

Constitution & By Laws

Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship

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ARTICLE I – LEGAL NAME

The legal name of the ministry is Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing in the State of Tennessee. Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship's legal address is currently P.O. Box 355, Hermitage, TN 37076.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship exists to pursue God, and to fulfill the Great Commission by attracting people to Jesus Christ, connecting as family, maturing together in Christ and equipping the church to do the work of Jesus Christ in our community and the world.

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement Of Faith of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship is defined by the following:

1. We affirm that there is one God, infinitely perfect and eternally existent in the person of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. We affirm the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His victorious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His much anticipated personal return in power and glory.
3. We affirm the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling, the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. We affirm the fullness of the Holy spirit as the empowerment of the Christian for witness and service. We affirm that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operative today.
4. We affirm the Bible to be Holy Spirit inspired, the authoritative word of God that is eternally reliable.
5. We affirm that salvation is by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that man is justified, sanctified, born again, and ultimately glorified through the working of God's Spirit and His grace.
6. We affirm that the gospel is the message of God's victorious Kingdom, promising forgiveness, healing, deliverance, provision, and friendship with God

in this life through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. We also affirm the culmination of our salvation being the promise of eternal, victorious, life with Christ throughout all eternity.

7. We affirm the priority of the Great Commission: to take the Gospel message "to every creature." We believe every Christian should be a proactive witness for God; and that every local church should work towards being involved in reaching beyond its local community to touch the world.

8. We affirm the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those that are saved to the resurrection of life and those that are lost to an eternity separated from God in hell. Hell is God's final place of judgment prepared for Satan and demonic beings. But those who do not respond to God in faith will suffer the same fate.

9. We affirm the one, universal Church that is the Body of Christ. We affirm Christ as its head. We affirm all who are born again as its members. We affirm the spiritual unity of all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. We also affirm the church's purposes as offering worship to God, fellowship, ministry and instruction to itself, and evangelism and service to the world. We believe as well that the church is an instrument of God to enforce the victory of the cross upon Satan, his associates, and his kingdom. We also believe that the Church has been given dominion to call forth the Kingdom of God and the will of God on the earth as it is in Heaven through intercession and obedience.

10. We affirm that each believer is to be connected and lovingly submitted to a local Body of believers. The local church is to be led by a Senior Pastor (connected to apostolic authority) and its members are to respect and honor the God-appointed authority of their leaders (Hebrews 13:17), recognizing them as those commissioned by God to be responsible for guiding, directing, teaching the body, and leading them, by example, in spiritual growth. The Sr. Pastor (along with his/her leadership team) will prioritize discipleship of the people; equipping, challenging and releasing them into their destinies. The church will have a "leadership team" of elders, deacons, or leaders in training who assist the Sr. Pastor and keep each other accountable.

11. We affirm believer's baptism by immersion in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

12. We affirm the importance of regular participation in the taking of the Lord's Supper.

13. We affirm the ministry and presence of angels and the reality of the devil and demonic forces. We also recognize the legitimacy and the necessity of waging spiritual warfare through prayer over nations, cities, families, and individuals.

14. Gender: We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as a male and female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). The rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of God's intended design and purpose for each person.

15. Marriage: We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in

Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

16. Sexual Immorality: We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

17. Faith Based Employment: We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship as the local Body Of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Eastgate members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Eastgate in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by these statements on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)

18. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sins, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

19. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship.

20. We affirm that "God hates divorce" (Malachi 2:16) and that it is detrimental to society. We do believe, however, that divorce is sometimes a permissible alternative in difficult circumstances where marital infidelity, illegal activities or desertions have destroyed a marriage (Matt. 19:9, 1 Cor. 7:15). In such cases the leaders of the church must walk with the individual and affirm any action taken.

21. We affirm the equality of men and women and the equality of race (Galatians 3:27-29). We encourage all who are followers of Jesus, and are properly submitted to the biblical governing authorities in the home and in the church, to be actively involved in the public ministry of the church through their unique gifts as distributed to each one of us by the Holy Spirit.

22. We affirm that Jesus has commissioned apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to be involved in equipping His church (Eph. 4:13). We believe all these offices are functional in the church today and necessary for her maturity.

23. We affirm that every repentant believer is to be welcomed into the family of God and fully accepted regardless of past sin.

