

# **The Constitution and Bylaws of Westside Community Church A Texas Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Religious Corporation**

## **Preamble**

We declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution/Bylaws will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches, as we seek to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE I - Name and Principal Office**

The name of the Corporation is WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Constitution/Bylaws as the "Church." The Church maintains its principal office at 201 E. Sunset Rd., El Paso, Texas. The Elders of the Church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another. Any change of this location may be amended to state the new location.

## **ARTICLE II – Purpose**

### **SECTION I – Mission Statement**

The Mission of Westside Community Church is to glorify God by joining God's Spirit in loving all peoples, telling them the good news of God's salvation, and developing them into obedient followers of the Lord Jesus Christ equipped to minister through the power of the Holy Spirit.

SECTION II - Vision

## Our Vision for El Paso and the World What is Our Vision as a Church and Seven Pillars?

- 1. We envision our church as a place that loves God and shows that same love to everyone we meet!** We see an exciting growing church that is always reaching out to our community for Jesus in new ways. A church united under the Lordship of Christ and serving him without dissension or division. A church empowered by the Holy Spirit as we share the good news of Christ and multitudes of people are born again. A friendly church with a relaxed atmosphere, inspirational contemporary Christian music, and Bible teaching, which is challenging and deep, yet practical and understandable. Where pre-Christians will feel comfortable attending, yet without compromising the truth about sin and God's holy word. People will be healed of broken lives, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and become followers of Jesus. They are discipled by mature Christians who will want to come and humbly serve, sacrifice, continue to grow, and help lead the new Christians in their exciting new life.
- 2. We envision a church where people of various races, and cultures, can worship God together in unity and purpose. A church that reflects the unique blend of cultures in the El Paso/ Juarez community.** Whether an El Pasoan for generations or just arrived, we want people to feel at home in our church. A church which reaches out to new people who relocate to El Paso from all over the United States, Mexico, and Latin America, internationals from around the world including Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, and every corner of the globe. Ft Bliss, various federal agencies, and people connected with the twin plants in Juarez, "snowbirds" and retirees to the "sun belt" all help make El Paso so special. We want our church to be a family for these people even if they only live here a brief time and then relocate as we disciple them to go spread the gospel around the world.
- 3. We envision a healthy growing church with at least 300 committed believers that will completely fill our sanctuary each Sunday morning, and if God wills a second or third service with another 300 or more people.** We envision at least 15 care groups led by lay leaders, who will shepherd and nurture the groups. A financially strong debt free church where people tithe and give sacrificially. Where people are taught the powerful eternal truth of God from the Bible. A church which does not compromise and give in to the changing standards of society but strives to live up to the eternal standards of God. A church of disciple makers who will nurture new Christians to maturity, and train them to disciple others, and start ministries that will impact all El Paso, and even the world.

**4. We envision a church that loves, nurtures, and empowers people to overcome the attacks of Satan in a fallen world.** A church that develops each person into a prayer warrior. A church where we never have less than 100 people at least one night a week praying together. Where both young and older couples can strengthen their marriages under Christ and our families live out true biblical principles. Where singles, are welcomed, cherished, and challenged to live in purity as they serve the body of Christ. Where seniors are loved, respected, and continue to lead and serve. Where all parents, including single moms and dads are helped to raise their children in a God centered home. We see dynamic children's ministries from infants through grade school with every classroom full. A powerful youth ministry where our youth center is filled to capacity with teens from every high school and middle school in west El Paso and beyond. We see teens and college students equipped to live victoriously for Christ no matter what temptation they encounter as they serve and become future leaders in the church body.

**5. We envision a church where every room, indeed every inch of our property is used to glorify God and serve our community in unique and powerful ministries.** We envision a professional counselling ministry, A food and clothes pantry, a safe room for abused children, a place for missionaries to stay while visiting, a beautiful sanctuary and venue for worship, Christian music concerts, evangelists and speakers. We see classes for adult education, home school children, Head Start for preschoolers, a Bible college, a well-maintained gymnasium and playground that attracts people to our church; whatever ministry God sends our way, and our facilities will allow.

