



# Trinity Fellowship

. . . an Evangelical Free Church

## Constitution and By-Laws

of the  
Trinity Evangelical Free Church  
of  
Clear Lake, Texas

dba Trinity Fellowship  
Friendswood, Texas

Adopted March 28, 1993

Revision to By-Laws adopted March 20, 1994

Revision to Constitution and By-Laws adopted March 13, 2005

Revision to Constitution and By-Laws adopted March 19, 2006

Revision to Constitution and By-Laws adopted March 27, 2011

### Revision History:

\* Originally adopted March 28, 1993.

\* Revision to by-laws March 20, 1994.

The purpose of this revision (which also affected the Articles of Incorporation) was to clarify the relationship between the elected officers and boards of the church and the board of directors. Article II, items I and J were added in their entirety.

\* Revision to Constitution and by-laws March 13, 2005

This revision changed the church name inside the document from Trinity Evangelical Free Church to Trinity Fellowship; changed the District name; changed 'elect' to 'affirm' for elders; changed the membership lists for the Discipleship and General Boards; and made several other corrections of an editorial and stylistic nature.

\* Revision to Constitution and by-laws March 19, 2006

This revision changed the Discipleship board to the elder board, added deacons, and re-structured the descriptions of qualifications, selection duties and dismissal for elders, deacons, officers, pastoral staff and ministry leaders, along with several other corrections of an editorial and stylistic nature.

\* Revision to Constitution and by-laws March 27, 2011

This revision incorporated the new Evangelical Free Church of America statement of faith and clarified spending guidelines for the General Board

\* Check, June 8, 2023 – this was a formatting check before reloading the Constitution and By-laws to the website. No substantive changes were made, only formatting and typography changes.

# CONSTITUTION

## Article I - Name

The name of this local body of believers shall be Trinity Fellowship - an Evangelical Free Church. The legal name of the associated corporation shall be Trinity Evangelical Free Church of Clear Lake dba Trinity Fellowship. Herein Trinity Evangelical Free Church of Clear Lake shall be referred to as "the church" or Trinity Fellowship.

## Article II - Purpose

The Purpose of Trinity Fellowship is to glorify God. As a community we achieve this purpose by corporate worship, by celebration of communion, by the witness of baptism, by loving discipline, by caring for people in need, and by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As individuals within the community of the church we achieve God's purpose by growing in maturity as disciples of the Lord Jesus through faith. This growth comes as we learn and obey His word, depend on Him in prayer, exalt him through worship, love and care for one another, and share His love with others in our community and around the world.

## Article III - Statement of Faith

The statement of faith for the church shall be identical with the statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America:

*The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:*

### *God*

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

### *The Bible*

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

### *The Human Condition*

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

#### *Jesus Christ*

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

#### *The Work of Christ*

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

#### *The Holy Spirit*

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

#### *The Church*

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

#### *Christian Living*

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

#### *Christ's Return*

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

#### *Response and Eternal Destiny*

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

The use of this statement in the teaching and practice of the church shall be as described in this constitution and by-laws.

## **Article IV - Membership**

The church shall receive into membership all those who desire to join and who confess personal trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, whose conduct is in accordance with this confession, and who subscribe to the above Statement of Faith. The process of joining the church shall be as described in the by-laws to this constitution.

## **Article V - Affiliation**

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America through affiliation with the EFCA Texas-Oklahoma District of said denomination and shall not join itself to any other denomination or synod. The church shall cooperate with the Evangelical Free Church of America and its branches by sending delegates to its conferences, supporting home and foreign missions, and uniting in the mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel. Though affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America, the church shall be free, under Christ, to govern its own affairs and determine the extent of its cooperation with the denomination. If the church at any time chooses to dissociate itself from the Evangelical Free Church of America, the church must adopt a new name and a new constitution.

## **Article VI - Property Rights**

The church shall have the power to buy, own, and sell real property in its own name. Should a division occur within the church, the name and all property shall be retained by those adhering to this constitution and making decisions in accordance with this constitution. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, the property shall become the property of the EFCA Texas-Oklahoma District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. If the church at any time chooses to dissociate itself from the Evangelical Free Church of America, by adopting a new name and a new constitution, the property of the church shall pass to the organization thus established. If the church chooses to participate in the creation of new churches, the church has the right to sell or give real property to the churches thus established.

