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PREFACE

This Structure for Ministry document provides the framework for ministries and the business of Oasis. The document is a tool designed to both serve the body of Oasis and to enhance effective ministry and operation. It is secondary in authority to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

OUR IDENTITY

OUR MISSION

To partner with God in His redemptive mission in the world.

OUR PURPOSE

We believe the church is the body of Christ sharing life together. Our call is to bring people into relationship with Jesus by proclaiming the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this by taking the good news outside the church walls, meeting the needs of those who are hurting and announcing the Kingdom of God is at hand.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose partnership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Adopted by the Evangelical Free Church of America on June 26, 2008

Our affirmation:

We believe this Statement of Faith to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. All partners shall refrain from advocating doctrines not included in this Statement of Faith in such a way as to cause dissension.

PARTNERSHIP

PURPOSE OF PARTNERSHIP

Partnership in a local body is not a Biblical requirement, neither is it a means to salvation. Rather we recognize partnership as a practical and public commitment that unites a group of people to a common purpose. All partners embrace the vision and mission of Oasis and endeavor to work to the best of their ability toward its fulfillment. Only partners are entitled to vote on matters of importance to the life of Oasis.

PROCEDURE FOR PARTNERSHIP

Partnership shall be open to anyone 16 years old or older who has:

- personally received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- been baptized as a believer by immersion
- shown commitment to this local body of believers
- subscribed to the Statement of Faith, Structure for Ministry, Partnership Covenant
- attended partnership class 101

RENEWAL OF PARTNERSHIP/COMMITMENT TO MATURITY

Annually, each partner will be asked to express their continued commitment to the mission statement of Oasis and to the expectations of his/her partnership covenant.

Partners may remove themselves from partnership by making a written request and giving the request to any pastor or elder or by mailing the request to the church office. Reinstatement of elapsed partnership may be made by complying with steps outlined in the policy and procedure manual.

The Elder Board is responsible for maintaining the partnership lists for the church. The Elder Board may remove a partner who they know has left the fellowship. If the Elder Board is considering removing a partner a letter must be sent to the individual indicating that they will be removed. If there is no response within four weeks of receiving that letter one final attempt will be made by contacting said partner by phone.

One of the primary benefits of being a partner of Oasis is the opportunity to vote on key church matters as defined by this document. Every partner should be actively participating in fulfilling the mission and purpose of Oasis.

Leadership and the Governance of Oasis

The Government / Organization of Oasis shall consist of the Pastoral staff, Elder Board, Board of Finance and various Ministry Teams. The Lead Pastor together with the Elder Board is given the vested authority by the congregation to oversee all the affairs of the church. They shall be the spiritual leaders of the church and be responsible for the spiritual welfare as well as congregational care of its members unless their conduct is immoral, unethical or unbiblical as determined through Scripture. If such a situation arises the principles of Matthew 18 will be followed.

The Lead Pastor and the Elders will serve as officers of the corporation, Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary as well as oversee the administrative and fiduciary functioning of the church. The various Ministry Teams oversee specific areas of ministry within the local body of Christ with accountability to the authority of the Lead Pastor.

Each level of leadership seeks to function as a unit with a mutual reliance upon each other and the Holy Spirit for effective leadership and operation. All leadership positions are seen as servant roles and not “power roles.” Those in authority are servants to those under them and foremost to Christ, having responsibility to lead, direct, and bring vision to ministry. The following paragraphs explain the roles, qualifications, and various procedures around the practical outworking of each of these levels of leadership.

STAFF

A. LEAD PASTOR

The Lead Pastor serves as a member of the Elder Board and therefore, must qualify for the position of an elder. He has the primary responsibility to pray, to preach, and to teach the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Preaching and teaching must be performed accurately, with authority, and communicated effectively. The goal of such praying/preaching/teaching is to produce a mature body of believers by the power of the Holy Spirit who are equipped to perform the work of ministry. (Eph. 4:11-12)

The Lead Pastor must exercise leadership by continually keeping the mission, goals, and purposes of the church before the congregation. His life both in public and private, in word and in deed, should be an example to the congregation so as to promote a spirit of teamwork, unity, and exhibit Christ-likeness. Should the Lead Pastor demonstrate moral, ethical, or theological practices which the Elders believe may require personal change or discipline, they shall first contact the Lead Pastor. If the conduct continues the principles of Matthew 18 will apply up to dismissal. Removing the Lead Pastor requires a majority vote of the church partnership.

We believe the Lead Pastor is called to a devotion of the study of God's Word. It is expected that he will guard his time in order to fulfill his calling. As the Chief Shepherd of this flock he will work with other staff to mentor and develop individuals. The goal of this process is to prepare these individuals to become team leaders. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all ministry teams and his leadership shall be recognized in all of them.