**6. We envision a church that supports various ministries, and missionaries, both local, regional and international.** We see a church where missionaries and other churches from all over the world can come to plan for work in Mexico and around the globe. A church where we organize both short and long-term mission trips. From orphanages, medical clinics, the homeless, prisons, whatever opportunity, we want to touch the world for Christ.

**7. We envision a church that will birth and plant many other churches here in El Paso and around the world.**

### SECTION III – Principles of Service

The following five service principles enable WCC the local body of our Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish this vision. They are: Evangelism/Missions, Education, Worship, Ministry/Service, and Fellowship

1. **EVANGELISM/MISSIONS** - "To share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world." (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9)
2. **EDUCATION** - "To help members develop toward full Christian maturity and train them for effective ministry. To promote personal, spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching." (Ephesians 4:11-13, Matthew 18:20, Timothy 2:2)
3. **WORSHIP** - "To participate in public worship services together and to maintain personal daily devotions." (John 4:24)
4. **MINISTRY/SERVICE** - "To serve unselfishly in Jesus' name, meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our Church, our community, and the world." (1 Peter 4:10-11, Matthew 25:34-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Galatians 5:13)
5. **FELLOWSHIP** - "To encourage, support, and pray for each other as members of the family of God. To share our lives together." (I John 1:7, Acts 2:44-47, Hebrews 10:23-25, Romans 15:5,7, John 13:34-35)

The Church seeks to benefit the people of West El Paso by providing opportunities for spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and cultural development. (Luke 2:52)

### **ARTICLE III - Statement of Faith**

WE BELIEVE that there is one living and true God. Eternally existing in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; that this triune God created all, upholds all, and governs all.

WE BELIEVE that the SCRIPTURES of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, fully inspired without error in the original manuscripts and they are the infallible rule of faith and practice. We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and as the only basis for our beliefs.

WE BELIEVE in GOD THE FATHER. An infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love; that he concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

WE BELIEVE in JESUS CHRIST, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth. Sinless life, miracles and teachings, His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and personal, visible return to earth.

WE BELIEVE in the HOLY SPIRIT, Who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower for ministry all who believe in Christ; we believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher and Guide. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit.

WE BELIEVE that all mankind are sinners by nature and choice and are, therefore, under condemnation, that God regenerates by the Holy Spirit those who repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord; that Jesus Christ baptizes and fills the believer with the Holy Spirit and power for service.

WE BELIEVE in the universal CHURCH where regenerated believers of all different races and cultures are the living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head.

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church, Baptism and the Lords Supper. We believe in baptism by immersion and communion open to all believers.

WE BELIEVE in the laying on of hands for ordination of pastors, elders, and servant leaders; and for both physical and spiritual healing.

WE BELIEVE in the personal visible RETURN OF CHRIST to the earth and the establishment of His Kingdom; in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, and eternal blessing of the righteous and endless suffering of the wicked.

The Church accepts the "Baptist Faith and Message" a 1963 affirmation of basic Christian beliefs, as a general statement of our faith and was used as a supportive document for the above.

#### **ARTICLE IV – Affiliation**

The church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs independent of any denomination control. Recognizing however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, we may support any mission organizations or efforts approved by the church. This church voluntarily supports and affiliates with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the El Paso Baptist Association, and other Southern Baptist Churches, as far as it will assist us to achieve the mission and vision of this church. However, it is not limited to Baptists and can support and cooperate with any other churches or Christian organizations approved by Westside Community Church.

## **ARTICLE V - Membership**

### **SECTION I: General**

Membership in the Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership roll.

### **SECTION II: Qualifications for Membership**

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony their salvation.
3. Completion of the Church's membership class (101).
4. A commitment to abide by the membership covenant, as stated in the Class 101

### **SECTION III: Responsibilities of Membership**

The responsibilities of membership are described in the membership covenant as presented in the membership class (101).

### **SECTION IV: Voting Rights of Membership**

Every Active Member shall have the right to vote on the following matters: the annual budget of the Church, the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church, the merger or dissolution of the Church, the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness, amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church, and the calling or removing of a Senior Pastor. Each member 16 years and older is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

### **SECTION V: Termination of Membership**

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Personal request of the member.
3. Dismissal by the Pastor and Elders according to the following conditions
  - a. The member's life and conduct are not in accordance with the membership covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community.
  - b. Procedures for the dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18:15-17.
4. Non-attendance for a contiguous period of 6 months.

