



Constitution & Bylaws

Revised January 2020

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Hope Assembly of God, Inc.

Constitution & Bylaws

Preamble

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands; we whose name appear upon the assembly roster, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local assembly in fellowship with and a part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and of the Potomac District Council of the Assemblies of God; and adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

Further, we associate ourselves together to operate in a non-profit corporate manner pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Statutes of the State of Maryland relative to corporations not for profit.

Constitution

Article 1: Name

The name of this church shall be Ellicott City Assembly of God, Inc. Name change to Hope Assembly of God, Inc. effective January 1, 2020. Name was changed in accordance to guidelines laid out in the Constitution and Bylaws and voted on by the membership with an approval vote. This Assembly shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland. Said entity shall in this document be addressed as Corporation, Church, Assembly, or by its corporate name.

Article 2: Prerogatives

This Assemblies of God Church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,... until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". (Eph. 4:3, 13)

The Corporation is empowered:

1. To purchase, lease, rent , acquire, own, construct, maintain, operate, make improvements, hold properties in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the above purposes.
2. To receive tithes, offerings, gifts, bequests, and other income and to solicit funds and raise money to fulfill the above stated purposes.
3. To borrow money, issue bonds, debentures, notes or other obligations, secure monies so borrowed or in payment for property, or for any of the purposes stated above.
4. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, this Corporation will not carry on any

activities not permitted to be carried on by:

- a. A Corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) or the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.
 - b. A Corporation, contributions to which are deductible under the Section 170 (c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or any other corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.
5. To exercise the corporate powers as set forth in Corporations and Associations Code of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Article 3: Affiliation

While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs, this Assembly shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with assemblies of like precious faith associated in the Potomac District Council, and the General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by this affiliation.

Article 4: Tenets of Faith

This Assembly accepts the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, to wit:

1. The Scriptures Inspired: The Scriptures, both the New and the Old Testaments, are verbally inspired by God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Tim. 3:15-17:1, Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. The One True God: The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I Am," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4, Isaiah 43:10-11, Matt. 28:19, Luke 3:22).

The Adorable Godhead

A. Terms Defined

The terms "Trinity" and "Persons", as related to the Godhead, while not found in the Scriptures are words in harmony with Scripture, whereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many." We, therefore, may speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is the One Lord, as a trinity or as one Being of three persons, and still be absolutely Scriptural (i.e. Matt. 28:19, 2 Corth. 13:14, John 14:16-17).

B. Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

Christ taught a distinction of Persons in the Godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:35, 1 Corth. 1:24, Matt. 11:25-27, 28:19, 2 Corth. 13:14, 1 John 1:3-4).

C. Unity of the One Being of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

Accordingly, there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father, and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitutes Him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore, the Father is the Begetter, the Son is the Begotten and the Holy Spirit is the one proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these Three Persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but One Lord God Almighty and His name One. (John 1:18, 15:26, 17:11, 21, Zech. 14:9).

D. Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are never identical as to Person; nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the Godhead; nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and the Father is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son, but the Son is from the Father as to authority. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation and authority. Hence, neither Person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others. (John 5:17-30, 32, 37; John 8:17-18).

E. The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation, "The Lord Jesus Christ," is a proper name. It is never applied, in the New Testament, either to the Father or the Holy Spirit. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God. (Rom. 1:1-3, 7; 2 John 3).

F. The Lord Jesus Christ, God With Us

The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His Divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father, but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of Man. He is, therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man, who because He is God and man, is "Emmanuel," God with us. (Matt. 1:23, 1 John 4:2, 10, 14, Rev. 1:13, 17)

G. The Title, Son of God

Since the name "Emmanuel" embraces both God and man in the one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title, Son of God, describes His proper deity and the title Son of Man, His proper humanity. Therefore, the title, Son of God, belongs to the order of eternity and the title, Son of Man, to the order of time. (Matt. 1:21-23, 2 John 3, 1 John 3:8, Heb. 1:1-13, 7:3)

H. Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the Doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title, Son of God, solely from the fact of the incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father, and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God, a denial of the Father and the Son and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. (2 John 9, John 1:1-2, 14, 18, 29, 49, 1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-5, Heb. 12:2)

I. Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. Having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Spirit that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all. (Heb. 1:3, 1 Peter 3:22, Acts 2:32-36, Rom. 14:11, 1 Corth. 15:24-28)

J. Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgement unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Spirit to ascribe unto the Son all the Attributes -of Deity and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the Godhead (except those which express relationship. See paragraphs B, C, and D), and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father. (John 5:22-23, 1 Peter 1:8, Rev. 5:6-14, Phil. 2:8-9, Rev. 7:9-10, Rev. 4:8-11).

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ: The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The scriptures declare:

- A. His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23, Luke 1:31, 35).
- B. His sinless life (Heb. 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22).
- C. His miracles (Acts 2:22, 10:38).
- D. His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corth. 15:3, 2 Corth. 5:21).
- E. His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matt. 28:6, Luke 24:39, 1 Corth. 15:4).
- F. His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11, 2:33, Phil. 2:9-11, Heb. 1:3).

4. The Fall of Man: Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:17, 3:6, Rom. 5:12-19).

5. The Salvation of Man: Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God:

- A. **Conditions to Salvation:** Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life. (Luke 24:47, John 3:3, Rom 10:13-15, Eph 2:8, Titus 2:11, 3:5-7).
- B. **The Evidences of Salvation:** The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Rom 8: 16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24, Titus 2:12).

6. The Ordinances of the Church:

- A. **Baptism in Water:** The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they

declare to the world that they have died with Christ and they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 10:47-48, Rom. 6:4).

- B. **Holy Communion:** The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements (bread and the fruit of the vine) is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corth. 11:26), and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corth. 11:26) and is enjoined in all believers "till He come!"

7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost:

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, 8, 1 Corth 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit {John 7:37-39, Acts 4:8}, a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43, Heb 12:28), and intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work {Acts 2:42}, and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost. (Mark 16:20).

8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost:

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2: 4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corth. 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

9. Sanctification:

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil and of dedication unto God {Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Thess. 5:23, Heb. 13:12}. The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; 8:1-2, 13; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12-13; I Peter 1:5).

10. The Church and Its Mission:

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven (Eph 1:22-23, 2:22, Heb 12:23). Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

- A. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8, Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16).
- B. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Corth 12:13).
- C. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph 4:11-16, 1 Corth 12:28, 14:12).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason for being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

- A. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16: 15-20, Acts 4:29-31, Heb 2:3-4).
- B. Adds a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God (I Corth 2:10-16, 1 Corth 12-14).
- C. Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ (Gal. 5:22-26, 1 Corth. 1-4:12, Eph. 4:11-12, 1 Corth 12:28, Col. 1:29).

11. The Ministry:

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the three-fold purpose of leading the Church in:

Evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20).

Worship of God (John 4:23-24).

Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph. 4:11-16).

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12. Divine Healing:

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers (Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 8:16-17, James 5:14-16).

13. The Blessed Hope:

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thess. 4:16-17, Rom. 8:23, Titus 2:13, 1 Corth. 15:51-52).

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ:

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5, Matt. 24:27,30, Rev. 1:7, 19:11-14, 20:1-6) . This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezek. 37:21-22, Zeph. 3:19-20, Rom. 11:26-27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isa.11:6-9, Psa. 72:3-8, Micah 4:3-4).

15. The Final Judgement:

There will be a final judgement in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 19:20, 20:11, 21:8).

16. The New Heavens and the New Earth:

"We according to His promise... Look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:21-22).

Article 5: Ordinances

Section 1: Water Baptism

The ordinance of Baptism by immersion in water (Matt 28:19) shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins and who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12).

Section 2: The Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corth. 11:23-26).