24. We affirm that the Church of Jesus Christ is on the move! While we may hold to differing understandings of the particulars of the Last Days, we all affirm that the Church will become more glorious, victorious, and anointed as we continue to grow individually and corporately in His grace and power.

The Statement Of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible, itself, as the inspired and infallible word of God that speaks with final authority concerning

truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind. It is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purpose of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Board Of Elders and Pastoral Leaders are the the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 401 – Qualifications

We acknowledge that those conditions which the Scriptures require of an individual at the occasion of his or her acceptance of Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior, and the individual's entrance into the Universal Body Of Christ, as outlined in Acts 2:38-42, are essential components for local union with this Church. We further recognize, and challenge all members to acknowledge their pursuit of and agreement with the following Covenant Principles:

1. Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. A covenant member will acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's only Son, our only Lord and Savior, eternally existing, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, crucified for our sins, risen from the dead on the third day, ascended to the Father, sitting at His right hand, coming again as Judge and King.
2. Prayer. A covenant member will devote themselves to a lifestyle of prayer as the scriptures command, and as Jesus Christ demonstrated in His life. (Jer.29:11-14, Luke 18:1, Ps. 32:6)
3. Worship. A covenant member will subscribe to a lifestyle of exclusive devotion to, and recognition of, the beauty of God's holiness through joyful praise and reverent adoration. (Ps. 29:2, Ex. 23:25-26, Ex. 34:14)
4. Tithes & Offerings. A covenant member will Honor the Lord by giving of his/her finances. (Malachi 3:6-12, 2 Cor. 9:6-10, Luke 6:38).
5. Developing Abundant Fruit. A covenant member's life should bear fruit from which others can feed. (Is. 61:3, Gal. 5:22-23, Jer. 17:7-8).
6. Serving. A covenant member will devote themselves, their skills, their time, and their gifting to Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship, it's leaders, it's individual members, and to Eastgate's mission locally and abroad. (Eph 2:10, 1Cor. 3:5, Gal. 6:2)
7. Evangelize. A covenant member will devote themselves to Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:19-20, Acts 10:19).

SECTION 402 - Admission Procedure

An applicant for membership shall be required to profess, as a minimum, belief in the fundamentals of the Christian faith as contained in the Covenant Principles (Section 401). Membership is acknowledged by the execution of a membership application by the individual during our Thrive Events and it being submitted to the church's administrative offices for approval by the Elders of the church. The new member should be publicly welcomed into the fellowship at a regular service of the Church on the Lord's Day. Our Members are encouraged to participate in our weekly Connect Group meetings (Section 801 B.) for the care and nurturing of their faith in Christ.

SECTION 403 - Children of Members

Children of adult members do not automatically gain membership upon reaching a certain age of accountability. Our concern is that each young person has a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This relationship cannot be inherited by virtue of a parent's profession and commitment. However, it is not our intention to exclude young men and women from the life of the church. Therefore, children may enter into Membership provided they, along with the affirmation of their parents or legal guardian, agree and affirm their understanding, acknowledgment and acceptance of the Covenant Principles (Section 401) surrounding membership.

SECTION 404- Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

1. By Death.

2. By Transfer.

Any member in good standing who wishes to affiliate with another church will be granted a Letter of Recommendation upon request by the church with which he desires to associate. The Letter will be forwarded upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

3. By Request.

Any member who requests termination of membership for whatever reason will be granted that request. If there are unresolved problems between the requesting member and the Church, efforts will be made by the Elders to resolve any points at issue prior to the granting of the request.

4. By Disciplinary Action.

Should any member of this Church be found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life, the Church reserves the right to administer Scriptural forms of church discipline, as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 through the Board of Elders. Should faithful efforts by the Elders render no promise of reform or manifest no spirit of repentance on the part of the member in question, membership may be terminated upon unanimous recommendation of the Board of Elders. The Elders may also notify the church of such action, if they so choose, for the protection of the body. (1 Cor. 5:9-13) A member removed from fellowship by disciplinary action may be reinstated, but only upon the approval of the Sr. Pastor and Elders. Any approved reinstatement must then be handled through the normal admission procedure.