## **Article VII - Church Government**

The church shall be governed by elders and officers elected or affirmed by the congregation according to the methods described in the by-laws to this constitution. The annual budget of the church and all major capital expenses shall be approved by the congregation as described in the by-laws to this constitution. Elders and officers shall preside over a General Board charged with making operating decisions for the church. Elders shall also constitute an Elder Board charged with the spiritual nurture of ministry leaders, ministries and members.

The officers of the church shall be the Chairman of the General Board, Vice-Chairman of the General Board, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Recording Secretary. In addition to election of officers, the congregation shall vote to call or dismiss pastoral staff and to affirm elders and any other ministry leaders specified in the by-laws. The qualifications, affirmation, election, duties, and removal of officers and elders shall be as defined in the by-laws to this constitution.

## **Article VIII - Voting**

In all church affairs requiring a vote, except for affirmation of elders, calling of pastoral staff, and amendments to the constitution, a simple majority vote of those voting members present shall suffice to pass a motion. Voting members shall be as defined in the by-laws to this constitution. The exceptions mentioned above shall require a higher percentage for approval, as defined in the by-laws. Thirty three percent of the voting members must be present in person at a membership meeting in order to constitute a quorum, except for the special cases of calling a pastor or making amendments to the constitution, which require that fifty percent of the voting members be present. In the case where a quorum is not present for a constitutionally called membership meeting, another meeting may be scheduled for no sooner than two weeks later, and the quorum requirement for that meeting reduced to two-thirds of the previous quorum.

## **Article IX - Annual Meeting**

An annual membership meeting of the church shall be held once a year, in the last month of the church's business year. Items which must be voted on at this meeting shall be as outlined in the by-laws to this constitution.

## **Article X - Amendments to this Constitution**

Amendments to this constitution may be made at an annual membership meeting or a special membership meeting after the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the entire membership at least two months prior to the membership meeting and ample opportunity has been provided for discussion. A two thirds majority affirmative vote of voting members present (in person or by proxy) shall be required to adopt an amendment to the constitution.

## **Article XI - Provision for By-Laws**

The by-laws of the church shall embody the details of the organizations, government, membership, discipline, procedures for conducting meetings, financial and accounting procedures, qualification and duties of pastors, elders, officers, and ministry leaders, and general rules and principles by which the church shall be governed.

# BY-LAWS

## I. Membership

A. Qualifications for Church Membership. These qualifications are both guidelines for the Elder Board in evaluating prospective members, and an aid for those seeking membership to understand what it involves. To be eligible for membership, a person must:

1. Trust solely in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His bodily resurrection from the dead for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Acts 4:12 & 16:31)
2. Have been baptized in obedience to Scripture. The norm for baptism at Trinity Fellowship will be immersion of believers. However, the Elder Board may accept as members those who have undergone other modes of baptism, or have stated their intent to be baptized in the near future. (Acts 2:38-41, Acts 8:12, Romans 6:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-27, Ephesians 4:4-6, Colossians 2:11-12, 1 Peter 3:21)
3. Desire steady growth toward Christian maturity. This involves allowing the Holy Spirit to develop Christlike character in us and to lead us into actively serving the Lord in whatever we do. (2 Peter 1:3-9, Romans 8:29 & 12:6-8, Colossians 1:28, Philippians 3:13-14)
4. Live in a way which gives evidence of having become "a new creation" in Christ. This does not mean we are perfect, but that we are allowing the Holy Spirit to work changes in us to "lay aside the old self" and "put on the new." By God's grace we also regularly confess and turn away from any known sin. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:14-16 & 4:1-5, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:1-10, 1 John 1:8-10 & 2:15-17)
5. Read the constitution and by-laws of the church and subscribe in principle to the statement of faith. (Philippians 2:2, Psalm 133:1, Matthew 12:25)
6. Agree to submit to the discipline of the church (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8, Galatians 6:1-2, Matthew 7:1-5, Titus 1:10-11)

B. Applying for Church Membership

1. Anyone who has attended the church regularly for three months may apply for membership through a pastor or elder. The prospective member will then meet with at least two members of the Elder Board for a membership interview. There is no minimum age for membership, but the parents of children who desire membership, as well as the Elder Board itself, will determine if a child's commitment, faith and walk are appropriate for membership.
2. If the applicant has questions or reservations about any point in the statement of faith, these should be thoroughly discussed at the interview.

3. The Elder Board will approve applicants for membership and notify new members of their approval. New members will be publicly welcomed into membership at a Sunday morning service.
4. If the Board votes against membership, the reasons for that decision will be carefully explained to the applicant. A negative vote for formal membership does not exclude the applicant from fellowship with the church or from application at a later date.