## **SECTION VI: Restoration of Members**

Members dismissed by the Pastor and Elders shall be restored by the Pastor according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lifestyles are judged to be in accordance with the membership covenant.

## **ARTICLE VI - Membership Meetings**

### **SECTION I: Place**

Meetings of the members shall be held at the principal office of the Church or at such other place or places within or outside Texas as may be designated from time to time by the Elders.

### **SECTION II: General Meetings**

A general meeting of the members shall be held on the second Sunday of November of each year. This general meeting shall be the annual membership meeting. The purpose of this meeting shall be to adopt an annual budget. Subject to Section IV of this Article, any other proper business may be conducted at this meeting.

### **SECTION III: Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Elders or the Pastor for any purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with Section IV of this Article. Only topics covered in the notification will be discussed.

### **SECTION IV: Notice Requirements for Membership Meetings**

1. General Requirements. Whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, notice and agenda shall be given to members no less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting. Notification of membership meetings shall be given in accordance with item 1a below and at least one of items b, c, or d.
  - a. Distribution of written material to the congregation two consecutive services prior to the meeting.
  - b. Announcement of the meeting in the Church newsletter.
  - c. Oral announcement to the congregation at a Sunday service.
  - d. Delivery by United States mail to each member identified on the membership roll.

2. Notice of Certain Agenda Items. Approval by the members of any of the following proposals is valid only if the notice specifies the general nature of the proposal:
  - a. Calling or removing the Pastor
  - b. Amending the Articles of Incorporation
  - c. Adopting, amending or repealing Constitution/Bylaws
  - d. Disposing of all or substantially all of the Church's assets
  - e. Adopting or amending a merger agreement
  - f. Approving the decision to dissolve the Church
  - g. Approving the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness

#### **SECTION V: Quorum**

Those members present and voting at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

#### **SECTION VI: Voting**

A passing vote on items listed in Section IV, subsection 2 shall be 51% of the quorum.

## **ARTICLE VIII – Servant Leaders**

### **SECTION I: Background**

The Greek word for servant in the Bible is “diaconis”. This is where we get the word deacon in today’s church. They were spoken of in the New Testament as people who helped serve the body of Christ with many of its material needs and relieve some of the apostles of much of their daily work. The apostles then could concentrate on spiritual teaching and ministry. Acts 6:1-6

In fact, Jesus said that in order to be a leader we must first serve. That is why Deacons and Deaconesses were also looked up to as leaders. Therefore, we have chosen to refer to what most churches would consider “Deacons”, as “Servant Leaders.”

Although all Christians must strive to maintain godly standards, Servant Leaders have an even greater responsibility to maintain their Christian witness because of their leadership role. They should be a good example to the rest of the church body in all areas of their Christian life. *See Appendix A for more details.*

### **SECTION II: Nomination and Selection Procedures**

1. Calling: Christ called all of us to be servants. Therefore, if a man or woman truly wants to follow Jesus and is called upon to serve, and demonstrates the attributes described in Section I and Appendix A, they should be allowed to serve. They need only to be willing and faithful. They should be a person who can be counted on to keep their word and serve others in the body of Christ.
2. The Servant Leaders may recommend a candidate for consideration at any regularly scheduled Servant Leaders or Elders meeting.
3. After a person has been nominated and found to have the attributes of a Servant Leader described in Section I and Appendix A, they will be voted on by the Servant Leaders Board. A 100% vote approval of a quorum of the Servant Leaders must take place before the nominee’s name is forwarded to the Elders for consideration. Candidates must then be approved by 100% of a quorum of the Elders.

### **SECTION III: Ordination and Term of Service**

1. If approved by the Senior Pastor and the Elders, a man or woman will begin serving as a Servant Leader immediately. They are elected to a two-year term which is staggered with the other Servant Leaders so that not everyone will come up for reelection at the same time. In the case of a Servant Leader resigning or being asked to step down another Servant Leader can be appointed by the Senior Pastor/Elders and will complete that person’s original term.

