

# The Bylaws of English Church (Draft 1.3)

## **ARTICLE I NAME**

This Church shall be known as \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

## **ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF FAITH**

This Church is committed to the Statement of Faith of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and distributed via the membership class. This Statement of Faith is hereby incorporated by reference into the church bylaws.

## **ARTICLE III STATEMENT OF MISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Church is committed to bring glory to God through the transforming of lives by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our passion is to be a church that is most effective in reaching and transforming our communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE IV CHURCH STAFF**

### 4.1 Lead Pastor

4.11 Qualifications The lead pastor shall be a man whose character and gifts conform to the biblical qualifications presented in I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-4.

4.12 Selection/Tenure The lead pastor shall be called for a five (5) year term of office. A two-thirds (66%) majority of all votes cast by the membership shall be the minimum required for a call to ministry.

4.13 Duties The lead pastor shall be responsible, along with the Pastoral Team and Elders, for shepherding the people of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and for overseeing its ministries. His primary duties will be to serve as a preaching/teaching elder (I Tim. 5:17, Eph. 4:11, II Tim. 4:2, and Titus 1:9), thereby “preparing God’s people for works of service” (Eph. 4:12). He shall be directly accountable to the Council of Elders, who will advise, assist, and evaluate him in his work.

4.14 Discipline In the event that discipline of the lead pastor becomes necessary, the Council of Elders will assume responsibility for the disciplinary process in keeping with scriptural instructions, particularly those in I Timothy 5:19-21.

### 4.15 Lead Pastoral Change

4.151 Vote for Change A vote for pastoral change may be called for by the Council of Elders or the lead pastor.

4.152 Pastoral Search Committee In the event that a new lead pastor is to be called, the Council of Elders shall appoint, with representation from the Council of Elders and Board, a Pastoral Search Committee which shall assume leadership in seeking a new lead pastor. The Council of Elders will, when appropriate, bring the recommendation to the Board and Church membership. For quorum and affirmative vote details, see 4.22.

4.153 Interim Pastor In the event the Church is making a change in lead pastor, the Council of Elders may appoint an interim pastor who shall serve for the ensuing year, or until a regular lead pastor is called. An interim pastor shall normally not serve longer than one (1) year.

## 4.2 Pastoral Staff

4.21 Qualifications The basic qualifications of any pastoral staff member shall be the same as for the lead pastor (4.11). In addition, the gifts and experience of the individual under consideration shall match the needs of the Church and the duties of the position.

4.22 Selection When a new pastoral staff position is needed, the Council of Elders will share the need and a proposed ministry description with the Board and membership. If the proposed position is approved by the Board, the Council of Elders will recommend a candidate to the membership for its affirmation. An eighty (80%) majority of all votes cast in the Board and two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast in membership shall be required for affirmation.

4.23 Tenure The term of service will be 4 years, and may be terminated by either the staff member or the Council of Elders along with the Board with a thirty (30) day notice, or at any time that is mutually agreeable. Eighty (80%) majority of all votes cast in the Board shall be required.

4.24 Duties A ministry description for all pastoral staff members shall be prepared by the Council of Elders in cooperation with the pastoral staff member.

4.25 Accountability All pastoral staff members are directly accountable to the lead pastor, and ultimately responsible to the Council of Elders.

4.26 Discipline See 4.14.

## ARTICLE V ELDERS

- 5.1 Composition \_\_\_\_\_ Church shall be governed by a Council of Elders made up of both vocational and lay elders as well as Chairman of the Board. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. "Double honor" (i.e. "first among equals") will be given to those who rule well especially in the areas of preaching and teaching (I Timothy 5:17). Pastors will be recommended for formal eldership by the standing Council and affirmed by the Board with an eighty (80%) vote and by the membership of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.
- 5.2 Qualifications The elders shall be men whose lives conform to the biblical qualifications presented in I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and I Pet. 5:1-4.
- 5.3 Selection/Tenure Each lay member of the Council of Elders shall be affirmed by the Board and membership for a four (4 ) year term. An eighty (80%) majority of all votes cast by the Board and two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast by membership shall be required for affirmation. A lay elder shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, after which he shall be ineligible for reaffirmation for at least one (1) year.

5.31 Selection Process

- (1) The Council of Elders, in awareness of leadership needs within the church, shall be regularly and prayerfully considering the qualification of particular individuals to meet those needs.
- (2) The Council of Elders will invite the Board to suggest additional possible candidates to be considered for service as an Elder. Eight weeks prior to the fourth quarter membership meeting, the Council of Elders will invite the membership to suggest additional candidates. These suggestions will need to be received at least five weeks prior to the fourth quarter membership meeting.
- (3) The Elders will review these submissions along with any individuals already under consideration. Personal interviews may be conducted as necessary.
- (4) After further prayerful consideration, the Elders shall present the names of the individuals they are recommending for Eldership to the Board. After affirmation by the Board, the Elders shall present the candidates to the membership two weeks prior to the membership meeting.
- (5) At the fourth quarter membership meeting, the membership will have opportunity to affirm or withhold affirmation of these individuals.

