

GOSPEL CITY CHURCH

Bylaws

Revised and Restated

Adopted on Wednesday, September 14, 2022

and

Amended on Wednesday, October 23, 2024

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Preamble

In submission to Christ the Lord and His authoritative Word, the Elders and Pastors of Gospel City Church, Inc. ordain and establish the following articles for the promotion of unity in the Church body and the spreading of the gospel of Christ to the world.

Article I. Articles of Faith

1.1 Statement of Mission

This Church exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Our focus is to honor God by fulfilling the mission the Lord gave His followers to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to follow Him (Matthew 28:19-20; Colossians 1:28-29). This Church aims to accomplish this mission through our Four Pillars:

- proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology (2 Timothy 4:2);
- lifting high the name of Jesus through worship (John 4:24);
- believing firmly in the power of prayer (Colossians 4:2);
- sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness (Ephesians 6:19-20).

Our obedience to the Lord's command is revealed in our lives as we glorify Him, gather with other believers, grow in our faith and spiritual maturity, and go tell others the good news of the gospel.

1.2 Doctrinal Statement

This Church is committed to our Doctrinal Statement, which is publicly available through the Church's website or physically upon request from the Church office. The Doctrinal Statement may only be amended by consensus of the Council of Elders.

Our Doctrinal Statement includes our convictions about the biblical definitions of marriage, sexuality, and gender.

This Church affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this Church and any related celebrations or activities allowed in its facilities shall be for unions that meet the standards named in the Doctrinal Statement, and further, that Church ministers and staff engage only in marriage ceremonies in keeping with this Church's adopted biblical and theological definition of marriage.

Additionally, to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Members and the community, all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, are Members of the Church, or who serve as volunteers, shall abide by and agree to the Doctrinal Statement, including these convictions on marriage, sexuality, and gender, and conduct themselves accordingly.

Article II. Name and Legal Status

2.1 Name, Address, and Location

The name of this corporation is Gospel City Church, Inc. (herein referred to as the “Church”). The Church’s primary mailing address is 52277 Hickory Road, Granger, IN 46530.

2.2 Corporate Office

The Church shall maintain a registered agent and a registered office within the State. The Church may have other offices within or without the State and need not be identical with the office of the registered agent in the State. The address of the registered office and registered agent may be changed from time to time by the Council of Elders.

2.3 Affiliations

The Church, recognizing Christ as its Head and the Scripture as its only rule for faith and practice, shall not be subject to any other authority. It may associate in fellowship with those of like faith and practice and may declare itself in agreement with others in a common cause, but under no circumstances shall such association be construed as bringing the Church under the authority of any such person, group, or body.

2.4 Nonprofit Status

The Church is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Indiana so long as such ruling remains valid and applicable to the Church in accord with Scripture. The Church is exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

2.5 Dissolutions and Mergers

The voluntary dissolution or merger of this Church shall require three fourths majority vote of the Council of Elders with affirmation by a simple majority vote of the Members in attendance, with written notice of at least 20 and not more than 60 days prior to the voting meeting. In the event of a voluntary dissolution of the Church, the net assets of the Church shall be distributed to one or more nonprofit organizations; the distribution shall be in accordance with a passing vote of the Council of Elders. In the event of a merger with another Church, then the net assets of the Church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.

Article III. Membership

3.1 Purpose

The New Testament uses the word “church” (literally “assembly”) to refer to two different gatherings: (1) The heavenly gathering made up of all believers from all time (the Universal Church), and (2) earthly gatherings consisting of believers in a specific time and place (the local Church). When the Bible refers to the local Church it considers individual Members to be united to a particular body (Romans 12:4-5), it

exhorts undershepherds to oversee a distinguishable flock (1 Peter 5:1-5), and it commands the regular physical gathering (Hebrews 10:25). Therefore, in order to provide structured accountability for obedience to these commands, this Church shall formally recognize Church Membership.

3.2 Qualifications

Membership at this Church is available to all who profess faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, are baptized after their conversion, give credible evidence of genuine salvation, are willing to submit to the Scriptures as expressed in the Doctrinal Statement, and are eager to abide by the Membership Covenant.

3.3 Admission

Qualified, prospective Members shall complete all the requirements of Membership as defined by the Elders and Pastors, including a Membership course, a Membership application, an interview with one or more Elders or Pastors, and a period of review and affirmation by the current Members. Upon meeting the requirements of Membership, the Elders and Pastors shall approve new Members, whose Membership shall commence immediately upon approval. Subsequently, the Church shall be notified of each new Member's admission.

