

Church Constitution.

Draft

Article 1. Name

The legal name of this nonprofit organization shall be _____—herein referred to as “this church.”

Article 2. Authority and affiliation

The congregation is the governing body of this church, in the manner described herein.

This church shall be affiliated with the _____ through _____ district and shall send delegates to their conferences and support their endeavors for the furtherance of the gospel in the measure that this church officially decides.

Article 3. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to glory Christ and do what he would do, obeying His Great Command to love and His Great Commission for the world.

Article 4. Statement of Faith

Print the adopted statement.

Article 5. Membership

The membership process for those who are trusting Jesus Christ as Savior *and have been baptized (?)* will be defined each year by the board of the church, as to classes and statement of faith and commitment to the church.

Article 6. Property

The church shall have the authority to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the United States of America and the State of _____ and is deemed positive for the purpose of this church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.

(May need to add a statement about possible dissolution and where the property would go....)

Article 7. Amendments

This church may make any change in the constitution or bylaws which may seem necessary, but such changes must be submitted to the church membership by the church board in a written form at least three weeks before the proposed meeting or voting time. Such amendments can be proposed only with a 2/3 vote of the board and can be adopted only with a 2/3 majority vote of the membership.

Church bylaws

Article 1. Membership

Eligibility: any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and whose character and conduct are in accord with his or her confession, and who subscribes to support the above statement of faith, and who is willing to support this church in attendance and prayers and material means, may request membership in this church.

Process: the process for joining the official membership shall be prescribed by the board of the church and then reviewed annually. It shall be published as necessary.

Conduct: members are asked to abide by a covenant of membership that includes the following: trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, commitment to honor our statement of faith and never teach in contradiction to it, and faithful support of the church. Members are asked to maintain a biblical lifestyle that gives a positive picture of faith in Christ.

Our restoration-discipline policy: all members of this church are expected to live in accord with this churches statement of faith and lead a lifestyle that is exemplary of a Christ-follower as presented in scripture. In the event that a member begins to live in a way that brings disrepute upon himself or herself and the church, leaders of the church will follow steps to restore that person to the fellowship in Christ — those steps will be defined and reviewed each year by the board. This policy will be made known to each person in any membership process.

Article 2. Government and leadership

The Word of God

Our ultimate authority for the church is the Word of God, as revealed in the clear guidelines for the church in the Bible.

The congregational membership

We are congregational in that our membership as a corporation owns our property and votes as a membership on the largest issues of church decisions at an annual meeting or at a specially called meeting of the members with clearly stated purpose:

- * call of the senior pastor
- * call of the members of the board of oversight
- * purchase or sale of real property and building programs
- * constitution and bylaws adoption or changes
- * our annual budget

All other matters of the church and issues not directly addressed by these bylaws will be conducted under the leadership and supervision of the pastor and the church board.

The board of oversight

The board of oversight shall include the senior pastor and at least five spiritual men affirmed by the congregation for a three-year term beginning at the annual meeting. They shall choose a chairman from among them, and a vice-chair.

A member of the board may serve only two consecutive terms. Terms shall be staggered so that approximately 1/3 of the members of this board begin terms each fiduciary year of the church.

The responsibilities of the board as the guardian of the ministry policies of the church for all ministries of the staff and volunteers include these areas:

Foundations: statement of faith, constitution, bylaws, discipline process.

Any changes in these areas shall first be approved by a two-thirds vote of this board and then, except for the discipline process, the same percentage of the membership at a duly-called membership meeting.

Resources: finances, buildings and property or capital, volunteers, missions dollars and salaries.

As a part of this area, the board will present an annual budget for approval by the congregation. They will also appoint a finance committee that reports to them, and that monitors and gives advice on all financial procedures and reports. This committee will include at least two from the board.

They will also appoint a building-capital team of volunteers to make recommendations for purchases of over \$1000 to the church board, and to help with policies and procedures for the care and maintenance of the building and properties.

Guidelines: church-wide ministry policies, pertaining to all people and staff of the church.

The board and staff shall keep a policy book for all procedures and values to be followed by the church and its staff and volunteers.

Goals: mission, long-term vision, culture of the church emphasis on core values.

The church board has oversight over the four sides of this ministry field, and the pastors have oversight of the Sunday and weekday ministries, always following policies and goals approved by the board.