Article 6: Membership

Section 1: Membership Eligibility

Membership in this Assembly shall be open to all those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who voluntarily subscribe to its tenets of faith and agree to be governed by its constitution and bylaws as herein set forth. Those individuals eligible for membership who shall desire to become members of this church shall make written application to the pastor. The Church Board shall have the right and authority to determine the eligibility and acceptability of all applicants for membership by majority vote. Those approved for membership by the Church Board shall be received into the Church publicly at any of its regular services, and their names thereupon added to the Church membership roll. No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before an annual business meeting or a special business meeting.

Section 2: Voting Membership

All those who meet the scriptural standards for membership and whose names appeared on the original membership roll of the Assembly, at the time the Assembly was first organized together along with those names which shall be added from time to time, shall constitute the legal voting membership of the Assembly (provided they are sixteen years of age or over, that they regularly attend the means of grace and take part in the services, that they are living consistent Christian lives and are in agreement with our distinctive testimony).

Section 3: Junior Membership

Junior membership shall be available for young people under 16 years of age who give evidence of the new birth, having received Christ as personal Savior, and who meet the usual qualifications for membership established by this Assembly and are approved by majority vote of the Church Board. The purpose of such a roll shall be to assist in creating a sense of belonging among the young people. Although not entitled to a voting privilege, they shall have floor privileges at business meetings. Members under sixteen (16) may be transferred to voting membership upon reaching their sixteenth (16th) birthday upon approval of the Church Board.

Section 4: Inactive Membership

Enrolled members who shall without good cause absent themselves from the services of the Assembly

for a period of three consecutive months and who cease to contribute of their means to its support, who may be out of harmony with its teachings or its ministries, or who shall be under charges for misconduct, or who may have fallen under condemnation through sinful or worldly practices, shall be considered as inactive members and shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by the Church Board.

Section 5: Honorary Members

Honorary members shall consist of those members who have entered the ministry as District Officers, Pastors, Evangelists, Missionaries, Religious Educators, those serving in the Armed Services, those away at college, shut-ins, or those absent for extended period with good cause, which makes it impossible to serve as active members. Honorary membership recognition shall continue as long as the member maintains a consistent Christian life, remains sound in doctrine and maintains a cooperative attitude toward the Home Assemble. Voting privilege may be granted at the discretion of the Church Board.

Section 6: Associate Members

The Church Board shall be authorized to make provisions for associate (nonvoting) members when such persons may have to be absent from their home assembly for prolonged periods of time. This may include those from another area attending college in the area where this church is located.

Section 7: Pastor and Spouse

By virtue of office the Pastor shall be considered an active voting member of the church during his tenure. The Pastor's spouse shall become an active voting member simultaneously with the Pastor.

Section 8: Transfer Members

A member in good standing of another Assembly of God church, who satisfies the standards for membership eligibility specified in Section 1 of the Article VI (other than the attendance and support requirements), may apply for membership by submitting a letter of transfer from the pastor of the other assembly, upon approval of a majority of the Church Board.

Section 9: Discipline

- A. Grounds:** Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible (Matt. 16:19, 18:15-20, Luke 17:3, John 20:23, Acts 16:4, Eph.5:11, 1 Tim. 5:20, 2 Tim. 4:2, Heb. 13:17). The purpose of discipline is to promote repentance and restoration through exposing sinful behavior. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of the Assembly is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct of doctrinal departure from the Tenets of Faith of this Assembly. The discipline of pastors is administered by the District Presbytery.
- B. Procedure:** The Assembly will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matt. 18:15-20. This procedure consists generally of the following steps:
 - a. The Pastor or a designated member of the Church Board discusses the charges with the member in an effort to resolve the matter privately.
 - b. If the first step does not resolve the matter, then the member shall meet with the

Pastor and Church Board, who shall take whatever disciplinary action they deem necessary.

- c. In the event the member cannot accept the decision of the Pastor and Church Board, he/ she may appeal the matter to the membership of Assembly in a special business meeting called for that purpose. Only active voting members of the Church shall be permitted to attend such a special business meeting. The decision of a majority of the voting members present at such a meeting shall be final.