3.4 Membership Covenant

As disciples who are being transformed by the gospel, Members commit to:

- submit to the teaching and authority of Scripture and the Lordship of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:14-17);
- pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through consistent participation in the spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1, Acts 17:11, John 15);
- consistently participate whenever the Church body gathers for worship, fellowship, and prayer (Hebrews 10:24-25);
- participate in the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper (Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25);
- steward the resources God has given them to edify the Church, such as: time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11);
- welcome and submit to the loving leadership and care of the Elders and Pastors (Hebrews 13:17);
- live in a manner worthy of the Gospel (such conduct includes the Spirit-empowered pursuit of personal holiness, confession and repentance of sin, relational harmony, and evangelism) (Philippians 1:27);
- maintain unity in mind and purpose with the body of Christ under the headship of Christ and aligned with the mission of Gospel City Church (Ephesians 4:3, 1 Peter 3:8);
- love, serve, minister to, and be personally invested in the holiness and spiritual health of fellow covenant Members of the Church (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2, Acts 2:42-47);
- make every effort to resolve conflict among fellow Members according to biblically-based principles, as outlined in Article IX below;

- respect the process of Church discipline and restoration (Matthew 18:15-20), as outlined in Article VIII below; and
- Communicate intentions to terminate membership at Gospel City Church to a Pastor, Elder, or the Church office.

3.5 Meetings

In addition to Sunday gatherings, the Council of Elders shall have the authority to call Member meetings whenever deemed appropriate.

3.6 Termination of Membership

In addition to removal through Church discipline, possible reasons for termination of Membership include: moving to a different city, moving to a different Church, or death. Members may request to terminate their Membership by notifying an Elder, Pastor, or the Church office in writing. The Elders and Pastors shall have the authority to refuse a Member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to a different Church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

Article IV. Elders and Pastors

4.1 Purpose

Scripture ordains the primary weight of leadership in the local Church to the office of Elder (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17). Therefore, this Church shall be governed by a plurality of Elders and Pastors (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). Elders and Pastors are to lead by shepherding the flock, ministering the Word to the flock, providing an example of Christ-like character for the flock, and submitting to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd of the flock.

4.2 Nomenclature

Scripture uses the terms Elder, Overseer, Pastor, Bishop, and Shepherd synonymously (Acts 20:17-28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Titus 1:7-9) to describe one and the same office. However, for the purposes of contextualization and role distinction within this Church, the following terms are used to describe this office:

- *Elder*: Staff and non-staff men who have been called to the office of Elder/Pastor and have been so titled. While all Elders have spiritual authority and are involved in shepherding and governing the Church, not every Elder may serve on the Council of Elders.
- *Pastor*: Staff men who have been called to the office of Elder/Pastor, are so titled, and have been officially ordained for vocational ministry. While all Pastors have spiritual authority and are involved in shepherding and governing the Church, not every Pastor may serve on the Council of Elders.
- *Council of Elders*: A subset of the Elders and Pastors commissioned to serve as the Board of Directors, per the requirements of Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

4.3 Qualifications

The qualifications for Elder and Pastor are limited to Members who are biological men, who meet the spiritual and moral qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, and Titus 1:6-9, who evidence a calling from God to the office of Elder/Pastor, who affirm the Doctrinal Statement throughout their term, and who receive confirmation of calling from both the Elders and Pastors and the individual being considered.

4.4 General Responsibilities

Elders and Pastors are entrusted with the responsibilities of teaching the Word (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 5:17, 2 Timothy 2:2), governing (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 1 Timothy 5:17), praying (Acts 6:1-4, James 5:14), and caring for (1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28, James 5:13-15) the Church on the foundation of the Word. These responsibilities are typically carried out through:

- The public ministry of the Word, through preaching and teaching;
- The private ministry of the Word, through counseling and personal discipleship; and
- Shepherding and overseeing God's Church, through governing the Church, nominating Pastor, Elders, and Deacons for consideration and affirmation, praying for the Church, specifically praying for sick Members, taking a personal interest in Member's souls, equipping Members for ministry, stewarding the resources of the Church, and providing an example of Christ-likeness (Acts 6:4, James 5:13-15, Hebrews 13:17, Ephesians 4:12, Acts 11:29-30, Titus 1:5-9).