#### C. Categories of Membership

1. Non-Voting Members. Members will be considered non-voting members (and therefore, not counted when quorum requirements are established) if:
  - a. They are younger than 18, or
  - b. They reside far enough away from the church that they can not regularly attend meetings.
2. Voting Members. All other members shall be considered voting members.

#### D. Responsibilities of Membership

1. Members should consider this their church family and regularly participate in services, small group meetings, membership meetings, and other church functions for the purpose of teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. (He. 10:24-25, Acts 2:42)
2. Seek opportunities for service and ministry in the church, in accordance with their spiritual gifts and the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:6-8, Psalm 100:2)
3. Commit to a relationship of mutual accountability with and prayer for others in the church. (Colossians 1:9-14, Hebrews 13:18, Galatians 6:1-2)
4. Give materially to others in need and to the church, in proportion to how the Lord has provided, and in obedience to how He leads. (1 Corinthians 9:4-14, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, 1 John 3:17-18, Romans 12:13, Galatians 6:10)

#### E. Withdrawing from Church Membership

1. Members who wish to withdraw membership are asked to notify the church in writing. Members who would like a letter of recommendation to another Evangelical Free Church may obtain one with the approval of the Elder Board. Those who are in the process of church discipline may not withdraw their membership without the approval of the Elder Board.
2. Names of members who are not participating in the life of the church may be removed from membership by the Elder Board.

## F. Church Discipline

1. Church discipline becomes necessary when a believer knowingly persists in some sin or adopts false doctrine, in spite of the teaching of God's word and the loving attempts of other Christians to bring correction. Such a person must be dealt with because their actions may lead others into sin or falsehood, are a discredit to the Lord and the church before unbelievers, and are harmful to themselves. Everyone who is taken into the membership of this church agrees to submit to church discipline if necessary.
2. The motive of church discipline must be restoration of the offender to fellowship with God and the church.
3. The following steps will be followed in administering church discipline. (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Cor. 2:6-8, Gal. 6:1-2, and Matthew 7:1-5, Titus 1:10-11)
  - a. After appropriate self-examination, the individual who becomes aware of the problem should privately discuss it with the offender. Ideally, if the offender accepts the admonition, the discipline can end here and will involve no one else. The initiator of this step could be anyone in the congregation. (Matthew 7:1-5, Galatians 6:1b, Matthew 18:15)
  - b. If the offender will not listen, one or two other people may be brought into the situation so that there is more than one witness to the facts and to add strength to the attempt to persuade the person of the need for repentance. In this church, the additional witnesses should include at least one elder.
  - c. Matthew 18:16 emphasizes accurate facts. Church discipline cannot be conducted on the basis of gossip or hearsay. Before proceeding the church leaders involved will interview the accused offender and review the facts to insure that the allegations of misbehavior are true and that the misbehavior is actually grounds for church discipline. (1 Corinthians 5:11, Titus 1:10-11)
  - d. If the offender listens to counsel, church discipline can end here and will involve no one else. The church leaders present must inform the offender of the next step in church discipline if the person persists in the sin. At this point the elders will be updated on the situation, will conduct a thorough investigation into the situation, and will decide on the next step of action.
  - e. Only after private attempts to turn the person from sin have failed should the matter be made public to the whole church. Prior to reaching this step, all persons involved must hold the matter in strictest confidence to avoid gossip, speculation, and distortion of the facts.
  - f. The accused must be notified at least two weeks in advance of formal action at a church membership meeting. The elders will present the charges against the offender to the congregation and will announce specific disciplinary action at this meeting.
  - g. In both Matthew 18:17 and in 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, the prescribed discipline is cessation of fellowship with the offender. In this church, cessation of fellowship includes: (1) exclusion from worship services, small group meetings, fellowship suppers, and other church social gatherings, (2) Exclusion from taking



communion, (1 Cor. 11:28-29), (3) Loss of voting privileges in church membership meetings.