- C. **Resignations:** Members who are under discipline by this Assembly forfeit and waive the right to resign from membership in this Assembly. Resignations from membership are possible only by those members in good standing who are not under any disciplinary action.

Article 7: Government

Section 1: The Church Board

In General: The government of this Assembly shall be vested in the Church Board which shall consist of the Pastor and at least three Deacons and the Treasurer to the extent that such authority is not limited by district supervision as provided for under the bylaws of the District Council.

Section 2: Officers

A. In General: There shall be a Pastor, three deacons, a treasurer, a secretary and three trustees. The Pastor, by virtue of office, shall be the President and Chairman of the Church Board. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held simultaneously by the same individual.

B. Qualifications

1. **Pastor:** The Pastor shall be in good standing with both The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the District Council, holding a current fellowship card.
2. **Deacons:** The Deacons shall be persons of mature Christian experience and knowledge, who shall be expected to meet the requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6. Deacons shall be at least 23 years old and shall have been members of the Assembly for at least one year. They shall currently support the Church with their tithes and offerings, have a cooperative spirit and regularly attend church services. They shall not hold ministerial credentials.
3. **Secretary:** Inasmuch as the Secretary will be selected from among the Deacons, the qualifications will be the same.
4. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be an active voting member of this Assembly for at least one year immediately preceding election to office, and shall currently support the Church with tithes, and shall have a cooperative spirit and shall be faithful in attendance at church services.
5. **Trustees:** Trustees shall be active voting members of the fellowship. They must be persons who have shown themselves to be committed to the ongoing ministry of the assembly.

Article 8: Meetings

Section 1: Public Meetings

Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Pastor and the Church Board.

Section 2: Annual Business Meeting

There shall be an annual business meeting of the Assembly at which time the election of Deacons and Trustees, and ratifying vote of the next year's nominating committee members shall take place. The report of existing officers will also be presented as required. This meeting shall be held during the month of April, date to be selected by the Church Board. Due notice shall be given on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting.

Section 3: Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings of the Assembly may be called when necessary, after proper notice has been given by the Pastor or by the Secretary of the Assembly, provided the meeting has been agreed upon by a majority of the Church Board. Special meetings may also be called by petition having been signed by not less than one third of the active membership of the Assembly, the petition to be placed in the hands of the Pastor or the Secretary and an announcement made on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of meeting.

Section 4: Quorum

No record of any special or regular business meeting of the Assembly shall be made unless 20% or more active members shall be present to constitute a quorum. Exceptions to this rule are duly noted in this document where percentage of attendees is required to be greater.

Section 5: Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots shall be acceptable under the following conditions: an established work schedule that prohibits attendance of a business meeting, out of town business, an ongoing illness or a scheduled vacation. The member who qualifies to cast a ballot under these conditions shall register with the Secretary or his representative, at least two weeks prior, after which official ballots and/ or copies of issues to be voted upon may be obtained. Having executed the same in his own hand, the voter shall be responsible to see that they are received by the Secretary or his representative in a sealed envelope prior to the business meeting.

Section 6: Church Board Meetings

The Church Board shall meet monthly or as often as needed for the transaction of business for the Assembly, time and place to be determined by the Pastor. A quorum of at least a majority of elected Board officials is required to conduct business.

Article 9: Departments and Committees

The Assembly shall provide for the establishment of a Christian Education Department; Youth Ministries, and any other department or committee as the needs of the work may require. All such

departments and committees shall be subordinate to the Assembly and shall be under the general supervision of the Pastor and Church Board. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all departments or committees.

Articles 10: Finances

Section 1: Contributions

Funds for the maintenance of the Assembly shall be primarily provided by the voluntary tithes and offerings of the members and friends of the organization. Offerings shall be accepted by the Assembly at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the Church Board and shall be administered by the Treasurer under its direction (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor. 6:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

Section 2: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall run from January 1 to December 31.