More specifically, the Elders and Pastors at this Church shall be responsible to oversee the ministry, teaching, doctrine, direction, Membership, discipline/restoration, operations, and finances of the Church.

4.5 Nomination, Installation, and Tenure

The Elders and Pastors shall prayerfully consider God's direction for installing new Elders and Pastors, and regularly evaluate the Church's needs and candidates for Eldership and/or Pastorship. This also includes prayerful consideration for installing a Lead Pastor, who shall be the "first among equals" amongst the Elders and Pastors and shall provide leadership amongst the Elders and Pastors as well as the Church, under the oversight of the Elders and Pastors.

If qualified and validated by unanimous vote of the Elders and Pastors, a designated Elder or Pastor shall announce to the congregation the nomination of an Elder or Pastor candidate, highlight the biblical qualifications for Eldership as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, and Titus 1:6-9, and in keeping with the biblical teaching of Matthew 18:15-20, invite them to speak directly to the candidate to address any known issue that would hinder his fruitful service to the Lord. Following a two week period of affirmation, if nothing objectionable is communicated directly to the candidate, any Elder or Pastor, or extended Church leadership, the Elders and Pastors shall publicly install the new Elder or Pastor through laying on of hands and prayer.

The term of service for an Elder at this Church shall commence the month of his public installment, and he shall hold office for three (3) years, or until his successor is elected. After serving a full three (3) year term, the Elder shall be eligible for nomination and re-election, unless the Elder no longer meets the criteria set forth in Article 4.3. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms served, although it is advisable that after serving multiple terms, an Elder, in dialogue with the Elders and Pastors, consider taking a one (1) year sabbatical prior to being nominated for another term.

The term of service for a Pastor at this Church shall commence the month of his public installment, and he shall hold pastoral office indefinitely, as long as he remains employed by the Church.

4.6 Resignation

While all Elders and Pastors are expected to serve the duration of their term of service, extenuating circumstances may merit premature resignation (e.g., inability to carry out Elder duties, physical locale changes, or no longer aspiring to be an Elder). An Elder or Pastor may resign from office at any time by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Council of Elders. Upon formal acceptance, the resignation shall be considered effective immediately, or at a mutually agreed-upon date.

4.7 Removal for Non-Disciplinary Reasons

An Elder's or Pastor's term of service may be terminated by dismissal for non-disciplinary reasons (e.g., no longer being able to carry out his responsibilities or a change in Church needs), but only upon consensus (as defined in Article 4.14) of the Council of Elders, effective immediately or at a mutually agreed-upon time. Persons under consideration for removal shall not be counted for the purpose of establishing quorum nor have any vote in such proceedings.

In the event that the dismissed Elder/Pastor feels that the dismissal was unwarranted, he may appeal for mediation by a mediation panel. The mediation panel shall consist of at least three (3) Members, Elders, or Pastors from like-minded Churches, or any combination thereof. Panel members shall be selected by the Council of Elders, with the goal of finding participants whose impartiality is beyond dispute. The panel shall hear the perspective of said Elder/Pastor and of the Council of Elders and shall then present their evaluation to the Council of Elders. In the event that the Council of Elders still agrees (by consensus) that it is best for the Elder/Pastor to be dismissed, the decision shall stand and a written report of the mediation process shall be given to the Members by a representative of those involved in the mediation process. Those involved shall make every reasonable effort to complete the appeal process within 45 days.

4.8 Removal for Disciplinary Reasons

Recognizing their ultimate accountability before the Lord (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:3, cf. 1 Timothy 5:19-21), each Elder and Pastor shall be accountable to the Council of Elders and the Church for his life, his teaching, and his service to the Church.

In the event that any moral or doctrinal charges are raised against an Elder or Pastor, the Council of Elders will assume responsibility to investigate such allegations. If the charges appear credible (1 Timothy 5:19) and include any flagrant sin, major doctrinal error, or any charge that is harmful to the witness of the gospel or the Church, the Council of Elders shall take the following steps:

- The Council of Elders shall form a Task Force of at least three (3) individuals who may be Elders, Pastors, Deacons, and/or other Members to further investigate the claim(s).
- During the investigation, the Elder/Pastor in question shall be placed on temporary leave. (During this time, a Pastor shall continue to be paid as a staff member of the Church.)
- The Task Force shall bring the results of its investigation to the Council of Elders who, after providing the accused with an opportunity to speak for himself, shall make a determination of the guilt or innocence of the accused according to the criteria of Scripture, without showing partiality (James 3:1, 1 Timothy 5:19-21).
- A consensus vote (as defined in Article 4.14) of the Council of Elders shall be necessary in order to find an Elder/Pastor guilty of charges. Persons under consideration for removal may not be counted for the purpose of establishing quorum nor shall they have any vote in such proceedings.
- If an Elder/Pastor is found guilty and believes the findings were unjust, he may appeal for mediation by a mediation panel. The mediation panel shall consist of at least three (3) Members, Elders, or Pastors from like-minded Churches, or any combination thereof. Panel members shall be selected by the Council of Elders, with the goal of finding individuals whose impartiality is beyond dispute. The panel shall hear the perspective of the accused Elder/Pastor and of the Council of Elders and shall then present their evaluation to the Council of Elders. In light of the report, the Council of Elders shall vote again on whether the accused is guilty of the charges. In the event that the Council of Elders still finds the accused guilty (by consensus), the decision shall stand and a written report of the mediation process shall be given to the Members by a representative of the mediation panel. Those involved shall make every reasonable effort to complete the appeal process within 45 days.
- If the accused Elder/Pastor is found guilty, the consequences for such a finding shall be determined by the Council of Elders. Any action, up to and including immediate removal from office and/or staff, shall be determined by consensus of the Council of Elders. If the guilty Elder/Pastor is removed from office, the Council of Elders shall publicly rebuke him before the Members of the Church (1 Timothy 5:20).
- If the accused Elder/Pastor is found innocent, his temporary leave shall end and he shall be fully restored to ministry. The Council of Elders shall determine what communication, if any, will be made to the Church.

4.9 Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs due to resignation or removal, the Elders and Pastors may nominate a qualified Member (in accordance with Article 4.5) to fulfill the remainder of the term.

4.10 Council of Elders

As noted in Article 4.2, the Council of Elders is a subset of the Elders and Pastors commissioned to serve as the Board of Directors, per the requirements of Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). The Council of Elders are given latitude to nominate and install which Elders and Pastors are to serve on the Council of Elders. The number of Elders and Pastors serving on the Council of Elders shall be a minimum of 5 and may vary at any given point in time up to 15 by resolution of the Council of Elders without amendment of these bylaws. In order to maintain a healthy level of accountability and to protect against potential conflicts of interest, the majority of men serving on the Council of Elders shall be Elders. Should the Council of Elders have more Pastors than Elders, the Council of Elders shall determine which Pastors serve as voting members and which Pastors serve as non-voting members.

The term of service for an Elder or Pastor serving on the Council of Elders shall commence the month of his installment on the Council of Elders, and he shall hold office for three (3) years, or until his successor is elected. After serving a full three (3) year term, the Elder or Pastor shall be eligible for nomination and re-election. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms served, although it is advisable that after serving multiple terms, an Elder or Pastor, in dialogue with the Council of Elders, consider taking a one (1) year sabbatical from the Council of Elders prior to being nominated for another term. Resignation or removal from the Elder/Pastor office precludes service on the Council of Elders.

The Council of Elders shall appoint a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary who (under the supervision of the Council of Elders) may act as agents of the Church. The roles, responsibilities, and guiding principles of these officers are noted in Article V.

4.11 Task Forces and Committees

As deemed necessary, the Elders and Pastors may appoint two or more persons to serve as a special or standing task force for the purpose of conducting certain aspects of business not otherwise delegated. An ongoing, long-term task force can also be referred to as a committee. The authority of any task force or committee shall be submitted to the overseeing authority of the Elders and Pastors.

If any task force or committee will have delegated authority in excess of merely advising the Elders and Pastors, then that task force or committee shall consist of two or more Elders. All task force and committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the Elders and Pastors.

4.12 Meetings

The Council of Elders shall meet no less than once a quarter. In addition to regular meetings, an annual meeting of the Council of Elders is to be held at a pre-designated time by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, or the Secretary. The purpose of this meeting shall be to review the ministry year and hear from ministry leaders.

Special meetings (physical or electronic) of the Council of Elders may be called upon request by any member of the Council of Elders.

4.13 Notice

Notice of any special meeting of the Council of Elders is to be delivered no less than 5 days, and no more than 60 days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.