- h. Members are obligated to faithfully pray for the restoration of those who have undergone church discipline, and when contact with the offending party occurs, to encourage repentance.
  - i. If restoration does not occur, the Elder Board may revoke the membership of the offender.
4. Restoration to unrestricted fellowship with the church and to full membership privileges can occur whenever the offender repents of his sin. The Elder Board will review this repentance and vote to restore the person to fellowship. Formal reinstatement will occur at an appropriate church gathering to be decided by the Elder Board. Personal reconciliations with individuals and restitution where appropriate should be handled privately, prior to the membership meeting.
5. The church should be eager to restore disciplined members, showing forgiveness, gentleness and loving acceptance when they come to repentance. (2 Corinthians 2:5-8)

## **II. Government**

A. Government of the church shall be by its elders, officers, and other leaders, operating through the Elder Board and the General Board.

B. Elder Board

- 1. The Elder Board shall consist of the currently affirmed elders of the church. Other ministry leaders, especially non-elder staff, will be encouraged to attend when topics of interest are discussed.
- 2. The chairman of the Elder Board will normally be the senior pastor, but may be one of the other elders.
- 3. The Elder Board shall meet once a month to direct the spiritual growth and nurture of the church.
- 4. Responsibilities of the Elder Board

The primary roles of elders and pastors are shepherding (I Peter 5:1-4), teaching (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9, Acts 6:4), leading in prayer (Acts 6:4) and equipping individuals for the work of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-12, Acts 6:3-4) As such the responsibilities of the Elder Board will include:

- a. Maintaining contact with all key ministry leaders, with each elder providing reports and updates concerning the ministries for which he provides oversight.
- b. Approving new initiatives and changes of direction for ministries. Whenever a ministry change would affect the financial or business operation of the church, such a change needs to also be approved by the General Board.
- c. Soliciting prayer requests and providing solid prayer support for individuals and ministries.

- d. Offering ongoing counsel and guidance through coaching of ministry leaders and individuals seeking to improve the effectiveness of their ministries or solve problems related to their ministries.
- e. Interviewing and approving new members and dismissing old members.
- f. Identifying and encouraging leaders for church ministries and recommending such leaders to the elders for nomination or appointment to ministry positions.
- g. Identifying and recognizing deacons per paragraph II E.
- h. Approving Ministry Leaders. The Elder Board shall approve any individual who serves in a ministry position that is not an elected position.
- i. Nomination of Elected Leaders. The Elder Board shall nominate individuals for all elected ministry and elder positions. They shall solicit recommendations from the congregation at large no less than four months before the annual meeting. They shall then solicit input from the congregation at least two months before the annual meeting as to the qualifications of the potential elders and deacons. They shall approve and publish the slate not less than two weeks before the annual meeting.
- j. Evaluation of appointed ministry leaders. The Elder Board shall evaluate as necessary the performance of leaders in ministry positions, and may dismiss leaders in non-elected positions if the leader consistently fails to meet the expectations of the position, or for reasons of church discipline.
- k. Evaluation of elected ministry leaders. The Elder Board shall evaluate as necessary the performance of elected leaders (including elders) and shall recommend dismissal to the congregation if the leader consistently fails to meet the expectations of the position, or for reasons of church discipline.
- l. Review of Staff Performance. The Elder Board shall conduct annual performance reviews of all pastoral staff positions, and shall be responsible to maintain a job description for these positions. They shall recommend dismissal of pastoral staff if the staff person consistently fails to meet the expectations of the position or for reasons of church discipline. Pastoral staff members who are also elders shall be recused from the Elder Board when they are under review.
- m. Church Discipline. The Elder Board shall be responsible for church discipline as outlined in the by-laws on membership. This shall include discernment of the spiritual condition of individuals and intervention in their lives with appropriate Biblical counsel, rebuke and encouragement.
- n. Evaluation and approval of the distinctives and teaching of this local body.
- o. Evaluation of the spiritual condition of the body as a whole and discernment of appropriate steps to address spiritual needs in the body.

## C. General Board

1. The General Board shall consist of the elders of the church, and officers of the church as defined by the constitution. Other ministry leaders, especially pastoral staff, will be expected and encouraged to attend when topics of interest are discussed.
2. The presiding officers for the General Board shall be the church officers (Chairman, Vice-chairman, etc.).
3. The General Board shall meet once a month to conduct the normal business of the church, including but not limited to:
  - a. Hearing and approving reports from all committees and functions represented on the General Board.
  - b. Approving new initiatives by individuals and committees.
  - c. Approving regular use of the facilities of the church by outside organizations and coordinating the church calendar.
  - d. Approving financial guidelines and providing for an annual evaluation of the church's finances.
  - e. Approving expenditures above or outside of the congregationally approved budget, and yet below \$5000 per incident and cumulatively below 10 percent of the approved budget.
  - f. Evaluating and presenting to the congregation for approval all non-budgeted expenses above \$5000.
  - g. Evaluating and approving the annual budget before it is presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.
  - h. Reviewing guidelines, policies, and procedures established by the various church ministries.
  - i. Coordinating cooperation with district and national programs of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
4. Meetings of the General Board shall be open to the congregation at large, who may speak at these meeting following the normal rules of order, but may not vote at these meetings. Summaries of all General Board meetings shall be made available to the congregation.