5. By Inactivity.

If a member has not participated in any of the church worship services for a period of 6 months, their membership may be terminated, unless the inactivity is due to health or other reasons acceptable to the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS & GOVERNMENT

SECTION 501 - Elders

1. Selection.

Elders shall be nominated by the Sr. Pastor and/or an Elder, confirmed and approved by a 3/4 vote of the entire Elder Board. In the event that there are too few elders within the Eldership to constitute a 3/4 vote, the Sr. Pastor and Elders will include any of the members of the Apostolic Board in order to allow for a 3/4's vote to

take place in the approval process. A new Elder may be approved to either fill a vacancy on the Board of Elders or to add an additional member to that Board.

2. Qualifications.

Elders shall be of intellectual and spiritual maturity, with proven Christian character and sound judgment, exemplary in their conduct, effective leaders and teachers, and shall be qualified in accordance with the guidelines of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and willing to be servants of the Church. Additionally, Elders shall be men or women members of the church, and shall have proven themselves before the Membership in lesser capacities of service. An Elder shall be ordained by the Church with the laying on of hands by the Sr. Pastor and the Board of Elders.

3. Responsibilities.

Responsibilities of individual Elders shall be those of the Board of Elders as described in Section 601 of Article VI.

SECTION 502 - Deacons

1. Selection.

Deacons shall be nominated, confirmed and elected by a three-fourths (3/4) vote by the Board of Elders, and shall serve in that capacity for an indefinite period of time. A new Deacon may be recommended, and approved to either fill a vacancy on the Board of Deacons, or to add an additional member to that Board. Deacons may be removed from office upon their own request, or by 3/4 vote of the Board of Elders.

2. Qualifications.

Deacons and Deaconesses shall be of spiritual discernment and members of the Church, exemplary in their Christian character and conduct, and of good reputation in the community outside of the Church. A requirement of one year Eastgate church membership allows the congregation to become acquainted with and grow in trust of the Deacon or Deaconess. They and their spouses (if applicable) shall be willing to be servants of the Church in accordance with the meaning of the work as outlined in Acts 6:1-6 and shall be qualified in accordance with the guidelines in I Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon or Deaconess shall be ordained by this Church with the laying on of hands by the Sr. Pastor and the Board of Elders.

3. Responsibilities.

Responsibilities of individual Deacons shall be those of the Board of Deacons as described in Section 602 of Article VI.

Eastgate's governmental structure is established for the purpose of stewarding God's people and the spiritual truths of the Gospel by the grace and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Eastgate defines leadership as influence, not positions or titles.

Leadership at any level, therefore, requires a careful evaluation of one's personal life, so as to ensure that the influences in the person's life enable those who are following to prosper in their own journey in Jesus. The spiritual health, maturity, and safety of the body through exemplary leadership is the primary goal of Eastgate's governing bodies.

LEADERSHIP CONDUCT:

Eastgate's ordained Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses and also all Eastgate leaders, worship team members and teachers agree to live above reproach in their conduct, striving to always be mindful that others are watching

them (in public, in private, and online) and that their actions will influence others, both positively and negatively. It is strongly suggested, although not mandated, that they abstain from all alcohol and smoking, so that those who are weak in the faith can be influenced positively by their leadership and to keep the Body from stumbling in weakness. Leaders agree to flee from sexual immorality and all illegal activity, including drug use. Having love for others and obedience to the conviction of the Holy Spirit at heart, all Eastgate leaders will earnestly seek guidance from the Holy Spirit on these matters, demonstrate a life of discipline, and use extreme caution and sensitivity concerning these issues whether in public, in private or online through social media. Let it be said of every leader in any capacity at Eastgate: *"We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry."* 2 Corinthians 6:3

SECTION 503 - Board of Elders

1. Membership.

The Board of Elders shall be comprised of those Elders nominated by the Sr. Pastor or by an Elder, approved by a three-fourths vote of the Board of Elders. The Sr. Pastor and Elders shall present the new Elders to the congregation for comment following their recommendation. Any comments by the congregation must be submitted to the Sr. Pastor and Elders in writing within one week of the recommendation, and shall be investigated and acted upon by the Elders. Once chosen, Elders shall serve on the Board for an indefinite period of time.