2. To ensure that we do not become out of touch or unaccountable to the congregation, the Servant Leaders whose terms have expired are brought before the voting membership at the annual Meeting. We use a simple written ballot with a “yes” or “no” vote for a nominee. The voting members are asked to write reasons for the no vote next to the person’s name. These votes will be reviewed by the Senior Pastor and Elder board. A “no” vote of less than 75% can be overturned by a unanimous vote of the Elder board. A 75% or higher “no” vote of the voting members must be respected, and that person will not be elected to a new term.
3. Prior ordination as a Deacon or Elder in another church is not equivalent to ordination to the office of Servant Leader.

#### **SECTION IV: Duties and Responsibilities**

1. The Servant Leaders are primarily responsible for assisting the Senior Pastor, the Elders, the Church staff, and the Church members in caring for the physical, material, and spiritual needs of the Church members and others in the community, as well as assisting in the Pastoral ministries of the Church. General Church administration will not be the responsibility of the Servant Leaders, although it can be if they are needed. The relationship among the Senior Pastor, the other Elders and the Servant Leaders shall be one of mutual support, encouragement, service and accountability.
2. The Servant Leader Board will establish close personal relationships with the Senior Pastor and the Elders and will encourage them and hold them accountable for their responsibilities in leading the Pastoral and Worship, Evangelism, Discipling and Administrative Ministries of the Church.
3. The Senior Pastor and the Elders will encourage the Servant Leader Board. They will hold the Servant Leaders accountable for their service, responsibilities, and duties of being aware of and meeting the physical, material, and spiritual needs of the Church as an institution and of the members of the Church as individuals. Every decision made by the Servant Leaders, the Pastor, staff, and Elders are to build up the body of Christ and to glorify His name within Westside Community Church’s special vision and mission.

#### **SECTION IV: Servant Leader Board Meetings**

1. The active Servant Leader Board will meet each month, unless otherwise specified. Special meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the Elders, the Interim Pastor, Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Servant Leaders as needed. Any recommendation for a new nominee to be brought to the Elders from the Servant Leader Board will require approval by a unanimous vote of a quorum of the Servant Leader Board.
2. The Servant Leader Board will elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary.

## **SECTION V: Servant Leader Board Provisional Statement**

Until there are Elders the Servant Leaders will act as both Servant Leaders and Elders in a united group. Therefore, until there is a distinct separation of Elders into one group and Servant Leaders into another group there will be no chairman or vice chairman. There will be a Secretary and the Senior Pastor will lead the meetings and set the agenda with all the Servant Leaders able to add to and change the agenda. There will be unanimity of voting by the Servant Leaders in approving any major topics. The Senior Pastor is the leader of the group, but all the Servant Leaders will have an equal vote. Later, when there are Elders, the Servant Leader Board, under authority of the Elders, will reorganize itself in a manner that will best serve the physical, material, and spiritual needs of the Church.

## **Article IX – Elders**

### **SECTION I: Background**

We have chosen to be an Elder-led church. We believe that the Biblical example of Pastors, Elders, and deacons / deaconesses (which we call Servant Leaders), are what we should strive to follow in our church. Many churches attempt to govern themselves as a “new testament church.” We also want to follow the example of the early church as much as possible.

However, it is impossible to replicate the New Testament church exactly. Some parts of the early church were applicable Biblical principles, and others were unique cultural adaptations that applied primarily to the people of that time and place. The men and women of the early church were human sinful people just as we are and did not have perfect churches. The only head of the church that was perfect then or perfect now is Jesus Christ. We will follow Him whether we are a new member, Servant Leader, or an Elder. We will always look first to the Holy Bible and the Holy Spirit to guide us.

There are many types of church government and even variations of churches that purport to be Elder led. We have chosen a form of church government that we believe is Biblical, God-inspired, and best fits the needs of our congregation.

In our congregation Jesus is the head of the church, and the men and women in it are there to serve Him and fulfill His mission as the body of Christ. The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader, shepherd, and head Elder of the church. However, the other Elders are equally important and serve alongside the senior pastor as all of them attempt to lead the church in serving Jesus. The relationship of the senior pastor and the Elders is one of mutual submission, respect, accountability, and brotherly love. The Senior Pastor and the Elders should always encourage and challenge one another and the congregation to higher godly standards as we attempt to fulfill our mission, and the unique vision God has given Westside Community Church. Therefore, although we must all strive to maintain godly standards, Elders have an even higher standard than the average church member, or even Servant Leaders, because of their greater responsibilities.