## D. Elders

1. Elders. An elder must be a male member of the church who qualifies according to the requirements of I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders shall be nominated by the Elder Board, who shall solicit recommendations from the congregation at large no less than four months before the annual meeting. They shall also solicit input from the elder candidate, and from the congregation as to the qualifications of the potential elder.

2. Elders shall be affirmed by the congregation for a three year term and must take at least one year off between terms. Elders may be affirmed for shorter terms as necessary to insure continuity of leadership. An elder who is on his year off between terms will be asked to meet with the elders prior to being re-nominated or passed over for re-nomination so that these decisions can be reached with mutual input and communication. It is legitimate for the elder board to pass over an elder for re-nomination out of respect for his personal wishes or because he did not fully carry his duties as an elder. However, an elder can only be dismissed for cause (see below).
3. Duties of Elders - see Elder Board, Item II.B. above.
4. Dismissal of Elders
  - a. Elders may only be dismissed from ministry for cause by the congregation.
  - b. If two or more elders or church members think they have a legitimate reason to seek the dismissal of an elder they should bring this concern to the elders. The elder in question shall not be included among the elders for this meeting but shall be promptly informed of any substantive charges brought against him.
  - c. Whenever the cause involves a matter of church discipline, that process will be pursued as outlined in these by-laws. Depending on the seriousness of the charges the elders may choose to continue toward dismissal or wait until the church discipline issue has been resolved.
  - d. If the elders feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal according to the qualifications outlined in these by-laws, then they shall call a special membership meeting of the church to recommend dismissal.
  - e. If the elders do not feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal, but 25 percent of the voting members of the church sign a petition seeking a membership meeting to discuss dismissal, then the elders shall be compelled to schedule such a meeting.
  - f. At the special membership meeting, adequate information shall be presented by the elders to justify their recommendation. The elder shall be dismissed if 50 percent of the voting membership present at the meeting vote for dismissal.

#### E. Deacons

1. At Trinity, deacons are those who have served faithfully and are actively serving in a key administrative ministry role at Trinity. Examples would be non-elder officers, facilities coordinators and ministry coordinators, etc. People who are in these ministry roles do not have to be deacons, but will be recognized as deacons if qualified and willing.
2. Selection of Deacons. A deacon must be a male member of Trinity Fellowship who has served faithfully and is actively serving in a key administrative ministry role at Trinity. The deacon must be evaluated and interviewed by the Elder Board and found to meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The elder board shall solicit recommendations from the congregation at large no less than four months before the annual meeting. They

shall also solicit input from the deacon candidate and from the congregation as to the qualifications of the potential deacon.

3. Deacons shall be affirmed by the congregation for a one year term, and may be re-affirmed by the elders and the congregation as long as they remain qualified and will and are continuing in active service.
4. Duties of Deacons. Deacons will be expected to faithfully continue active service in a ministry role. They may also continue to be considered a deacon if they assume a different key administrative ministry position.
5. Dismissal of Deacons. A deacon may be dismissed by the elders when he is no longer continuing in active and effective service, or for cause.
  - a. If two or more elders or church members think that they have a legitimate reason to seek the dismissal of a deacon, they should meet with the elders to consider this option.
  - b. Whenever the cause involves a matter of church discipline, that process will be pursued as outlined in these by-laws. Depending on the seriousness of the charges the elders may choose to continue toward dismissal or wait until the church discipline issue has been resolved.
  - c. If the elders feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal according to the qualifications outlined in these by-laws, then they shall call a special membership meeting of the church to recommend dismissal.
  - d. If the elders do not feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal, but 25 percent of the voting members of the church sign a petition seeking a membership meeting to discuss dismissal, then the elders shall be compelled to schedule such a meeting.
  - e. At the special membership meeting, adequate information shall be presented by the elders to justify their recommendation. The deacon shall be dismissed if 50 percent of the voting membership present at the meeting vote for dismissal.