2. Responsibilities.

The Board of Elders is responsible for the administration of the Church under God's authority and in particular is responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the Church and its members. Collectively, the Board of Elders shall:

- A. Lead in the pastoral ministry of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship.
- B. Give input to the Sr. Pastor regarding the overall policies and vision of the church.
- C. Approve and affirm all major directional and/or doctrinal policies of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Elders.
- D. Hold title to all Eastgate properties "in trust" for the benefit of the ministry, and to carry out specific duties with regard to the property, as approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire Board of Elders at any duly called Elders meeting.
- E. Borrow money and incur indebtedness on behalf of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship.
- F. Cause to be executed and delivered for Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship's purpose and in Eastgate's name any promissory notes and other evidences of debt and/or securities. No Eastgate funds shall be invested into a financial instrument where the principle will be at risk of loss.
- G. Exercise all powers conferred by the State of Tennessee and/or other

applicable laws.

H. Approve the compensation changes for the staff pastors by two-thirds majority vote of the entire Board of Elders at any duly called Elders meeting.

I. Approve the annual church budget.

J. Remove any officer, teacher or employee, appointed by the Elders, or whose appointment requires the approval of the Elders, by a two thirds majority vote of the entire Board of Elders at any time with or without cause.

K. Approve the purchase or sale of any real estate by Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Elders at any duly called Elders meeting.

L. Approve any Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship affiliations with other churches or organizations.

3. Authority

On the basis of the Scriptures, the administration of authority in the Church is given by the Holy Spirit to the Elders who are to administer God's authority and be responsible for His will being put into practice. The Board of Elders, therefore, shall have the authority to interpret this Constitution and By-laws and implement actions consistent with it.

SECTION 504 - Board of Deacons

1. Membership.

The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of those Deacons who have been recommended by the Members, nominated, confirmed and elected by a three fourths vote by the Board of Elders.

2. Responsibilities.

The Board of Deacons (which includes the role of Deaconesses) are ordained for the purpose of assisting the Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship Pastoral Staff in the pastoral care of the body, through oversight of various departments, leading Connect Groups, and any other areas of service within the body as determined by the Sr. Pastor. The following protocol will serve as the job description for the roles of Deacon and Deaconess and will further describe the expectations that Eastgate's Leadership will expect them to perform:

A. Deacons and deaconesses agree to live above reproach in their conduct. Abstaining from the use of drugs and nicotine products are a requirement for all who are serving in Eastgate leadership roles. Abstaining from the use of alcohol is not mandated, but strongly suggested for all leaders, so that those in the body who are recovering from addictions or abuse, and those who are weak in their faith can be influenced positively by our leadership team, and to keep the body from stumbling in weakness.

B. Deacons and deaconesses will be responsible for carrying the four core values of Eastgate's ministry (Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, Make A Difference) into the Connect Group ministries. Revisiting these values each week in the small group gatherings will ensure that the body understands the mission of Eastgate.

C. Deacons and deaconesses will commit to a lifestyle of relationship evangelism and proactively establish relationships in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and other locations in the community with a goal of getting people connected to the body of Jesus through the Connect Groups.

D. Deacons and deaconesses will set monthly evangelism goals and schedule relationship building events (cookouts, game nights, service projects, etc) that will encourage people in the community to connect to a Connect Group. They will lead the other members of the group to regularly invite people to Connect Group meetings. Deacons and deaconesses will be expected to report to the Pastoral Staff as to how effective these efforts are in reaching their goals during the monthly leadership meetings.

E. Deacons and deaconesses will participate in monthly leadership meetings for a time of equipping, evaluating, and encouragement with other leaders and the Pastoral Staff. Times and locations of these meetings will be determined and communicated. Deacons and Deaconesses will make attendance at Eastgate functions and events a priority.

F. Devise and implement effective Biblical methods of collecting the gifts of the Lord's people, and be involved in the weekly offering collection. This may include the counting of money collected in Church offerings or received by other means.

G. Assist in the preparation and distribution of the elements of the Lord's Supper, as required.

H. Assist the Sr. Pastor, and Elders in the care and leadership of the congregation.

3. Authority.

A. The Board of Deacons shall have the authority to expend funds as approved by the Sr. Pastor and the Elders in connection with their areas of responsibility, and within the limitations of the Church budget as determined by the Board of Elders.

B. Deacons and deaconesses do not have the authority to ordain a person into any leadership roles at Eastgate, but will be looked to to make

recommendations for those who desire to serve in this capacity, and who meet the required qualifications.

SECTION 505 - Apostolic Board

1. Membership

The members of the Apostolic board will be appointed by the Sr. Pastor and approved by a 3/4 majority vote of the Eldership. The members of the Apostolic Board will serve indefinitely in providing spiritual/Apostolic covering for the ministry.

