman. Hence, any sexual activity outside the bond of that union of marriage is scripturally prohibited and considered sinful. (Genesis 2:21-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20)
- We believe all people are made in the image of God, created with equal intrinsic value in only two distinct biological sexes – male and female. We believe that God's design for sexuality is expressed in the lifelong union of one man and one woman in the biblical covenant of marriage, and that any sexual activity outside this context, or any attempt to adopt a gender identity inconsistent with one's biological sex is contrary to biblical teaching and considered sin. Such individuals should be treated with compassion and love without condoning or affirming their belief, behavior or expression that are inconsistent with this biblical teaching. (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:24-27)

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP (rev. 2023)

SECTION 1: To be a member of the First Christian Church of Newbury Park a person must make a public confession of faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, repent of his/her sins, and be baptized by immersion in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; or by statement of his/her previous obedience to Christ according to the above requirements. The believer shall also attend this church's membership class as designated by the elders of this church.

SECTION 2: Voting privileges shall be accorded to all active members of First Christian Church of Newbury Park, 18 years or older, who are engaged in this church through regular attendance and financial support and regular service in the church. Interpretation of this article is left to the discretion of the elders of this church.

ARTICLE V

GOVERNANCE

SECTION 1: All persons who hold any office of any kind or character, whether of elder, ministry leader, or officer, shall be an active member.

SECTION 2: ELDERS

A. The elders are responsible for:

1. The spiritual oversight and guidance of the church.
2. The corporate management of church business.
3. Appointments of all ministry leaders, committee chairs, and officers not required to be elected by these bylaws.
4. Functioning as the Pastoral Search Committee as stated in accordance with Article VII.

(Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

B. Elders shall be elected for a term of three years or less by 2/3 votes of the voting members present at the annual congregational business meeting. After serving six consecutive years, a one-year leave of absence shall be taken.

C. The elder nominees shall have such qualifications as are found in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) Each elder nominee needs to have completed the Leadership Training course for elders and be a regular, proportional giving member of this church.

D. Release of an elder:

When an elder's conduct is not found in keeping with the biblical qualifications of an elder or when he is accused of not keeping these qualifications, the elder board will follow the guidelines set in I Timothy 5:19-20.

An elder who has been absent from three consecutive regular meetings without submitting in writing a satisfactory reason and so noted in minutes, will be notified by the chairman, and after such notice is still absent from the next regular meeting, or has not sent to the chairman a satisfactory reason for absence, the elders may recommend release of the elder to the congregation.

Release of an elder will be by **two-thirds majority vote of the elder board and announced to the congregation at a congregational meeting called by the elder board in keeping with ARTICLE VIII.**

SECTION 3: ELDER BOARD

A. The elected elders and lead pastor shall constitute the board of directors (hereafter referred to as elder board) of this church. The board will consist of no less than five or more than twelve members.

B. The elder board shall be responsible for the spiritual oversight of this church and shall formulate the general policy of this church, overseeing the management of its business and material affairs, including employment of employees.

C. Fifty one percent (51%) of the members shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the elder board.

D. The elder board shall inform the congregation, no later than the next congregational meeting, regarding all matters pertaining to the purchase/sale of real property or placing encumbrances thereon and all matters pertaining to a decision to erect buildings or major additions and the spending of all non-budgeted funds over ten thousand dollars (\$25,000), or ten percent (10%) of a budget category, whichever is greater, except for approved salaries.

E. The elder board shall have the authority to fill an elective office which becomes vacant during its term by appointing a qualified person to that office for the remaining term.

F. The elder board may appoint elder emeritus candidates to serve on the elder board. Qualifications for this position would include previous outstanding service on this church elder board and a desire to serve in that capacity. An elder emeritus would have full voting rights while attending meetings but would be exempted from the normal meeting requirements, as stated in ARTICLE V SECTION 2. They would be eligible for annual terms.

G. Any interpretation of the bylaws shall be the responsibility of the elder board.

ARTICLE VI

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1: The ministry of the church shall be delegated by the elder board to various teams which carry out the ministries of this church. These are functional groups as deemed acceptable and necessary by the elder board. Each ministry area will be led by a ministry coordinator, overseen by an elder, and guided by a staff member.

A. A ministry coordinator will be selected by the elder board and appointed to lead a specified ministry area

B. All ministry leaders (coordinators and team leaders) shall be active, responsible members of the church, qualified as servants as stated by the New Testament scriptures (Acts 6:1-7; Romans 16:1-2; I Timothy 3:8-13; Galatians 5:22-23) and who have completed the training for ministry leadership as directed in this church's Policy and Procedure Manual. This training will include, but not be limited to, the use of Training Manuals, Job Descriptions, On-the-Job with the predecessor leader, and the incorporation of Accountability and Responsibility into each leadership function.

C. The duties of ministry coordinators:

1. To support the spiritual objectives of this church as determined by the elder board. To work under the direction of staff and elder to carry out a specific scope of ministry.
2. To coordinate and lead a specified ministry area in accordance with the Training Manuals.
3. To attend the Ministry Coordinators' meetings.

SECTION 2: The dissolution of a ministry team will be decided by the elder board. Each elder will be responsible for making an annual recommendation for their individual Ministry Team.

SECTION 3: Any new ministries will have to first be submitted to the elder board in writing and approved.

ARTICLE VII

MINISTERS AND OTHER STAFF

SECTION 1: All church staff must affirm and practice this church's statement of faith and must comply with qualifications of being a church member as stated in ARTICLE II and support the purpose and objectives of this church.