We believe our church constitution, especially in regard to Elders and Servant Leaders, is more than adequate to govern our church by. In reality, no form of church government, no matter how well-crafted, will succeed without godly men and women who humble themselves before God and then seek to lead the church. The remainder of this article describes the attributes that we believe the Bible requires of an Elder. It also describes the structure, and procedures that the Elders will use to lead the church. *See Appendix B for more details of Elder attributes.*

## **SECTION II: Elder Nomination and Selection Procedures**

1. Calling: Christ called all of us to be servants, but not everyone to be an Elder. Therefore, if a man truly wants to follow Jesus and is called upon to serve, and demonstrates the attributes described in Appendix B, they should be carefully considered by the congregation. No man should be forced or pressured into being an Elder, just because others think he is “qualified and would make a good Elder.” They may be asked and then the person should pray and seek God’s calling, or they may feel God’s calling and let it be known they would like to be an Elder.

2. The Elders or Servant Leaders may recommend a candidate for consideration at any time. The Elder Board will vote on the nominee. The decision must be unanimous. If the Elders have agreed on the nominee, he will be contacted to see if he will indeed accept the nomination. Then having presented himself to the Elders, the candidate will be interviewed to be sure that he meets the Biblical qualifications set out in Appendix B for Elders, and that he understands the functions, responsibilities and obligations of the office of Elder.

3. After a person has been nominated and found to have the attributes of an Elder described in Appendix B, they will be voted on by the Elder Board. A 100% vote approval of a quorum of the Elder Board is required for a nominee to become an Elder, and 75% or more of the membership.

## **SECTION III: Ordination and Term of Service**

1. If approved by the Senior Pastor and the Elders, a man will begin serving as an Elder immediately. They are elected to a four-year term which is staggered with the other Elders so that not everyone will come up for reelection at the same time. In the case of an Elder resigning or being asked to step down, another Elder can be appointed per Section II by the Senior Pastor/Elders and will complete that person’s original term.

2. To ensure that we do not become out of touch or unaccountable to the congregation, the Elders whose terms will expire are brought before the voting congregation at the annual Meeting. We use a simple written ballot with a “yes” or “no” vote for a nominee. The voting members are asked to write reasons for the no vote next to the person’s name. These votes will be reviewed by the Senior Pastor and Elder Board. A “no” vote of less than 75% can be overturned by a unanimous vote of the Elder Board.

A 75% or higher “no” vote of the voting members must be respected, and that person will not be elected to a new term.

#### **SECTION IV: Duties and Responsibilities**

1. General Attitude and Motive: The Elders are to serve voluntarily (not under compulsion) and with pure motives (not for personal gain). 1 Peter 5:2-3.

2. Pastor and Shepherd: The Elders are to exercise management ability, starting with their own families, and extending to the broader Church family of God. The Spiritual management duties of Elders in their role as Pastor and shepherd include:

3. Meet spiritual needs of members

- a. Make members feel secure and restful
- b. Care for members’ spiritual thirst
- c. Build members up when they fail and are discouraged
- d. Lead members into the will of God
- e. Stand beside members when in difficulty or danger
- f. Lovingly discipline members when they go astray
- g. Provide spiritual food for members (teaching)
- h. Pray for healing for members’ hurts and wounds

4. Practically, this means being with the members in the sense of time spent at and with the Church, in ministry, knowing the members personally (their needs, concerns and problems) and holding their own doors open in the sense of being truly available to the members. It also includes leading by example, carrying out their duties and responsibilities strongly conscious of being looked at by members as role models for Christian living. It also means delegating so as to make use of the gifts and talents of all of the members, who will also serve as servant leaders, teachers and in other roles, to help the Elders carry out their own responsibilities.