2. Responsibilities

The Apostolic Board is a governing board of local and trans local leaders that will serve as general counsel and accountability to the Sr. Pastor, and the Board Of Elders. They will be responsible for:

A. Communicating with the Sr. Pastor on at least a quarterly basis to discuss the overall health, effectiveness, and direction of the ministry.

B. Providing counsel to the Sr. Pastor in all areas of the ministry.

C. Provide a "Higher Court" form of mediation for the Sr. Pastor and the Board Of Elders in the case of disagreements that may arise concerning ministry/doctrinal issues as described in Acts 15.

3. Authority.

The Apostolic Board shall have the authority to make final judgments and determinations on issues concerning the ministry, whereby the Sr. Pastor and the Board Of Elders are unable to reach a consensus vote. The Apostolic Board does not have the authority to overthrow a decision that is supported by a majority vote of the Eldership. The Apostolic Board will use it's authority to promote and maintain unanimity and peace within the governing bodies of the local church i.e. Sr. Pastor and the Board Of Elders.

ARTICLE VI – STAFF

SECTION 601 - SR. PASTOR

1. Selection.

In the event of a Sr. Pastor vacancy in this Church, the Sr. Pastor shall be selected by a three-fourths majority vote of the entire Board of Elders at any called Elders meeting. The Board of Elders shall use, at their sole discretion, utilize the counsel of the Apostolic Council, the Board of Deacons, staff pastors, and other ministry leaders it should so choose, in the determination and selection of the Sr. Pastor.

2. Responsibilities.

In general, it shall be the responsibility of the Elders to review and select candidates to be presented before the Church. This shall involve:

A. The establishment of criteria to be considered in making initial contacts with prospective candidates.

B. The making of inquiries as to the availability of prospective candidates.

C. The review of information as to the prospective candidates educational training, experience in Christian service, personal and spiritual reputation, doctrinal views, and conditions under which they would consider a call from the Church.

D. The scheduling of candidates for exposure to the Church including speaking at services.

3. Term of Service.

A Sr. Pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. The Sr. Pastor's tenure of service shall terminate by his resignation, death or by 3/4 vote of the Board of Elders and Apostolic Board. In the event of the Pastor's resignation, he/she may give up to thirty days notice; in the event that the Board of Elders vote to terminate the Pastor's services, he shall receive thirty days notice or thirty days salary in lieu of such notice.

4. Conditions of Employment.

The salary of the Pastor and other compensation such as Social Security, insurance, housing allowance, and pension shall be specified in writing and made a part of the call. Likewise, such items as authorized vacation, attendance at meetings and conferences, moving expenses, and other agreed upon conditions shall be addressed in the call. The call shall be in the form of a legal agreement. Changes in the initial conditions of employment are to be enacted by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

5. Qualifications.

The qualifications for the Sr. Pastor shall be the Biblical standards for the office of Elder (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In addition, the Pastor shall be ordained by the Board of Elders through the laying on of hands and shall hold membership in this Church during his term of service. Additional qualifications shall be as determined by the Board Of Elders. It is further understood that the Sr. Pastor is considered a member of the Board Of Elders.

6. Responsibilities.

The Sr. Pastor has both the collective responsibilities as a member of the Board of Elders, and the individual responsibilities of an Elder. Additionally, the Pastor shall:

A. Provide spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and general oversight to Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship.

B. Oversee the day-to-day operations of the Church, formulate annual budgets, and provide sound fiscal management of the budget.

C. Oversee and administrate the Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship staff, pastors, and ministry leaders, including compensation recommendations, additions, changes, and disciplinary matters. All recommendations must be made to the Board of Elders.

7. Outside Ministries.

Involvement by the Sr. Pastor in ministries, work, or other endeavors outside of the Church and its Ministries shall be reported to the Board of Elders.

8. Authority and Limitations

The authority of the Pastor to expend funds is limited to his participation as a member of the Board of Elders, and the authority and limitations prescribed to the Board of Elders. The Pastor shall have the authority to interpret the Scriptures to the Congregation consistent with the Doctrinal Statement of the Church.

SECTION 602 - Other Paid Staff Positions

1. Will be hired by the Sr. Pastor after a three-fourths majority vote by the Board of Elders provided funding (budget) has been approved. The Sr. Pastor will notify the congregation of such appointments as deemed necessary by the Board of Elders.