SECTION 2: SELECTION OF THE LEAD MINISTER (Pastor): Each candidate for the position of lead minister (pastor) of this church shall first be considered by the Pastoral Search Committee as determined by the elder board, and make recommendation to the elder board. Once the elder board unanimously approves any candidate, they shall inform the congregation of their action. The candidate shall be considered and voted upon by the congregation, and the purpose of the meeting shall be announced from the pulpit two Sundays proceeding the time of the meeting. A candidate for the position may be voted upon by the congregation at that special meeting. Approval shall be by two-thirds majority vote of all active members present and voting.

SECTION 3: A WRITTEN AGREEMENT shall be entered into between a minister and this church. The elder board and the minister shall jointly draft the agreement on behalf of this church. Reference in the document should also be made to the current church Policy and Procedures Manual for needed changes in benefits, Holidays, Vacation, Vacation Pay at Release, etc.

SECTION 4: RELEASE OF THE LEAD MINISTER (PASTOR) shall be by two thirds majority vote of the elder board and announced to the congregation at a congregational meeting called by the elder board in keeping with ARTICLE VIII

SECTION 5: All ministers of this church have voting rights at congregational meetings.

SECTION 6: SELECTION OF ALL STAFF, other than lead minister, will be made jointly by the lead minister and the elder board.

SECTION 7: RELEASE OF OTHER STAFF (i.e., other than the lead minister), shall be by the decision of the elder board and the lead pastor.

ARTICLE VIII

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

SECTION 1: THE ANNUAL CONGREGATION BUSINESS MEETING of this church shall be held within the first two (2) weeks of December of each year or at such time approximate to this time as may be determined by the elder board.

SECTION 2: At each annual meeting an election shall be held for all elders who have been nominated for the office of elder. The congregation will vote to approve the proposed budget for the coming year at the annual meeting.

SECTION 3: An annual written report shall be given at the annual meeting to the congregation by the board of elders, ministry leaders and ministerial staff. The board of elders may call for any other written reports which they deem necessary.

SECTION 4: Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by majority vote of the elder board. Two weeks public notice, listing the purpose of the special congregation meeting, shall be given the congregation before such special meetings.

SECTION 5: The chairman of the elder board shall preside at congregational business meetings, unless some other officer is designated for that purpose by the chairman or elder board.

SECTION 6: A two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes of active members present shall be required for election or approval of business.

ARTICLE IX

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED BY THE ELDER BOARD

SECTION 1: The elder board shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, a secretary, and treasurer annually, and these officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year.

SECTION 2: The chairman of the elder board, vice chairman and the secretary shall be the officers of this church and authorized to execute any necessary legal documents, upon authorization by the board, or the congregation as recorded in the minutes of the meeting which authorized the transaction.

SECTION 3: The power to manage the general affairs of the corporation of this church shall be given to the elder board.

ARTICLE X

VOTING

SECTION 1: All votes shall be cast in person whether at membership meetings or meetings of the elder board. No proxy votes shall be permitted. Voting at the congregational meeting shall be by secret ballots unless determined otherwise by the elder board. Absentee ballots will be permitted at annual congregational meetings only.

SECTION 2: The presiding officer at any meeting shall appoint such necessary election committee as may be required from the responsible active members present to supervise the voting procedure.

SECTION 3: After the votes are received at the annual congregational meeting, they shall be counted by at least one continuing elder, the member-at-large and witnessed by a board officer.

- A. After the vote is counted, the member-at-large certifies the vote results
- B. After having received the certified results, the elder board shall ratify the results in the next meeting and notify the congregation of the results.

ARTICLE XI

ELDER SELECTION

SECTION 1: THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE shall consist of the elders whose terms are not expiring, one (1) ministry leader, and the lead minister. This committee shall consist of at least five (5) members.

SECTION 2: Written suggestions shall be received by this committee from the active membership of the congregation by the end of August. No anonymous nominations will be received and no spontaneous nominations shall be made from the floor at the time of the election.

SECTION 3: The nominating committee shall review all suggestions to determine whether the nominees are qualified to serve. Those persons qualified for the offices to be filled as approved by the nominating committee, shall personally be contacted by the members of the elder board to determine if they will serve if elected. The name of nominees approved as stated above, shall be nominated.

SECTION 4: The names of all persons nominated shall be made public at least fourteen (14) days prior to the congregational meeting at which elders are to be elected.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: The bylaws may be amended at any time provided that such amendment shall be first approved by the elder board and then presented to the congregation for approval at a general or special meeting.

SECTION 2: At least two (2) weeks prior to any meeting at which it is intended to consider an amendment to the bylaws a public notice shall be made to the congregation stating the date, time and place of the meeting, the purpose of the meeting and the text of the proposed bylaw change.

SECTION 3: Amendments shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present and voting.

ARTICLE XIII

DEVOLUTION of ASSETS on DISSOLUTION

This church is irrevocably dedicated to Christian religious purposes. Upon liquidation, dissolution or abandonment, the elder board shall make provision for the payment of all liabilities, and thereafter, the organization's assets shall be distributed to a fund, foundation, or corporation exclusively organized and operated for religious, charitable, educational or hospital purposes or any combination of those purposes exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

ARTICLE XIV

INDEMNIFICATION

This church shall indemnify designated officers while serving as a member of the board of directors or those persons so identified in the Manual of Policies and Procedures of the church in their actions and services in furtherance of the mission and purpose of this church. Interpretation of this article is left to the discretion of the elders of this church.

ARTICLE XV

BYLAW REVIEW

The elder board of the church shall review the church bylaws every five years and bring any proposed changes to the congregation according to ARTICLE XII.

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