Whenever a meeting does warrant notice, such notice will be given through mail or email, and sent to the most recent known address of each individual Elder. Any Elder may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of an Elder at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice, unless his attendance is for the expressed purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because of the meeting's lack of proper notice. Neither the business to be transacted, nor the purpose of the meeting needs to be specified in the notice or waiver of such meeting unless specifically required by law or by these bylaws.

4.14 Quorum and Manner of Acting

A quorum is constituted if the following two factors are met:

- A majority of the Council of Elders are present
- Of that majority, a majority of non-staff Elders are present

A quorum is required for the transaction of business at any meeting (physical or electronic). If quorum is not constituted, a majority of the Elders/Pastors present may adjourn the meeting to another time without further notice.

It is the intent of the Council of Elders to employ the method of consensus as the most appropriate decision-making model. Consensus decision-making acknowledges mixtures and nuances of favor and opposition, and the need for a process of prayer, discussion, and discernment so that the Council of Elders reach a unified conclusion.

Consensus is achieved if the majority of Elders/Pastors are in agreement on an issue and those in the minority are willing to join the majority in public support of a decision. Once achieved for a given decision, consensus shall be documented in the meeting minutes. Consensus requires that each and every member of the Council of Elders publicly support the decision of the entire Council of Elders.

When the Council of Elders believe an issue is significant enough to require congregational input, the Elders will present the pertinent information to the congregation. The congregation shall have the opportunity to give input to the Council of Elders. It is the responsibility of the Council of Elders to prayerfully discern the direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Scriptures, while considering the pertinent issues at hand as well as the input from the congregation.

4.15 Informal Action

Any action requiring expediency by the Council of Elders may be taken without a meeting if consent is given in writing. Consent must set forth the action to be taken, must be signed by all voting members of the Council of Elders, and must be included in the meeting minutes of the next called Council of Elders meeting. Consent may be requested and given through electronic communication.

4.16 Compensation

Elders shall not receive any monetary compensation for their services on the Council of Elders or as part of the Elders and Pastors. Pastors may receive monetary compensation for their services as a part of the Church staff (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Article V. Officers

5.1 Officers

The officers of the Church shall be members of the Council of Elders and shall consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers as deemed necessary by the Council of Elders. Any two or more offices should not be held by the same person concurrently.

5.2 Election and Tenure

The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. As necessary, the Council of Elders shall appoint officers at its annual meeting. The officers of the Church shall be elected by a consensus vote of the Council of Elders and shall serve terms of three (3) years, as long as they remain a member of the Council of Elders. Officers may be re-elected at the end of the three (3) year term. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms served.

Each officer shall hold office until the first of the following occurs: a qualified successor is duly elected and qualified; the Elder dies, becomes incapacitated, or moves out of the area; or removal in the manner hereinafter provided.

Any vacancies occurring in any office to be filled by reason of any increase in the number of Elders or resignation or termination shall be filled by the Council of Elders as soon as practical. Any member so elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired commitment of their predecessor in office.

5.3 Removal and Resignation

Any officer or agent may be removed by the Council of Elders whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the Church is to be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of an officer or agent will not in itself create contract rights. An officer may resign at any time by delivering notice to either the Council of Elders, the Chairman, or the Secretary.

5.4 Duties

5.4.1 Chairman

The Chairman shall be the principal officer of the Church, and, subject to the control of the Council of Elders, shall preside at all meetings of the Elders as Chairman of the Council of Elders, unless otherwise stipulated by the consensus of the Council of Elders. The Chairman may sign, with the Secretary or any other officer of the Church authorized by the Council of Elders, such documents and deeds of the Church as

necessary or appropriate including, but not limited to, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Council of Elders has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof will be expressly delegated by the Council of Elders or by these bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Church, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed, and, in general, shall discharge all duties incident to the office of Chairman and such other duties as may be assigned by the Council of Elders.

5.4.2 Vice Chairman

The Vice Chairman shall have the following responsibilities: (a) be responsible for Elder recruitment, onboarding, development, and reappointment; (b) as necessary, review the governing documents of the Church and to determine consistency with applicable laws and actual or desired organizational practices, and, subject to approval by the Council of Elders, amend said governing documents; (c) review the performance of the Council of Elders and Task Forces, including the effectiveness of meetings, and make recommendations for improvement, as appropriate; (d) ensure timely and compliant elections of Council of Elders members and officers; and (e) in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Vice Chairman and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chairman or by the Council of Elders.