#### F. Officers

1. Qualifications and election of officers. An officer must be a male member of the church who qualifies according to the requirements of I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (if he is also an elder) or of I Timothy 3:8-13 (if he is not an elder). The chairman and vice-chairman must be elders, but the other officers need not be elders. Officers shall be elected to a one year term and may be reelected to an unlimited number of terms.
2. Duties of Officers:
  - a. Chairman - The chairman shall be responsible to run all membership meetings, and General Board meetings, and may call emergency meetings of the General Board.
  - b. Vice-Chairman - The vice-chairman shall be in charge of membership meetings and General Board meetings in the absence of the chairman, and may also call emergency meetings of the General Board.

- c. Recording Secretary - The secretary or his designee shall keep accurate records of the proceedings of the church and of all membership meetings, including recording the results of all votes. The secretary or his designee shall also keep a register of the members of the church.
  - d. Financial Secretary - The financial secretary or his designee (but not the treasurer) shall receive and count all funds and shall deposit funds and give a record of deposits and funds to the treasurer. The financial secretary shall give a report at all General Board meetings of the funds received by the church.
  - e. Treasurer - The treasurer shall receive a record of all donations from the financial secretary. The treasurer (and/or his designees approved by the General Board) shall have signature authority on the church checking account, and shall make all disbursements and pay all bills after these payments have been authorized as described in Section III. The treasurer shall give a report at all General Board meetings of the funds disbursed by the church.
3. Dismissal of Officers - Officers may be dismissed from their office by the elder board only for failure to carry out the duties of their office. Since all officers are either elders or deacons, they may also be dismissed for cause following the guidelines outlined in II.D.4 and II.E.5 above. Dismissal of an elder who is an officer automatically includes dismissal from his office. Dismissal of a deacon who is an officer also automatically includes dismissal from his office.

#### G. Pastoral Staff

1. Pastoral Staff will include the senior pastor and other full time staff members with significant church-wide ministry. They are distinguished from other staff members in that they must be called and approved by the congregation. It will be the responsibility of the elders to determine which staff positions will be pastoral staff positions and which will be regular employees under the supervision of the pastoral staff, elders or deacons.
2. Qualifications of Pastoral Staff. The senior pastor will be an elder and will meet the qualifications given above for elders. He may serve as an elder without affirmation and for an unlimited term as a consequence of his calling by the congregation. Any other members of the pastoral staff shall meet the qualifications for elders if they will be elders or for deacons if they will not be elders. The attendance period for church membership shall be waived for pastoral staff and their families. The staff member must perform adequately the duties of his position as outlined by the pastoral search committee and the Elder Board.
3. Calling and Approval of Pastoral Staff
  - a. When a pastoral staff position is vacant or a new position is created, a search committee consisting of not more than four elders of the church and four other members of the church shall be elected at a regular or special membership meeting. Other members of the pastoral staff, if any, may be included on this committee or may function as ad-hoc members on this committee.
  - b. It shall be the responsibility of the search committee to define the qualifications expected of the pastor and to evaluate the qualifications of possible candidates for

the position. This evaluation shall include such areas as the candidate's training, experience, reputation, ministerial standing, doctrine, maturity as a believer, family situation, and personality.

- c. When the search committee has selected a potential candidate, they shall meet with the elders to present evidence that the candidate meets the qualifications for pastoral staff outlined in these by-laws. Only one such candidate shall be selected at a time.
  - d. If the elders also approve the candidate, then a special meeting of the congregation shall be called. The candidate shall be brought to the church and allowed to meet and interact with members, preaching and teaching as appropriate. Then the congregation shall meet to vote on whether to call the candidate to a pastoral position. Such a call shall be extended if 80 percent or more of the voting members present at the meeting vote to call the candidate.
4. Pastoral staff shall be under the supervision of the elders as outlined above. The elders shall conduct an annual performance review for all pastoral staff and shall be responsible to maintain a detailed job description for each staff member. Though the senior pastor and all qualified staff members shall be elders, they may not vote on questions of their own performance or suitability for office. The elders shall be free to meet without the staff members to prepare for their performance evaluations.
5. Dismissal of Pastoral Staff.
- a. If two elders or other members think that they have a legitimate reason to seek the dismissal of a pastor, they should meet with the elders to consider this option. The pastor shall not be included among the elders for this meeting but shall be promptly informed of any substantive charges brought against him.
  - b. In some cases the charges may lead to a process of church discipline, as outlined in these by-laws. Depending on the seriousness of the charges the elders may choose to continue toward dismissal or wait until the church discipline issue has been resolved.
  - c. If the elders feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal according to the qualifications outlined in these by-laws, then they shall call a special membership meeting of the church to recommend dismissal.
  - d. If the elders do not feel there is adequate reason to seek dismissal, but 25 percent of the voting members of the church sign a petition seeking a membership meeting to discuss dismissal, then the elders shall be compelled to schedule such a meeting.
  - e. At the special membership meeting, adequate information shall be presented by the elders to justify their recommendation. The pastor shall be dismissed if 50 percent of the voting membership present at the meeting vote for dismissal. If the vote is between 25 percent and 50 percent, the pastor shall be required to seek the counsel of a consultant who shall be recommended by the district superintendent of the denomination.