5.32 Commencement of Office Term The term of office shall commence on January 1<sup>st</sup> following the fourth quarter meeting.

5.33 Filling of Elder Vacancies If an Elder position is vacated midterm, the office shall remain vacant until the next fourth quarter meeting, when a qualified replacement shall be selected to serve out the remainder of the unexpired term. The partial term shall not be counted as time in office if the replacement is subsequently affirmed at the next regular election.

5.34 Coordinator Council of Elders shall elect, in the first meeting of each year, a coordinator from its own membership. The coordinator shall serve at all meetings of the Council of Elders and the membership.

5.4 Duties The Council of Elders is responsible for lovingly governing the church, teaching the Word of God and "tending the flock" as overseers (I Peter 5:1-3). Specifically, these responsibilities include:

- (1) giving themselves to diligent study and fervent prayer;
- (2) consistently offering their lives as examples to the flock;
- (3) developing contexts for both the equipping and the work of the saints in order to present them to God as mature in Christ;
- (4) mobilizing the church to the world through mercy and evangelistic ministry;
- (5) instructing and examining baptism and membership candidates;
- (6) admonishing and/or disciplining members when needed;
- (7) caring for the sick, elderly, hurting, non-participating, etc.;
- (8) promoting prayer within the fellowship;
- (9) presiding over and serving the communion elements at the corporate observance of the Lord's Supper;
- (10) supervising the distribution of the needy fund;
- (11) establishing strategic long-term goals and objectives for \_\_\_\_\_ Church;
- (12) clarifying and guarding church doctrine and/or practices, including the formulation of consequent church policies;
- (13) advising and evaluating the pastoral staff, including the preparation and/or revision of job descriptions;
- (14) appointing the Pastoral Search Committee when it becomes necessary to seek a pastor;
- (15) participating regularly and actively in the service and ministry of the church;
- (16) overseeing a training program to cultivate young men aspiring to leadership and to maintain an orderly succession of elders.

5.5 Meetings Generally, the Council of Elders shall meet at least once each month. Special meetings may be called by the lead pastor, or a majority of the members of the Council. Special meetings will require a three (3) day notice unless waived by a majority of the Council membership.

5.6 Quorum A majority of the Council of Elders membership shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE VI Board of Elders and Deacons**

6.1 The Board shall be responsible for conducting business meetings, coordinating ministry affairs, forming committees, and confirming Council of Elders' initiative.

6.11 Composition The Board of Elders and Deacons shall be composed of the lead pastor, deacons, pastoral team, and chairman.

6.2 Deacons

- 6.21 Qualifications A Deacon shall be a coworker who is qualified by the standards set forth in the Bible, agrees with the Statement of Faith and has served at \_\_\_\_\_ Church for over two years.
- 6.22 Selection/Tenure The term of a deacon is two years and, subject to Board's approval, renewable once to a total of four years. Each deacon shall be affirmed by an eighty (80%) vote of the Board and two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes casted by membership.
- 6.23 Selection Process The Council of Elders shall recommend a nomination committee for the Board to confirm. The membership will submit nominations to the committee for screening before a list of candidates is submitted to Board for approval and then to membership for affirmation.
- 6.24 Duties Deacons shall be responsible for worship, mission, education, fellowship, student ministry, property management, finance, and other ministries. New deaconship will be submitted for consideration by Council of Elders and then to Board for affirmation. No membership affirmation required.
- 6.25 Chairman The chairman shall be a member of the Council of Elders. In transitional times or special situation, the Council of Elders can nominate candidates from current Board or membership. The Council of Elders shall submit a list of candidates from current Board or membership. The Board shall elect a chairperson by an eighty (80%) vote and two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes casted by membership.
- 6.26 Chairman tenure The term of the chairperson is two years and subject to Board's approval. The chair is to coordinate all ministry departments, call and preside over Board meetings, and serve on Council of Elders.