Section 3: Auditing Committee

An auditing committee composed of two (2) persons shall be appointed by the Pastor with approval of the Church Board. The auditing committee shall audit all financial records of the Assembly and shall present its report, in writing, at the Annual Business Meeting. The auditing committee shall examine all insurance policies to determine the amount and kind of insurance in force and include this information in its report.

Section 4: Borrowing

Monies will not be borrowed by this Assembly without receiving a two-thirds (2/3) approval vote at a regular or special congregational business meeting. The Pastor and the Secretary of the Assembly shall certify that the same has been duly authorized and recommended by a vote of the Assembly.

Section 5: Handling of Offerings

All offerings shall be counted by at least two (2) authorized persons before the funds are removed from the church building. An offering receipts form shall be signed in duplicate by those counting the offering, with a copy going to the Treasurer. A record shall be kept in a hard-bound, permanent book of all receipts and disbursements of the local Assembly and of all individual giving. All funds shall be deposited in federally insured accounts.

Section 6: Pastoral Remuneration

- A. Regular Remuneration:** The Pastor shall be remunerated for his services by salary or by other means agreed upon by the Church Board and himself. The Church Board shall review the Pastor's remuneration at least annually.
- B. Reimbursement for Expenses:** The Pastor shall be given consideration by the Church Board for expenses incurred by his attendance at District Councils, General Councils, and other District functions by reimbursement of such expenses, or by an offering to help defray such expenses, according to the ability of the Church as determined by the Church Board.
- C. Severance Pay:** In the event a Pastor is removed from office by vote of the active voting membership of the Church, or shall fail to be sustained by a vote of the active voting

membership at the end of a term, he shall be given a minimum of two (2) months regular or average remuneration as severance pay, except in the case of moral turpitude as determined by the Deacons and District officials.

Article 11: Property

Section 1: Deeding, Disposition and Acquisition of Property

All property of the Assembly shall be deeded to the Assembly and held in its name. No real property shall be purchased, sold, leased or mortgaged or otherwise disposed of without the same shall have first been recommended by a vote of at least two-thirds of the voting membership who are in attendance at a regular meeting or special meeting of the Assembly which has been called for the consideration of the proposal. The Pastor and the Secretary of the Assembly shall certify in such conveyance, lease or mortgage, that the same has been duly authorized and recommended by a vote of the Assembly. Such certificate shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

Section 2: Defection

In the event defection shall occur from the tenets of faith of this Church as the same are stated in the statement of Fundamental Truths in the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, or from affiliation with the General Council of the Assemblies of God, any portion of the membership subscribing to and practicing the aforesaid tenets of faith and retaining membership with the Ellicott City Assembly of God, Inc. shall retain possession of, and title to, all properties of said Church with full rights thereto as provided in its Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3: Reversion of Property

In the event this Church shall cease to function for the purposes as declared heretofore in its Articles of Agreement and/ or the Articles of its Constitution, then after providing for the payment of its debt, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person or persons but all such remaining assets shall revert to, and be transferred to the parent body, The General Council of the Assemblies of God (a Missouri Corporation with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri). The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall have full authority to sell such property and to use the proceeds derived therefrom for the extension of the work of the Assemblies of God within the Potomac District and under the direction of the presbytery of said district. In the event of cessation if this Church, its Church Board shall within one (1) year thereafter transfer all properties and remaining assets to the General Council of the Assemblies of God in accordance with the foregoing provisions. If such transfer is not made within the time prescribed herein or if the aforesaid The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be unable or unwilling to accept the aforesaid transfer as an organization operated exclusively for religious purposes with tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, then disposition thereof shall be made by the court of the county in which the Church is located, provided that in such case proceeds of the dissolution shall be distributed to an organization or organization having purposes nearest the purposes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and which are organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which have established tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article 12: Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership of the Assembly in attendance at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The proposed amendment(s) must have been approved by the Pastor and Church Board and read aloud to the Assembly at the service held on the two consecutive Sundays preceding the business meeting where it/they will be considered. The quorum and notification requirements of Article VIII shall apply.