## H. Other Ministry Leaders

1. The biblical roles of elders, deacons, and pastoral staff are reserved for male leadership. Women are encouraged to participate in leadership in many areas including Christian education, missions, evangelism, assimilation and outreach. In addition, the leadership of women in other areas of church life is organized through the Women's ministry, which is in turn directly accountable to the elders.
2. Leaders of other ministries shall be members in good standing, shall be of good moral character and repute, shall show giftedness and willingness to perform the ministry specified, and shall agree to teach only doctrine that is in agreement with the doctrinal statement.
3. Leaders of other ministries may be dismissed from their ministry positions by the elders.

## I. Membership Meetings

1. The chairman, vice-chairman, or another officer of the church are to conduct all membership meetings. No membership meeting of the church shall take place without a quorum of voting members, which is defined as 33% of the voting members, who must be present in person at a membership meeting. If the membership meeting includes the purpose of calling a Pastor, the making of amendments to the Constitution, or the making of amendments to the by-laws, then a quorum shall be 50% of the voting membership of the corporation. In the event a quorum is not present for a membership meeting, then another membership meeting may be scheduled for no sooner than a date two weeks later, and the quorum requirement for the subsequent meeting of the members shall be reduced to 2/3rd of the previous quorum requirement. A voting member may vote by a proxy which has been presented to an officer of the corporation at or before the time of the membership meeting. Any membership meeting shall be held at the date, time and place designated in the announcement of that meeting. At the request of any voting member prior to the announcement of a membership meeting, any item may be placed on the agenda for that meeting.



2. There shall be one regular annual membership meeting of the church each year, to be held in the last month of the church's fiscal year. The date, time, place, and agenda for this meeting shall be announced orally at the church's regularly scheduled worship services and ballots provided for information two weeks prior to the meeting. During this regular annual membership meeting, the following business shall be conducted:
  - a. Affirmation of Elders. Elders shall be approved if at least 75 percent of those voting at the regular annual membership meeting vote to approve the elder.
  - b. Election of Officers. Officers shall be approved by a majority vote.
  - c. Approval of the Annual Budget. The proposed budget shall be submitted in writing to the congregation at least two weeks before the regular annual membership meeting.
  - d. Receiving Reports. Officers and ministry leaders shall present to the congregation the status and plans of all ministries of the church, either in writing or orally, at the regular annual membership meeting.
3. Other special membership meetings of the church shall be called as needed. The date, time, and place of special membership meetings shall be announced orally at the church's regularly scheduled worship service at least two weeks in advance and an agenda and ballots provided for information. No business may be conducted at a special membership meeting which is not on the agenda. If a special membership meeting is called with no proposed ballot, no voting may take place at that meeting. Special membership meetings may be called using any of the following procedures:
  - a. The chairman or vice-chairman may call a membership meeting.
  - b. A majority of the elders may call a special membership meeting.
  - c. The General Board may call a special membership meeting by majority vote.
  - d. The congregation may call a special membership meeting by obtaining the signatures of 25 percent of the voting members agreeing to a proposed agenda and ballot for the meeting.

#### I. Board of Directors and Director's Meetings

1. The Elders and Officers of the church shall constitute the Board of Directors of the corporation and shall be confirmed in that role by their affirmation as elders and election as officers.
2. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, or another officer of the Church shall conduct all directors' meetings. A majority of the members then constituting the Board of Directors of the corporation shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Board of Directors.
3. There shall be one regular annual directors' meeting ~~of the church~~ each year, to be held immediately following the first General Board meeting of the fiscal year.
4. Other special directors' meetings shall be called by the Chairman, Vice Chairman or any director. The date, time, place, and agenda for special directors; meetings shall be

announced orally at the church's regularly scheduled worship service at least one week in advance. At the request of any director prior to the announcement of a directors' meeting, any item may be placed on the agenda for the meeting. No business may be conducted at a special directors' meeting which is not on the agenda.. Subject to the limitations in the Articles of Incorporation, these bylaws, and the Texas Non-Profit corporation Act, Article 1396, Texas Civil Statutes, the Board of Directors shall have the rights and authority that are expressly delegated to the Board of Directors by the membership.