5. Preach and Teach: The Elders are to both preach and teach. 1 Timothy 5:17. Preaching and teaching, while only two aspects of overall ministry, are clearly two of the most important roles of Elders, and are at the very core of effective Christian ministry, for without accurate and dedicated preaching and teaching, the members of the Church are not properly equipped for ministry. *See Appendix B.*

6. Hold Firmly to the Trustworthy Word of God: A corollary to the function of preaching and teaching is the responsibility to be active in discerning the truth revealed in Scripture. To do this, the Elders must first understand Scripture themselves, then hold it fast, then encourage and edify others by teaching it, and finally refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9. In this sense, they are to guard the Biblical truth from perversion and error. Elders are literally entrusted with God’s truth and with His work and are to serve as stewards of these assets within the Church. Titus 1:7.

7. Operating under the principle of unanimity, the Elders will make decisions in regular meetings regarding the various ministries and day-to-day operations of the Church,

without requiring Church approval except in the areas of: (i) staffing; (ii) building; (iii) budgeting; and (iv) Church membership. Initially, the Elders will organize themselves to oversee and assist the Pastoral and Worship, Evangelism, Discipling and Administrative Ministries of the Church. Each of these Ministries will in turn be comprised of various existing sub-ministries of the Church, as carried out from time to time.

8. In the absence of a Senior Pastor or an Interim Pastor, the role of the Elders is expanded. In such event, the Church staff will be responsible for continuing and accomplishing the day-to-day functions and activities of the Church. A Church staff member or an appropriate Church member designated by the Elders will provide day-to-day leadership for, and supervision of, the Church staff in the absence of a Senior Pastor or Interim Pastor. The designated Church staff person or Church member will be announced to the Church members at a Church Conference or worship service and will provide periodic reports to the Elders on a frequency established by the Elders. At the time the Senior Pastor's position is vacated, the Church staff will continue to carry out the existing policies of the Church. All decisions requiring a change of policy, an interpretation of policy, or other decisions, will be referred to the Elders for action. Policy changes, interpretations, or other decisions will be brought before the Church for information and affirmation. In addition, during that period of time when an Interim Pastor is serving, the Elders will consult with the officers of the Senior Pastor Search Committee before taking any final action concerning policy changes.

9. A 100% vote of a quorum of the Elder Board must agree for hiring a Senior Pastor followed by a 75% or more vote of the membership.

10. Committees: The Elder Board has the responsibility to establish, oversee, and abolish committees that further the Church's missions.

#### **SECTION V: Elder Board Meetings**

1. The active Elder Board will meet each month, unless otherwise specified. Special meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the Elders, the Interim Pastor, Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Servant Leaders as needed.

2. The Senior Pastor will lead the meetings and set the agenda with all the Elders able to add to and change the agenda. There will be unanimity of voting by the Elders in approving any major topics. The Senior Pastor is the leader of the group, but all the Elders will have an equal vote.

#### **SECTION VI: Elder Board Provisional Statement**

Until there are Elders, the Servant Leaders will act as both Servant Leaders and Elders in a united group as explained in Article VIII Section V.

## **Article X- Church Discipline**

1. Pastors: The Senior Pastor or Assistant Pastor(s) are not voted on. This would result in instability and severely undermine the ability of the Pastor to shepherd the church. He is not running for office and does not need to conduct church like a political candidate. However, a Pastor is not above discipline and is not appointed for life no matter what he does. There are some sins that could require the removal of the Pastor because the consequences would be so profound that they would destroy the church's ability to fulfill its mission for Christ. Sins such as adultery, embezzlement of church funds, the open and gross repudiation of what our church teaches about the Bible in strange apostasy, etc., are all examples of grounds to bring the removal of a Pastor to a vote. This constitution does not enumerate all the reasons for voting out a Pastor or any other leader. It is not meant to. Needless to say, such drastic measures would only be justified in the case of what the congregation would consider an egregious sin that threatens the life of the church. Personality conflicts, power struggles etc., are never reasons to vote out a Pastor or split a church.

2. A 100% vote of a quorum of the Elder Board must agree for removing a Senior Pastor followed by a 75% or more vote of the membership.

3. Elders and Servant leaders: Elders and Servant Leaders are voted on every four and two years respectively. They can obviously be removed at that time. However, if there is a great and urgent need to remove them sooner, they can be. Just as removing a pastor, removing an Elder or Servant Leader should not be taken lightly. Only an egregious sin or a violation of Biblical principles which threatens the life of the church should necessitate the forced removal of an Elder or Servant Leader.