2. Can be removed by resignation, death, or a three-fourths vote by the Elders. When the person being considered for removal is an Elder or a spouse or family member of an Elder, a majority vote by the Eldership is needed for removal. Following the decision to remove a paid staff member from his or her responsibilities at Eastgate, an announcement will be made to the Members, either in writing or publicly, as deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders for the purpose of maintaining unity in the body.

3. Will be supervised by the Senior Pastor.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

SECTION 701 - Regular Meetings

1. The Weekend Service(s)

The Church shall initially meet regularly each Sunday morning, for edification and discipleship through the Word of God, for fellowship among those in the Body of Christ that they may minister to spiritual needs, and as a witness to the community. The conduct of these meetings shall be the responsibility of the Sr. Pastor, and the Board of Elders, with specific responsibilities delegated to the Board of Deacons, the pastoral staff and ministry leaders and other individuals or committees.

2. Connect Groups

These are groups that take many forms and meet throughout the week, either in homes, public places, or at the church facilities, in addition to our Sunday morning Church gathering. These groups exist to carry out the Four Core Values of Eastgate's ministry in the community. The Four Core Values are defined below in Part B. Purpose Of Connect Groups:

A. Structure of Connect Groups

All those in the Congregation are encouraged to participate in a Connect Group Meeting. The number of Connect Groups, their structure and leadership shall be determined by the Sr. Pastor, and approved by the Board of Elders.

B. Purpose of Connect Groups.

Connect Groups are patterned after the model described in Acts 2:46, which existed in the early Christian Church. They are to put into practice the principles found in the New Testament that provide opportunities for:

- a. KNOW GOD- Reaching the lost and disenfranchised people in our city and beyond through relationship evangelism and sharing the Gospel, giving people the opportunity to live in personal relationship with God through the redemptive works of Jesus Christ and the

indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

b. FIND FREEDOM- Connecting the people to the body of Jesus for the purpose of healing, growth, and discipleship through membership and regular connection to Connect Groups, Corporate Gatherings, Special Events, and Eastgate's Finding Freedom Ministry.

c. DISCOVER PURPOSE- Equipping God's people to understand that they are God's original design and that He has a life purpose for them to pursue and participate in with Him for His glory in the earth.

d. MAKE A DIFFERENCE- Empowering believers to live out their faith in service to the body and in our city, nation and in the nations of the world through the unique gifts of grace given to them by the Holy Spirit.

C. Connect Group Meetings.

Connect Groups shall regularly meet at a time and in places determined by the leaders of each group and as approved by the Sr. Pastor and/or pastoral staff. The places of connection and the activities conducted in the groups must not compromise scripture or the integrity of the body of Christ, but must reflect the loving truths of God's word for the edification of the Body to the glory of God.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCES

SECTION 801 - Financial Policies and Goals

We believe that the way an organization handles itself in the financial area is a reflection of its integrity in every area. Luke 16:11 teaches that the person who is untrustworthy in handling money cannot be trusted to handle spiritual riches either. Likewise, if we are trustworthy in the use of monetary riches, then God will be able to entrust spiritual riches and blessings to us as a church (Luke 16:10). Therefore, we have established the following financial policies and goals to guide us in proper stewardship of God's monetary riches:

1. This church and ministry belongs to God. It is neither a monument to anyone's ego nor a legacy to anyone's memory. The ministry does not bear anyone's name. The buildings are not dedicated to anyone, but Jesus Christ. The pastor, elders and other members are merely stewards and fellow-servants in the work of the Kingdom.

2. The Lord has chosen to place His mantle of approval on the ministry of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship. Nevertheless, He gives and sometimes takes away. It is the belief of the Members of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship that the "church" of Jesus Christ is the people of God. God's people will never cease to exist. But this particular ministry will cease if it is the divine will of God. If He closes the doors to this work, we will accept His leading and yield the outcome to Him. Until then, we will devote ourselves to the faithful fulfillment of the objectives stated in our Purpose statement (Article II).

3. One of the ways we can discern the Lord's will regarding the continuation of our work is through the financial support He sends (or doesn't send) via His people. Therefore, during lean times we will make our obligations known, but we will never resort to what we consider to be disrespectful and dishonorable methods of raising funds, even when the need is serious. Nor will we attempt to motivate giving from a

false sense of guilt or compulsion, since this robs God's people of the opportunity to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

4. We consider the contributions we receive as the Lord's. And, like the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4), we will view each contribution as a sacrificial gift from Christian people who love God. Our obligation, therefore, is to spend that money conservatively and wisely. Every penny will be stretched as far as possible to serve the needs of the ministry and the extension of Christ's kingdom.