Bylaws

Article 1: Duties of Officers

Section 1: Pastor

The Pastor shall be a minister of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in good standing and shall be known to be in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of that body and those of the local Assembly. As the spiritual overseer of the Assembly, the Pastor shall direct all of its activities. He shall provide for services of worship and arrange for all special meetings, conventions, revival campaigns, etc. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the Assembly without his approval. The Pastor shall serve as President of the Corporation and Chairman of the Church Board. It shall be his responsibility to preside over the business meetings of the Church and the Church Board. He shall likewise serve as an ex-officio member of all departments and committees. (1 Tim 3: 1-7)

Section 2: Official Board (Pastor, Deacons, Treasurer and Secretary)

The Church Board is chosen to serve the Church and therefore shall act in all matters pertaining to the Assembly in its spiritual life and administrative affairs and in the ministry of its ordinances. It shall act in the examination of applicants for membership and also in the administration of discipline. All matters of church government shall be conducted by the Board. All legally binding documents will be signed by the Pastor, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Those parties will have the authority to act on behalf of the Assembly in such matters. In the event the Assembly is temporarily without a Pastor, or the Pastor is unable to be present, the Board shall be empowered to provide for its own Chairman from its membership in order to transact business for the Assembly.

Section 3: The Secretary

The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Board and of the annual and special business meetings of the Assembly. They shall keep a record of the membership of the Assembly and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of their duties.

Section 4: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be entrusted with all the finances of the Assembly which may be committed to him. He shall deposit all funds in a federally insured bank or other accounts if approved by a majority of the Church Board in the name of the Assembly. He shall disburse the same by check as authorized by the Church Board. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized account of the receipts and

disbursements. All accounts shall be reviewed under the direction of the Church Board periodically and at the end of each fiscal year. An annual financial statement shall be published at least one week prior to the annual church business meeting and presented at the meeting. The Treasurer shall issue a statement of all recorded giving to each donor at least annually. The Treasurer shall be Chairman of the Finance Committee which is appointed by the Church Board. The Treasurer, with the assistance of the Finance Committee, shall prepare an inclusive annual church budget and submit it to the Church Board in adequate time for its approval prior to the new fiscal year. The Treasurer shall also be the custodian of all the financial records of the Church.

Section 5: Trustee

The three trustees will comprise the Board of Trustees. As a Board, they shall elect one of themselves to serve as Chairman. The Chairman will serve in that role for a one-year term. If the elected chairman shall, for any reason, be unable to fulfill that one-year obligation, a replacement will be elected from the duly elected Board of Trustees. The Chairman shall report to the Pastor.

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for:

1. Ongoing oversight of the fellowship's building and grounds.
2. Planning, scheduling and supervision of maintenance functions of buildings and grounds.
3. Attentiveness to the ongoing and projected needs of the fellowship's real property.

Section 6: Fiduciary Duties

The law imposes several fiduciary duties on officers and Deacons, including the duties of due care and diligence, loyalty, avoidance of self-dealing, expending designated contributions for the purposes specified and not commingling personal and corporate funds.

Section 7: Temporary Church Board

Should irreconcilable differences arise between the Pastor and other members of the Church Board, destroying the unity and the successful ministry of the Assembly, the District Executive Presbytery along with sectional presbyter (the investigating committee), upon request from the Pastor or a majority of the Church Board members, shall investigate such differences. Upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the investigating committee they may declare the Church under District supervision. The term. "District supervision" means that the investigating committee has the authority to:

1. Suspend the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church.
2. Suspend the Church Board.
3. Reclassify the Church as a District Council affiliated church
4. Appoint and establish a temporary Church Board invested with authority to manage both the secular and ecclesiastical affairs of the Church until such strife shall cease.

If the Pastor is also the sectional presbyter, another presbyter shall be a member of the investigating committee in his place.