6. A vacancy in the position of a director because of death, resignation, disqualification, refusal or failure to serve, or removal by the membership, may be filled by the vote of a majority of the voting members by electing a person eligible to serve as a director for the unexpired portion of the term for that position.
7. Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, any action required to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all of the members of the Board of Directors. Such consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote at a Directors' meeting.

#### J. General Provisions

1. The corporation shall indemnify officers, directors, elders, and members of the General Board to the fullest extent of the law.
2. There will be no compensation paid by the corporation to officers, directors, elders, or members of the General Board for serving in those capacities. However, reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties may be authorized. Nothing herein shall precluded an officer, director, elder, or member of the General Board from serving the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation for services in such other capacity.
3. An elder may be affirmed by a vote of at least 75% of those voting at a special membership meeting. A vacancy in the position of elder shall be filled by a vote of at least 75% of those voting at either the regular annual membership meeting or a special membership meeting.
4. A vacancy in the position of an officer may be filled by a vote of the majority of those voting at a special membership meeting. An officer position may also be filled on a temporary basis until the next regular annual membership meeting, at the discretion of the elders.
5. The Revised Edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority for procedure in conducting all membership meetings and directors' meetings, when not in conflict with provisions of these bylaws.
6. In the event of any conflicts between the corporations's Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation shall control.

7. The invalidity of any provision or provisions of these bylaws shall not be deemed to impair or affect in any manner the validity or enforceability of the remainder of these Bylaws, and in such event, all of the other provisions of these bylaws shall continue in full force and effect, as if such invalid provision had never been included herein.

### **III. Finances and Accounting**

- A. The church is a non-profit organization. No expenditures shall be made or business conducted which would threaten the non-profit nature of the church, and any steps necessary shall be taken to insure the recognition of the church as a non-profit organization by appropriate local, state, and federal government agencies.
- B. The annual budget of the church shall be prepared by the financial secretary, the treasurer and two other members who will be appointed at least three months before the annual meeting at which the budget is to be presented. At least one month before the annual meeting the budget committee shall propose the budget to the General Board, which shall have the authority to modify the budget on a line-by-line basis and approve the whole for presentation to the congregation. The congregation will then be given the opportunity to discuss, amend, and approve the budget at the annual meeting.
- C. The General Board will appoint a committee once each year to review the accounting system and financial records of the church. The committee may not include the financial secretary or treasurer. A summary of the review shall be made available to the congregation.
- D. The financial secretary is expected to develop guidelines and train personnel in order to appropriately account for all funds received by the church. The General Board shall review and approve these guidelines once a year.
- E. The treasurer is expected to develop guidelines and train personnel in order to appropriately account for all funds expended by the church. Guidelines shall include procedures for the approval of budgeted expenditures, and procedures for preparation and reporting of salaries to the IRS on appropriate forms. The General Board shall review and approve these guidelines once a year.
- F. Expenditures above or outside the congregationally approved budget shall be approved by the General Board. Any expenditure not in the congregationally approved budget and above \$5000 must be approved at a membership meeting of the congregation. Expenditures that are above budget but below this amount must be reported in the minutes of the board meeting at which they were approved.
- G. The treasurer and financial secretary shall each prepare a report for the monthly General Board meeting showing the monthly activity and cumulative financial status of the church. A quarterly summary shall be made available to the congregation.

- H. Income and expenditures from designated use accounts shall be reported by the treasurer monthly. Expenditures from such accounts are exempt from the requirements of paragraphs III. E. and II.C.3.e above.

#### **IV. Amendments**

These By-Laws may be revised, changed, or amended at any membership meeting, annual or special, by a 2/3rds majority vote of the voting members present; provided, however, that a copy of the proposed revision, change or amendment shall have been provided, and notification of the time and place of the membership meeting in which same is to be considered shall have been announced orally, at a regularly scheduled worship service at least two weeks before such membership meeting.