5.4.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall have the following responsibilities: (a) be responsible for the keeping of the minutes of the Council of Elders meetings in one or more books provided for that purpose; (b) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; (c) be custodian of the corporate records; and (d) in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chairman or by the Council of Elders.

5.4.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have the following responsibilities: (a) monitor the financial books of the Church; (b) keep regular books of account; (c) render to the Council of Elders from time to time, as may be required, an account of the financial condition of the Church; (d) on behalf of the Council of Elders, provide direction to the Finance Committee, and (e) in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties as may be assigned by the Chairman or by the Council of Elders.

5.5 Delegation of Authority

In case of the absence of any officer of the Church, or for any other reason that it may deem sufficient, the Council of Elders may, by consensus and communicated in written form, either delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any Elder or employee of the Church, for the time being, or may eliminate some or all of such powers or duties of such officer.

5.6 Compensation

Officers shall not receive any stated salaries for their services as officers, but by resolution of the Council of Elders, expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed for each regular or special meeting of the Council of Elders, provided that nothing herein contained is to be construed to preclude any officers serving the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation for that service.

Article VI. Deacons

6.1 Purpose

Scripture ordains the primary weight of serving the local Church is the office of Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Philippians 1:1, Acts 6:1-7). The Greek word for “deacon” (diakonos) means “servant.” Therefore, this Church shall commission numerous Deacons to serve the body, maintain unity, and facilitate various ministries of this Church.

6.2 Qualifications

Scripture lays out many similarities between the office of Deacon and Elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The qualifications for Deaconship are limited to Members who are men or women, who meet the spiritual and moral qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, who evidence a calling from God to Deaconship, who affirm the Doctrinal Statement throughout their term, and to those who receive confirmation of calling from the Elders and Pastors.

6.3 General Responsibilities

Deacons are to serve the Church by spotting and meeting tangible needs, protecting and promoting Church unity, and serving and supporting the ministry of the Elders and Pastors (Acts 6:1-7). In general, Deacons help facilitate the ministry and steward the resources necessary to do the ministry.

Since the needs of ministry and ministry resources are ever-changing, Deacon roles and job functions may change over time. Some examples of Deacon roles and job functions include, but are not limited to: executing the Church financial books and records; caring for the building and grounds; supplying the Communion and baptismal needs, as well as all other food and fellowship materials; administration of a benevolence fund for the manifold material needs of the people; readiness to step in during crises of all kinds; handling the greeting and welcoming ministries; and providing practical assistance in job hunting, housing matters, financial know-how, legal aid, childcare, etc. In general, Deacons would be ready to assist the Elders and Pastors of the Church in any service that supports and promotes the ministry of the Word.

6.4 Structure

Scripture does not ordain any governing responsibility to the office of Deacon. Therefore, Deacons shall serve under the authority and oversight of the Elders and Pastors, who are both in submission to Jesus, the Ultimate Servant of the Church

who gave his life as a ransom for many (Isaiah 42:1, Mark 10:42-45, Philippians 2:3-11, Romans 15:8).

There is no minimum or maximum number of Deacons to be commissioned. The number of Deacons and the job description of each Deacon may be determined by the Elders and Pastors in consideration of the gifts and needs of the congregation.

6.5 Nomination, Installation, and Tenure

The Elders and Pastors shall prayerfully consider God's direction for installing new Deacons and regularly evaluate the Church's needs and Deacon candidates. The process for nomination, election, and tenure shall follow the same process as for Elders, as outlined in Article 4.5.

6.6 Resignation, Removal, and Vacancies

The process for resignation, removal for non-disciplinary reasons, and vacancies shall follow the same process as for Elders, as outlined in Articles 4.6, 4.7, and 4.9. The process for removal for disciplinary reasons shall follow the process outlined in Article 6.7.

6.7 Moral Accountability

Recognizing their ultimate accountability before the Lord (1 Timothy 3:8-13), each Deacon shall be accountable to the Elders and Pastors and the Church for his or her life and service to the Church. In the event that any moral charges are raised against a Deacon, the Elders and Pastors shall administer Church discipline whenever it is biblically warranted. Should the need for Church discipline arise, the process shall proceed as outlined in Article VIII.

6.8 Compensation

Deacons shall not receive any monetary compensation for their services. Deacons who work on Church staff may receive monetary compensation for their services as a part of the Church staff.