The Lead Pastor is the day-to-day overseer of the pastoral and administrative staff. All of the pastoral staff will work with the Lead Pastor in establishing the direction for their ministries as well as the regular monitoring of those ministries.

B. ASSOCIATE PASTORS

All pastors named in the church shall meet the biblical qualifications of an elder. The Lead Pastor and Elder Board will determine the number of pastors serving the church. The selection process of any associate pastor is outlined below.

Selection of Pastoral Staff

The Elders and Lead Pastor are responsible to conduct a search to fill associate pastoral staff vacancies. Ministry descriptions and qualifications for candidates are to be determined and completed by the Lead Pastor and Elders.

Once a candidate has been selected, the Lead Pastor and Elders will then enter into negotiations with the candidate and a start date will be determined.

The Lead Pastor is responsible for the overall supervision and watch care of all pastoral staff. The specific roles and job descriptions for each staff member shall be determined by the Lead Pastor in conjunction with the Elders. Staff salaries shall also be reviewed and recommended by the Lead Pastor together with the Elders to the Board of Finance as part of the budgetary process in accordance with established criteria.

C. SUPPORT STAFF

All paid or unpaid support staff are required to meet Ministry Team Leader qualifications. Any staff member shall agree to the church Statement of Faith as a condition of employment. The Lead Pastor/Elders, however, may specify that a certain position must be filled with an individual possessing the qualities of an elder. All staff members fulfill a position of leadership and will serve as role models for other believers. Therefore, spiritual qualifications and walk are of utmost importance.

ELDERS LEADERSHIP TEAM

THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF ELDERS

All Elders will meet the qualifications and requirements of the position as stated in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1.

THE CORPORATE ROLE OF ELDERS

The Board of Elders shall have supervision over all legal, administrative (including policies and procedures), and fiscal affairs of the Church. The Elders as servant leaders, and recognizing their accountability to the congregation, are empowered to act on these affairs on behalf of the Church. Each Elder shall be an ex officio member of all other boards and committees of the Church. The Elder Board shall periodically report on its deliberations and decisions to the Church as deemed necessary.

A. SELECTION OF ELDERS

The size of the Elders Leadership Team will be consistent with the size of the congregation, with a suggested minimum of three. The only pastor who will serve on the elder board is the Lead Pastor. Selection of new elders will follow these guidelines:

1. A call for elders -- The congregation will be made aware of the desire to add new elders to the Leadership Team and be given teaching and/or information regarding the roles and responsibilities of eldership.
2. Congregants will prayerfully submit names of men who are partners of Oasis and align with biblical characteristics of elders. Pastoral staff are exempt from such nominations.
3. The elders will meet with potential candidates to ensure that they meet the biblical qualifications for an elder and to better understand their God given giftedness.
4. The elders will prayerfully review the names and make final selections.
5. The names of the prospective elders will be presented before the church who will be given 30 days to show cause why any one of the nominees would not qualify to serve. Concerns about cause will be presented personally to the nominee, and if not resolved, to the present Elder Board.
6. After 30 days, the prospective elder(s) will be presented to the partnership for affirmation and dedication.

B. TERM OF ACTIVE SERVICE

Each elder will serve a three-year term. There shall be no limit on the number of terms a lay elder may serve on the Elder Board. The installation of the elders shall be staggered to prevent all elders' terms from expiring at the same time. An elder may decide to discontinue his service as an elder by giving four weeks written notice to the Elder Board. An elder may discontinue his service as an Elder by his own decision or an elder may be removed from active service for cause. After seeking wise counsel from other Elders/Pastors the Lead Pastor may dismiss an Elder from the Board, not to exceed a rate of one per six months (unless multiple Elders exhibit moral or ethical failure). Existing Elders are not required to approve the Lead Pastor's dismissal of an Elder. An Elder may be reinstated to the Board with the approval of the Lead Pastor and by a two-thirds vote of existing Board of Elders.

An accusation against an Elder from the congregation will be considered on the basis of 2 or 3 witnesses (I Tim. 5:19).

The Board of Finance

A. MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS FOR BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS

The major financial and operational affairs of the church will be governed by the Corporate Officers, whose members shall have fiduciary and administrative responsibility.

The Board of Finance will be the consulting board for the corporate officers in the area of financial and administrative matters. The Board of Finance will meet at least once each quarter.

The Board of Finance will consist of a chair, vice chair, and secretary.

The agenda for each Board of Finance meeting will be determined by the finance chair in conjunction with the Lead Pastor and the Elders and may include prayer, budget discussion, and reporting. Reports may include results, progress, and status of team business.