Article 2: Election, Appointments, and Vacancies

Section 1: Pastor

The pastor shall be elected to serve one year and, if elected the second year, it shall be for an indefinite period of time. He shall be nominated by the Church Board. Only one name shall be

voted upon at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot at the annual business meeting of the Assembly or at a special meeting called for that purpose. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all votes cast shall be required to constitute an election.

Section 2: Deacons

Deacons shall be chosen from the membership of the Assembly. Two nominees shall be presented for each position by the Nominating Committee. All incumbent Deacons will be nominated by the Nominating Committee unless request is made by the incumbent to the committee to have his name deleted. Election shall be by secret ballot at the annual business meeting and a majority of all votes cast shall be required. The term of office shall be two years. Two offices are to be filled one year and one office the next year on an alternating basis. In the event one or more offices remain to be filled after the first ballot, two nominees shall be considered for each vacancy. They shall be the nominees with the highest vote count from the previous ballot.

Section 3: Secretary

The Secretary shall be elected by the Church Board from among its members. The term of office shall be one year, and the Secretary may serve consecutive terms without limitations.

Section 4: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Church Board from among the active voting members of the Assembly. The term of office shall be one (1) year and the Treasurer may serve consecutive terms without limitation.

Section 5: Trustee

Trustees shall be chosen from the membership of the Assembly. They shall serve two years. Inasmuch as one trustee shall be elected one year and two the next, each year's ballot shall consist of multiple parties for each position to be filled. The list of nominees shall be presented to the membership for consideration by the nominating committee. Nominee(s) receiving the largest vote in ballot voting will be named trustee. Trustees will be permitted to serve consecutive terms without limitations.

Section 6: Director of Christian Education

The Director of Christian Education shall be appointed by and report to the Pastor and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the full membership of the Church Board. The Pastor and the Director of Christian Education shall have the right to appoint all officers, teachers and other workers of the Christian Education Department and, in consultation with the workers of the Department, determine all policies and programs of the Department.

Section 7: Associate Pastor

Associate Pastor shall be appointed by and report to the Pastor and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the full membership of the Church Board.

Section 8: Ministering Elders

Ministering Elders shall be appointed from the membership by the Pastor and approved by a majority vote of the Church Board. They shall report to the Pastor and term of office shall be two years. Duties of the group shall include body ministry, visitation, fellowship group ministries and

outreach ministries. Ministering Elders are not meant to be defined as in 1 Tim. 3, but may include any mature persons from within the membership. Individuals may serve consecutive terms without limitations.

Section 9: Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee of three members, including the Pastor, shall be appointed by the Pastor and ratified by the membership in the annual business meeting. One alternate shall likewise be appointed and ratified. It shall be the duty of this committee, under the Chairmanship of the Pastor, to present nominees for the offices of Deacon and Trustee in the annual business meeting following the one in which the Committee was appointed. The names of the nominees for Deacon and Trustee shall be presented on a prepared ballot at least one week in advance of the annual business meeting.

Section 10: Vacancies

- A. **Pastor:** The pastorate may become vacant through resignation, removal, death, or disqualification.
1. In the event of a Pastor's resignation, he shall submit the same in writing at least sixty (60) days prior to the resignation date.
 2. In the event a pastor has a serious charge preferred against him or his ministry has ceased to be effective and no provision has been made for the termination of his ministry, responsibility is vested in the Church Board to ask for the resignation of the Pastor at any of its regular business meetings. If such resignation is refused, the pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Church Board has been sustained by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by the district officer. When a vacancy in the pastorate shall occur, a supply shall be arranged for by the church Board until a pastor shall be chosen as prescribed in Section 1. In the case of a pastor's removal from office a report of such action shall be made to the District Council office.
- B. **Other Officers**
1. Any office may be declared vacant by an act of a majority of the membership of the Church Board at any of its business meetings. In the event that an office is vacated, the unexpired term shall be filled by appointment by the Pastor and the Church Board.
 2. Ground for such action shall be unscriptural conduct, departure from the tenets of faith, incompetency in office or any good and sufficient cause.
 3. Any incumbent under charges shall have the opportunity for a hearing of his case before the Assembly if he so requests.