## **ARTICLE VII MEMBERSHIP**

- 7.1 Qualifications When an individual is saved, he becomes a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Because he is united to Christ and the other members of the body in this way, he is therefore qualified to become a member of this Church. Members of this Church must be persons who give a clear testimony and evidence of saving faith in Jesus Christ. This includes baptism or willingness to be baptized. Because of the responsibilities and accountability involved with church membership, members must be at least (16) years of age.
- 7.2 Applications Applicants shall be expected to complete a preparatory course of instruction, complete appropriate application forms, and be interviewed by a Pastors or Elder, who shall then recommend to the

Council of Elders those who qualify for membership. With the Council of Elders' approval, applicants will become members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

7.3 Duties of Membership Members of this Church are expected to support this Church in fulfilling its mission (Article III) through the faithful stewardship of their skills, time, energy, and financial resources.

7.31 If members have concerns, they should communicate with the leaders prior to petitioning for a special membership meeting.

7.4 Discipline of Members All members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church are expected to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture. Such conduct includes moral purity, personal honesty, promotion of church unity and biblical fidelity. Members are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as they seek to emulate the character of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Rom. 8:28-29, 16:17-18; I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:3, 25, 5:18; II Tim. 3:1-17; Titus 3:10-11)

7.41 Purposes of Discipline The church is commanded to discipline its members when they continue in open and habitual sin. Church discipline has multiple purposes including the following:

- (1) encouraging the sinning member to repent, thus restoring fellowship with Christ and the church;
- (2) warning other members against such sin;
- (3) upholding and maintaining the moral purity and blameless testimony of the church.

(Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:1-13; II Cor. 2:6-11, 7:8-10; I Tim. 5:19-20; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15)

7.42 Process of Discipline Should any member depart from the standard of Scripture and engage in conduct which conflicts with biblical principles of holiness, the steps of discipline outlined in the Scriptures shall be followed as necessary to accomplish the purposes stated above:

- (1) private reproof of sinning member;
- (2) reproof before two or three witnesses;
- (3) public reproof before the Church;
- (4) termination of membership with possible disassociation and severance of fellowship.

The entire process of church discipline outlined above shall be carried out and enforced in a spirit of Christian love, care and sensitivity.

(Matt. 18:16-18; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 6:1; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 3:10).

7.43 Enactment of Discipline It is hoped that the preliminary steps of discipline outlined above will result in repentance on the part of the sinning member. However, if there is no indication of repentance after these steps are taken, the sinning person's membership shall be terminated. Such termination of membership shall be decided by the Council of Elders after due consideration and prayer. The

reason for termination shall be stated in a pastoral letter and delivered to the terminated member.

7.44 Agreement of Members to Submit to the Process of Church Discipline Every person who makes application for membership or maintains membership in this Church explicitly consents to submit to the process of church discipline outlined above.

7.5 Termination or Transfer Members in good standing moving from one location to another shall, at their request, be given letters stating their standing in the Church and indicating their termination of membership. A member failing to share in the fellowship and responsibilities of the Church for a period of one year without just cause shall, after due personal counsel, forfeit membership.

## **ARTICLE VIII CHURCH MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

8.1 Voting Membership All members of the Church shall be eligible to vote in the membership meetings.

8.2 Church Year The church year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

8.3 Regular Membership Meetings There will be at least one but no more than three regular membership meetings held each year. The meetings shall be held at a place designated by the Council of Elders.

8.31 Fourth Quarter Membership Meetings A membership meeting shall be held during the fourth quarter to adopt a church budget for the coming fiscal year and to transact any other necessary business.

8.4 Special Membership Meetings Special membership meetings may be called by the Council of Elders or by written petition containing the signatures of a quarter (25%) of the membership of the Church. All special meetings shall be held at a site designated by the Council of Elders.

8.5 Announcement of Membership Meetings

8.51 Public Announcement A public announcement of all regular membership meetings shall be made at least fourteen (14) days in advance. It shall be announced by a member of the Council of Elders in the Sunday worship service. The announcement will include the purpose of the meeting.

8.52 Special Meetings Special meetings may be called by giving public announcement of at least seven (7) days in advance. The announcement shall be made by a member of the Council of

Elders in the Sunday worship service. The announcement will include the purpose of the meeting.

8.6 Voting Policy

8.61 Eligibility All members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church shall be eligible to vote in church membership meetings.

8.62 Vote Required for Decision A majority vote of those members voting shall be required in all Church decisions and elections, except as specified elsewhere.

8.63 Quorum A quorum shall consist of no less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the membership.

8.64 Absentee/Proxy Voting There shall be no provision for absentee or proxy voting.

**ARTICLE IX CORPORATE OFFICERS**

The coordinator of the Council of Elders, the chairman of the Board and \_\_\_\_\_ shall serve as the corporate officers of the Church in legal matters.

**ARTICLE X AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended by three-fourths (3/4) majority vote at any regular or special meeting of the membership, providing announcement of the proposed revision has been made when the meeting is called.