After seeking wise council the Lead Pastor may dismiss a Board of Finance member (not to exceed one per six months, unless in the case of multiple moral/ethical failures). Existing Board members or Elders are not required to approve the dismissal by the Lead Pastor.

The role of the Board of Finance chair, vice chair, and secretary will be determined by the board, with the chair being the head.

B. SELECTION PROCESS FOR BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS

The Lead Pastor and Elder Board are responsible to identify, contact, and select potential candidates as well as present candidates to church body for affirmation.

The selected Board of Finance member will commit to serve 1 (one) two-year term. Upon completing initial two-year commitment the Board of Finance member can continue with the Finance Board in two-year-term increments. A courtesy notice of 3 months is requested in the event the Board of Finance member decides to remove themselves from the Finance Board either prior to (a) the start of a new 2-year term or (b) the completion of the current term of service.

C. GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS

Those who serve on the board shall possess the following characteristics (based on I Tim. 3:8-13):

- have a personal relationship with Christ, however not be a new believer
- be grounded in the faith and filled with the Holy Spirit
- be mature in character: humble, honest, and without addictions
- be a partner of Oasis in good standing
- be of good reputation
- be faithful managers of their home
- be willing to serve on a team

Congregational Meetings

The partnership will be called to meetings if and when there is an issue that needs a congregational vote. Additional meetings may arise and can be called at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and/or Elders.

In all votes only yeas and nays will be counted. Abstention will not be counted in the total vote. The Lead Pastor will conduct all meetings or in his absence, the corporate chair or his designee. All meetings are to be conducted in a decent and orderly manner (I Cor. 14:40). All partners must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21).

PROCEDURES FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A quorum of 25% of current church partnership and a simple majority of those voting shall be required to approve the following matters:

- calling or terminating Lead Pastor
- changes to the Structure for Ministry
- acquisition or disposal of church buildings or land
- encumbrance of any church property

Normally congregational meetings of the church will be called by an announcement made by the Lead Pastor during a church service at least three Sundays prior to the meeting and posted on the website. The announcement shall state the date of the meeting and an agenda.

The Lead Pastor or Elders may call a special meeting by similar notice at least two Sundays prior to a meeting and the meeting can be held on the second Sunday. The notice shall list the issues that will be discussed and voted on at that meeting. Any other issue(s) may be discussed (but not voted on) at the meeting as time permits and at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and/or Elders.

Oasis as a Corporation

A. OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

For purposes of fulfilling statutory requirements the following people will serve as officers of the corporation:

- a Designee from the Elders will serve as Corporate Chair
- a Designee from the Elders will serve as Corporate Vice Chair
- a Designee from the Elders will serve as Corporate Secretary

B. NONPROFIT RELIGIOUS PURPOSES

Oasis, a Corporation, is a church, and in addition operated or may operate a school, and other divisions which further the religious purposes of the Corporation.

The property of the Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to nonprofit religious purposes. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of its directors, officers, private shareholders or to any other individual, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments in the furtherance of the nonprofit religious purposes of the Corporation.

No substantial part of the activities of this Corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and this Corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including publishing or distributing statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Upon the winding up and dissolution of the Corporation, the elders shall, after paying or adequately providing for all the debts, obligations, and liabilities of the Corporation, distribute the remaining assets of the Corporation exclusively for the nonprofit religious purposes of the Corporation in such manner as the elders shall in its sole discretion determine, or shall distribute the remaining assets of the Corporation to such organization or organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for the nonprofit religious purposes of the Corporation and which are tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, (the "Code"), as the elders in its sole discretion shall determine.

In furtherance of its religious nonprofit tax-exempt purposes, the Corporation shall have the following powers and authority:

1. To do all acts, perform all functions, and carry on all activities permitted by the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Connecticut, or of any other State in which the Corporation is qualified to act.
2. To have an exercise all powers and rights enjoyed by corporations generally in the State of Connecticut, and in any State in which the Corporation is qualified to act, as long as the exercise of such powers is not specifically prohibited for nonprofit religious corporations.

3. To use all media, whether now known or hereafter discovered, including but not limited to, print, television, and radio.
4. To exercise such incidental powers as may reasonably be necessary to carry out the purposes for which the Corporation is established, provided that such incidental powers shall be exercised in a manner consistent with its tax-exempt status as a religious organization as set forth in Section 501(c) (3) of the Code.
5. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Articles of Incorporation or these By-laws (Structure For Ministry), the Corporation shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activity or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the nonprofit religious purposes of the Corporation, and the Corporation shall not carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c) (3) of the Code, or under the corresponding section of any future United States revenue law; or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under 170 (b) (1) (A) (I) of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future United States revenue law.