Article 3: Membership

Section 1: The Standard of Membership

The standard of membership of this Assembly shall be:

- A. Evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration (the new birth).. John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:18-25.
- B. Evidence of a consistent Christian Life. Rom 6:4, 8:1-4, 13:13-14, Eph.4:17-32; 5:1-2; 15, 1 John 1:6-7.
- C. To fully subscribe to the tenets of faith as set forth in Articles N in the Constitution.
- D. Willingness to contribute regularly to the support of the Assembly according to his or her ability.

- E. A willingness to cooperate in the work of the Church and to be governed by its Constitution and Bylaws.
- F. Having reached at least 16 years of age.
- G. Having regularly supported and attended services of this Assembly for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to the date of application of membership.
- H. For those new to the Assemblies of God, attendance in a new members class to acquaint with our beliefs and mission.

Section 2: Reception of Members

- A. Persons desiring to become active members of the Assembly shall make the fact known to the Pastor, who shall examine the applicant according to the standard for membership.
- B. The Pastor shall present the name of those who apply for membership with his recommendation to the Church Board, who shall act upon said recommendation and render a final decision. All persons who shall have met the membership requirements and have been passed on favorably shall be received into the Assembly publicly at any of the regular Sunday services and their names inscribed in the roster.
- C. Letters of transfer from churches of like precious faith may be presented by prospective members, but each transferee shall file the usual application for membership.

Section 3: Revision of Membership Roll

The Church Board shall be authorized to revise the membership roll of the Assembly at least annually, but always at least thirty days in advance of the annual business meeting.

Section 4: Transfer of Membership

Members in good standing who desire to transfer to another church of like precious faith may apply for a letter which shall be granted on the approval of the Pastor and the Church Board, said letter to be signed by the Pastor or Secretary of the Assembly.

Section 5: Discipline of Members

A. Reason for disciplinary action shall be as follows:

1. Absence from the services of the Church without a valid excuse for a period of three consecutive months.
2. Unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the tenets of faith, teachings and standards to which the Assembly subscribes (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; Gal 1:8-9; Titus 3:1-14; 2 Thess 3:6-15).
3. A life of open sin (Matt 18: 15-17).

B. Suspension and Restoration

1. Every reasonable measure shall be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the church staff and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Restoration rather than punishment should be the guidelines which governs the attitude of one member toward another.
2. When charges are brought against a member giving reason for disciplinary action and subsequent investigation indicated the charges to be well founded, he/she shall be suspended from active membership by the Church Board and his/her name placed on the inactive roll pending a final decision in the case. The member shall be notified of this action

by letter.

3. The Church Board shall delay a final decision in the case of a member under charges for a reasonable length of time, thus giving an opportunity for repentance and restoration in the spirit of James
4. 5:19-20. Should the member manifest a repentant spirit and request restoration, the Church Board shall be empowered to restore him/her, should they feel the action is justified.

C. Dismissal

In the event an inactive member shows no interest in restoration to active membership after a reasonable length of time, the Church Board shall instruct the Secretary to remove his/her name from the roll and notify the person of this action.

D. Appeal

Any member whose name is removed from a given membership classification shall have the right to appear before the Church Board to show just cause why the original decision should not prevail. Should the position of the Church Board remain unchanged thereafter, the person in question may then request a hearing before the membership of the Assembly. A majority of all votes cast shall be required to sustain the action of the Church Board, and the decision of the membership shall be considered final.

Article 4: Annual Business Meeting Agenda

The regular order of business for the annual meeting of the Assembly shall typically include:

1. Devotional
2. Reading of Previous Minutes by Secretary
3. Report of Treasurer
4. Report of Committees
5. Unfinished Business
6. Election of Officers
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

Article 5: Amendments

The bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the Assembly by a two-thirds (2/3) vote for the membership present.