5. We believe that God gives His people the power to make wealth. (Deut.8:18; 2Cor. 9:11 "rich in every way generous on every occasion". We will teach the message of Godly prosperity, which is built on a foundation of giving and generosity, not selfish promotion or gain.

6. To summarize, we will remember that Jesus Christ is our possessor and our dispossessor. He has ordained and blessed the establishment of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship. It belongs entirely to Him. Therefore, we will cradle it lovingly in our hands, attempting not to crush it through self-centeredness, ignorance or church politics.

SECTION 802 - Accounts

The Financial Accounts shall be established through the Budget annually by the Board of Elders, and maintained by our designated Accountants or bookkeepers. Accounts may be established for non-budgeted funds collected for church approved activities or events, but only by the approval of the Eldership in order to maintain accountability and integrity.

SECTION 803 - Offerings

1. Regular Offerings

Regular offerings shall be taken at Sunday services and other special meetings as determined by the Board of Elders, or the Sr. Pastor. Non designated offerings shall be applied to the General Operating Budget. We do not allow Members to designate their regular tithes and offerings to specific departments of the ministry. It is understood that the regular tithes and offerings are to be brought to the storehouse and used as designated and approved by the Sr. Pastor and Elders.

2. Special Offerings

Special offerings shall be specifically identified as to their purpose and shall either be taken separate from regular offerings or provision made for the separating of special offerings from regular offerings by means of an identification procedure.

3. Accounting of Offerings

The amount of funds received in regular offerings shall be communicated to the Congregation as deemed necessary by the Sr Pastors or the Elders. Funds received in special offerings shall be communicated to the Congregation on the Sunday morning following the offering. Offerings shall be counted by two or more designated leaders appointed by the Board of Elders.

SECTION 804 - Financial Statements

Financial statements shall be prepared by the Certified Public Accountants or the church bookkeeper for the Board of Elders. Financial statements shall conform to

business standards, be comprehensive in nature including the identification of receipts and disbursements by account for the period covered. The financial statements should include both Budget and Actual amounts for the all accounts as approved by the Board of Elders. Yearly financial statements can be viewed by Covenant Members of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship only (see definition of "MEMBER"). Viewing may be done by appointment only during regular business hours. Copies of the ministries financials will not be made available to anyone other than the Board of Elders in order to protect the ministry, those who give financially to Eastgate, and for the confidentiality of those whom the ministry employs.

SECTION 805 - Church Budget

1. Preparation.

The Church budget shall be prepared by the Sr. Pastor. The Sr. Pastor will be assisted by the Board of Elders. The Church Budget shall be based on God-given challenges, the previous receipt and disbursement records, growth experienced during the previous year/period and anticipated in the coming year/period, and other factors which affect the expenditures of the Church. Input should be obtained from the various Department Heads, Ministry Leaders, ministry groups or individuals relative to their particular areas of ministry.

2. Submittal and Approval.

A copy of the budget as prepared shall be made available to the Board of Elders at least one week prior to any Budget approval meeting between the Sr. Pastor and the Board of Elders. Upon approval of the final Budget the Sr. Pastor will conduct a State Of The Ministry meeting to outline the areas of emphasis, announce staff promotions, additions, etc. that are outlined in the new budget. This presentation will be conducted on the church premises and is open to the entire Congregation. The Board of Elders, which includes the Sr. Pastor, will provide a time for questions and answers to allow the members the opportunity to better understand and become informed of current church business and decisions.

3. Use and Implementation.

The Annual Church Budget shall serve as a guide for the expenditure of funds in all areas of the Church's ministry. Expenditures in excess of the budget by Boards, Committees, Officers, ministry groups or individuals require the prior approval of the Board of Elders. The expenditure of funds for budgeted items which exceed the Budget amount may be approved by the Board of Elders as long as these expenditures are consistent with the needs of the Church, the recent financial position of the Church, and the extent of funds on hand. Items not addressed or identified in the Budget require the approval of the Board of Elders, regardless of amount.