Article VII. Church Staff

7.1 Pastoral Positions on Staff

When the Council of Elders believes that God is leading the Church toward hiring for a pastoral position on staff, whether hiring internally or externally, the Council of Elders shall act as the committee to find and evaluate pastoral candidates for that position. Within the nomination and installation guidelines of Article 4.5 and the compensation guidelines of Article 10.4, the Council of Elders may hire pastoral staff as long as the annual budget includes funds for such a position. The Council of Elders shall maintain final authority to hire Pastors.

In some cases, the Council of Elders may choose to formally nominate a man from outside of this Church to serve as a Pastor. In this case (after following the steps outlined in Article 4.5) he may be welcomed into Membership at the same time he is commissioned as a Pastor.

7.2 Other Staff Members

All Members are to do “the work of ministry,” and the Council of Elders may choose to appoint or recognize ministry leaders for a variety of ministry purposes and may choose to hire some people for internships or long-term staff positions. Unless otherwise specified, the qualifications for other ministry leaders and staff members shall be consistent with the qualifications noted for Deacons in Article 6.2. Within the compensation guidelines of Article 10.4, the Council of Elders may hire additional staff as long as the annual budget includes funds for such a position. The Council of Elders shall maintain final authority to hire directors, but the Council of Elders may delegate hiring authority of support positions for Pastors/directors to Church staff.

Additionally, for Church personnel who are not Pastors or Deacons, the Church reserves the right to terminate the employment of any existing employee who fails to display the staff core values and the expectations highlighted in the employee handbook.

7.3 Organizational Structure

The Church staff is afforded the latitude to organize themselves in a manner suitable for personal and corporate accountability, healthy personnel management, and efficient Church operations. This self-organization can include the establishment of a Leadership Team(s) composed of multiple staff members. It is recommended that a Leadership Team include the Lead Pastor, more than one Pastor who serves on the Council of Elders, and any staff critical to the healthy function of that team. Any staff Leadership Team shall not be considered a doctrinal, governing, or authoritative decision-making body separate from the Council of Elders. The organizational structure of this Church, including any Leadership Team, shall submit to the oversight and direction of the Council of Elders.

Article VIII. Church Discipline and Restoration

The Elders and Pastors shall be held accountable for how they shepherd the souls of those who are entrusted to them (Hebrews 13:17). Part of shepherding requires rebuking and disciplining sin. Scripture describes and directs a process of the Church disciplining unrepentant Members, with the primary aim of repentance and spiritual restoration of a brother or sister in Christ (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 2:6-11). Church discipline aims to demonstrate:

- Love for the individual, that he or she might be warned and with the aim that he or she would be brought to repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:10-17);
- Love for the Church, that its purity, health, and strength might be protected, since “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9);
- Love for the watching world, that it might see Christ’s transforming power, and that our witness would not be hindered, tarnished, or discredited;
- Love for Christ, that His Church might uphold his holy name, obey Him, and so glorify Him.

In accordance with the biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and in the spirit of love, a person who evidences such unrepentant sin shall be confronted

by one or more Members in an initial one-on-one meeting, followed by escalating engagement by Elders and/or Pastors. Where the steps of restoration and discipline are exhausted in cases of continued unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the Elders and Pastors shall consider removing a person from service and/or Membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may include a prohibition to attend Church services and events, depending on the circumstances. In addition, it might include public disclosure of removal from Membership and the circumstances leading to this decision to the Members of the Church. Those so disciplined shall in turn be restored to fellowship where the Elders and Pastors have determined that appropriate repentance has occurred.

The process of Church restoration and discipline is explained more fully in its *Church Restoration Guidelines*. Such resource provides additional explanation but shall not be incorporated into these Bylaws by reference, nor shall it replace the text of Article VIII above. In the event of any disagreement of the linked document with these Bylaws, the Bylaws shall prevail.

Article IX. Grievance Policy

9.1 Process for Resolving Grievances and Disagreements in the Church

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), Members shall make every effort to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblical principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the Church shall encourage the use of biblical principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the Church.

This approach to resolving disputes does not prohibit the involvement of secular authorities with regard to criminal activity or matters that jeopardize the safety of any person.

9.2 Process for Resolving Grievances with Elders and Pastors

In cases of serious concerns about the leadership of an Elder, Pastor, several Elders and/or Pastors, or the whole Council of Elders, the Council of Elders and other Members shall follow the steps outlined in our document, *Resolution Process for Grievances against Elders and Pastors*, which may be received by request from the Church office. The process shall begin with attempts for personal reconciliation and mediation within this Church, and shall allow for appeals to Christian mediation from outside this Church.