The Pastor

A. The pastor, as well as all other designated teachers and leaders of this church, must be of irreproachable Christian character, having a “good report” (I Timothy 3:1-3).

B. The pastor shall be the spiritual and ministry leader of the church, serving within the clear “boundaries” (the four areas) set by the board of oversight. He will be ex-officio member of all of the ministry teams, be the leader of the pulpit ministry, and serve and represent the church with grace and truth. The pastor shall institute a plan of discipleship, and one of pastoral care for needs, and be an example to the people.

He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and a voting member of the board.

C. The pastor shall represent the church in this community and in the district and national ministries of _____

D. The pastor and pastor's spouse, if any, shall become members of this church by virtue of acceptance of the call.

E. The pastor shall be chosen by a three-fourths majority vote at any regular or special business meeting of this church. He shall be called for an indefinite period of time and two months notice must be given by the pastor or by this church for the termination of his ministry.

G. A meeting of the membership to consider the resignation or dismissal of the pastor may be called by a two-thirds vote of the board. The announcement of this meeting must be given no less than ten days prior to the meeting and must specify the purpose of the meeting when the matter of dismissal is considered. The church members shall vote by written ballot and a two-thirds vote of confidence by those present and voting is required to retain the pastor.

Pastoral Assistants

Full-time ministry positions shall be chosen by the pastor and the board, by means of a procedure reviewed annually. Full-time pastors must also receive a two-thirds vote of the membership.

They may be dismissed by the board at the recommendation of the pastor.

Position descriptions should be approved by the board before filling any position. This description should become part of the policy and procedures.

All full-time ministry positions shall work under the supervision of the pastor or his designee, with a clear system of reporting to the senior pastor. They shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

Interim pastor

In the absence of the senior pastor, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the board for an agreed upon period of time to perform specific functions or duties identified by the board subject to the congregation-approved budget allocation. The congregation shall be informed of any such appointment(s).

Other staff

All non-pastoral staff positions, including support staff and interns, shall be established by the board, provided the budget is not increased in full. Positions requiring an increase in the total budget of this church shall require approval by the members at a regular or special meeting. All non-pastoral staff shall be chosen and dismissed by the pastor, with approval of the board.

Position descriptions should be written and approved by the board before filling any position. This description should become part of the policy and procedures.

All other staff shall work under the supervision of the pastor or his designee. They shall serve until such time as they resign or are dismissed. The pastor, or his designee, shall provide an annual written review of performance for each staff person through a mutually agreed upon evaluation form and procedure.

Volunteer member-ministers

The pastor or those he designates may appoint teachers and group leaders and leaders and teams of ministry for the various ministries of the church. Teachers of the Bible and leaders of ministry teams shall sign and live by a leaders agreement that is part of the approved policies of the church, adopted by the board.

Committees for selection of pastor and board

Senior pastor search committee

When there is the need for a senior (lead) pastor, a search committee of at least seven shall be appointed by the board to do an extensive search for the pastor, with the goal of presenting the best candidate to the board. If the board affirms with a 2/3 vote the selection of the search team after their own research, the adopted and extensive introduction to the church before they vote at a members meeting called for that purpose at least two Sundays before the vote.

An 80 % vote of the membership shall be needed for the call, for an indefinite period.

Board nominating committee

The senior pastor shall chair a nominating committee of at least seven others —one or two outgoing board members, two or three appointed by the board, and three people selected by the membership at the previous annual meeting — to submit names for affirmation for the board of oversight. A 75 % vote of affirmation is needed for the three-year term.

Article 3. Members meetings

The annual members meeting to adopt the budget, affirm board members, and care for any matters than need congregational approval shall be held at approximately the same time each year and always have at least a month of notifications including mailings and Sunday announcements.

Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the board with at least two weeks notice.

They shall present names to the congregation at the annual meeting -- names approved by the board also and to receive affirmation votes of at least two-thirds of the members at the annual meeting.

Section 6.01 -- Commissions

I would delete this whole section to be consistent with your practices and and the rest of the constitution.

Section 6.02 Committees or Ministry Teams

The board or pastors may appoint ministry teams to carry out goals and ministries.

ARTICLE 7

INSERT UNDER THE POLICIES PART OF THE FOUR AREAS OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES?

ARTICLE 8 -- SAME

ARTICLE 9 -- SAME