4. Budget Review.

The Board of Elders will conduct at least an annual review of the income and expenditures of the church. At the discretion of the Board of Elders, they may formulate a committee made up of Deacons, staff pastors or ministry leaders to participate in the review. At the sole discretion of the Elders this committee might be called in to provide counsel and or information to the Board of Elders on critical financial situations.

ARTICLE VIII - ORDINANCES AND CEREMONIES

SECTION 901 - Baptism

1. Baptism of Believers

A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, or a rededication of their faith in Jesus, and who earnestly desires to lead a life in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, whether previously water baptized or who has never been water baptized, will be encouraged to be water baptized. Such a person should present him or herself before the Sr. Pastor, an Elder, a Deacon, a Staff Pastor, or a Connect Group Leader to profess his/her faith and to request water baptism. Upon the request for baptism, an Eastgate ministry leader will educate the new believer into an understanding of the symbols, and the spiritual significance that water baptism brings to the believers new life in Christ. It is the position of this ministry, and it shall be explained, that water baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10) is both a symbol of the old nature being washed away or put under, and the new man being resurrected into new life with Christ. It is also the position of this ministry, and it shall be explained to those seeking baptism, that there is an impartation or deposit of the Spirit of God upon the believer as they come up out of the water (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10) that signifies, seals, or sets them apart as a child of God.

2. Administration of Baptism

Baptism services shall occur as and when scheduled by the Board of Elders. Any Elder, staff pastor, Deacon, Lay Leader, or any Covenant Member (Article IV, Section 402) in good standing, may administer Baptisms.

SECTION 902 - Child Dedication Ceremony

1. Parent's and Congregation's Commitment

Those parents who wish to make a commitment to raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord may make a public statement of this fact during a designated Sunday service. Dedication Ceremonies shall occur as and when scheduled by the Sr. Pastor. The Sr. Pastor is responsible for the Dedication Service.

SECTION 903 - The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is symbolic of the sacrifice of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and the resulting fellowship of believers (1 Corinthians 10:16,17). Participation in the Lord's Supper shall be open to all Christians who genuinely confess their sinful state and indicate their repentant spirit and dependence upon Christ as Savior and Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). The Lord's Supper shall be administered as, and when determined by the Board of Elders, and or the Sr. Pastor, on no less than a monthly basis. Any Covenant Member (Article IV, Section 402) in good standing may lead in the administration of the Lord's Supper.

SECTION 904 - Marriage Ceremonies

Marriage ceremonies may be conducted by, in accordance to Tennessee State Code 36-3-301(a), any ordained leader, i.e. Sr. Pastor, Elder, Deacon, Staff Pastor of Eastgate, upon the approval of the Sr. Pastor. It is understood that premarital counseling between the Sr. Pastor and the husband and wife to be is a requirement before any marriage ceremony is performed. Those performing the marriage ceremony will emphasize the importance of Jesus Christ's Lordship in the marriage, and will make every effort to ensure that both the husband and wife know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As stated in our Statement Of Faith, Eastgate defines marriage as the union of a biological man (as defined at birth) and a biological woman (as defined at birth) (Genesis 2:18-25), and reserves the biblical and free expressive right to limit Marriage Ceremonies in our facilities and on our properties

to unions between a biological man (as defined at birth) and a biological woman (as defined at birth), so as to uphold the truths of God's word and what we believe to be His intentional design for marriage. Marriage ceremonies performed in the church facilities or on the church's property must be approved by the Senior Pastor(s) and documented in the church records.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

SECTION 10

01 - Procedures

These By-laws may be amended at any Board of Elders Meeting provided:

1. That such amendments are proposed by the Board of Elders of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship.
2. That such proposed amendments have been made available to the covenant membership in written form on the two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting in which action on the amendments is to be taken or have been provided by mail 10 days prior to that Meeting.
3. That the affirmative vote for amendment shall not be less than 3/4 of the votes cast by the Board of Elders. Voting shall be by secret ballot if so requested by any Elder.

DEFINITIONS:

BODY OF CHRIST - The visible Church of Jesus Christ; all Christians still living, no matter what local church or denomination they may be a part of.

CHURCH - In almost every case in these By-laws, Church refers to this particular local church called Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship. Where Church is used to refer to the Christian Church, the entire Body of Christ, this is made clear either by the context or use of the term "Christian Church".

CONGREGATION - All those who fellowship with Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship on a regular basis including both members and nonmembers.

MEMBERS - A member of Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship as per ARTICLE IV of these By-laws.