Article X. Financial Stewardship

10.1 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church is to begin on the first day of September each year and end on the last day of August.

10.2 Required Books, Records, and Audits

In striving to maintain integrity in all things (Proverbs 10:9), the Church shall be accountable for keeping correct and complete books and records of account, whether maintained in-house or third party (via independent licensed and bonded professional service firms).

The Church shall engage an independent, certified public accountant to conduct an annual audit, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, of the financial records of the Church. The auditor shall express an opinion on the financial statements presented in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. These financial statements are to include, but not be limited to, a statement of financial condition, a statement of activity, and a statement of cash flows and disclosures. The designated staff member who has oversight of the finances shall arrange for the audit with oversight from the Treasurer.

10.3 Annual Budget

An annual budget shall be approved annually by consensus of the Council of Elders. The annual budget shall be maintained by the designated staff member who has oversight of the finances, along with the aid and input of the Finance Committee.

10.4 Compensation and Conflicts of Interest

All staff compensation, including base salary and performance increases, shall be overseen and approved by the Compensation Committee, under the direction and authority of the Council of Elders. The Compensation Committee shall consist of at least the Chairman, the designated staff member who performs the role of an executive pastor, Treasurer and one (1) other non-staff Elder. Any staff member serving on the Compensation Committee shall recuse themselves from any discussions pertaining to their own compensation. The Compensation Committee may consult with the Finance Committee to obtain budgetary recommendations.

All Elders, Pastors, Deacons, and Church staff are responsible for avoiding potential conflicts of interest, in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy, available from the Church office.

10.5 Financial Operations

The day-to-day financial operations of the Church shall be overseen by the designated staff person who has oversight of the finances. This person serves under the direction of the Council of Elders and in collaboration with the Treasurer and Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee shall consist of at least the Treasurer, the Deacon of Finance, and the Church staff member responsible for finances. The Treasurer shall provide direction to the committee, on behalf of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders, along with the input of the Deacon of Finance, shall appoint the remaining members of the committee who shall oversee the day-to-day execution of the finance committee. The committee shall review, consider, and make reports and recommendations to the Council of Elders concerning the Church, including but not limited to: (i) budget planning and consultation; (ii) financial strategy and recommendations; (iii) financial policy review and recommendations; and (iv) discipleship engagement and financial training. The committee shall perform such additional duties as may be prescribed periodically by the Council of Elders. All Finance Committee members serve under the authority of the Council of Elders.

Additional information pertaining to the Finance Committee can be found in the *Finance Committee Charter*, available from the Church office.

10.6 Purchase or Sale of Assets

A purchase, lease, exchange, mortgage, pledge or other acquisition of assets or property of the Church greater than three-thousand dollars (\$3,000) not already approved in the annual budget shall be approved by the Council of Elders, in consultation with the Finance Committee, upon such terms and conditions and for such considerations, which may consist in whole or in part of the money or property, real or personal, as may be authorized by the Council of Elders.

A sale, lease, exchange, or other disposition of fixed assets or property of the Church shall be approved by the Council of Elders, in consultation with the Finance Committee, upon such terms and conditions and for such considerations, which may consist in whole or in part of the money or property, real or personal, as may be authorized by the Council of Elders.

10.7 Contracts

The Council of Elders may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

10.8 Seal

The Church shall not maintain a corporate seal.

Article XI. Indemnification

11.1 General

The Church shall provide indemnification subject to these Bylaws and as provided by IC 23-17-16-1 through IC 23-17-16-15 of the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1991.

11.2 Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, director, Elder, employee, or agent of the Church, the Church shall

provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim or allegation if the Council of Elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care of an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the Church, and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

11.3 Permissive Indemnification

At the sole discretion of the Council of Elders, the Church may also indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the Church's best interest and not unlawful.

Article XII. Administrative Provisions

12.1 Amendments to Bylaws

The Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new articles and bylaws may be adopted by a consensus vote of the Council of Elders present at any regular meeting or any special meeting of the Council of Elders called for that purpose. Notice of the proposed amendment (including the suggested text of the change) shall be given in writing to the Council of Elders at least 20 days before the meeting at which the vote thereon is to be taken, and shall identify the persons proposing the amendment. These bylaws shall be reviewed annually to ensure they are kept current.