4. 100% vote of a quorum of the Elder Board must agree for removing an Elder or Servant Leader followed by a 75% or more vote of the membership.

## **ARTICLE XI - Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**

Subject to the provision of the Texas Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, this Constitution and Bylaws or any provision of them may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted by vote of two-thirds of the members present at any special or regular membership meeting at which a quorum is present.

## **Amendment 1: Definition of Marriage**

Marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described in Scripture. We believe that biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the union of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church, its pastors, officers, administrators, interns and any other staff (“personnel”) will not be involved in any same-sex union, nor shall this church use its personnel, property or resources to commemorate, celebrate or otherwise promote any same-sex union, which would include (without limitation) any wedding, reception, ceremony, and other similar activities or events.

### Terms & Definitions:

1. “Marriage in this section refers only to the state of being united and not to any ceremony or related festivity or other event.
2. “Personnel” in this section is defined as a body of persons employed in an organization or place of work.
3. “Wedding in this section refers to a ceremony and the festivities usually associated with such a ceremony or event.

## **APPENDIX A: Servant Leaders Attributes**

Generally: “If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1b). He may be set apart to his responsibilities as an Elder when the Church clearly recognizes his giftedness, virtue and service by the standards given in these references: 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:2-3.

A born-again believer: A person who has given their life to Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Godly man or woman: A Servant Leader can be either a man or a woman. Romans 16:1-3. There were women who served in the New Testament as deaconesses such as Phoebe, specifically mentioned by Paul as a person to be received in a manner “worthy of the saints”. Although we do not believe it is Biblical to have women Elders or women Pastors, we do believe the Bible is clear that we should have women Servant Leaders.

Loves Jesus: A person who is not ashamed to live for Christ in public. A person with a love and passion for Jesus. Ephesians 3:17

Hold fast the Faithful Word: Must be stable in his faith and obedient to the Word of God in all respects. Titus 1:9.

Baptized: A man or woman who has been baptized by immersion in a Bible-believing Christ-centered church. Matthew 27:19, Acts 2:41.

A servant: A person who serves others around them; who graciously and without complaint serves others in the body of Christ. Matthew 20:26, Philippians 2:4.

Loves fellowship: A person who is not too proud to be accountable to others and is part of a small fellowship. Acts 2:42, 1 Peter 5:5.

A person who does not gossip: They can be trusted with confidential knowledge within and without the church. Proverbs 20:19, 1 Timothy 5:13.

A man or woman of prayer: Has a daily quiet time and believes in the power of prayer. James 5:16, Acts 1:14.

A leader: A man or woman who inspires people to follow them but can also follow others with humility. 2 Timothy 2:2.

Sober: A person who is not a heavy drinker or addicted to drink or other drugs. 1 Timothy 3:3, 1 Corinthians 10:32.

A disciple maker: A man or woman who takes the great commission seriously and strives to disciple people to maturity in Christ. Matthew 28:19.

Encourager: A person who exhorts others with patience and always a kind word Hebrews 10:24, Ephesians 4:32, Hebrews 3:13, 2 Timothy 2:24-25.

A man of faith: A person who listens to God and believes the promises of God and is not afraid to act on faith. He or she uses their intelligence but knows that many things are not to be understood but acted on by faith in Jesus and His words. Hebrews 11:1-2.

Above reproach: A model; sets an example for the congregation and lives a morally pure life. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7.

A man who is truthful: A person who can be trusted to tell the truth in all situations. Proverbs 12:17.

Husband of but one wife: A “one-woman man,” not referring to a leader’s marital status. The issue is moral, sexual behavior not whether or not a man or woman has been married before. Therefore, a man or woman who has been divorced can be a Servant Leader if he or she is living a pure life and their new marriage is good with a strong believer. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

A good family man or woman: He or she manages their family well and demonstrates leadership in their own home. They love and cherish their spouse and children. However, they do not have to be married; they can be single. They do not have to have children, and can have been married before, either widowed or divorced. 1 Corinthians 7:32-36, 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

Temperate: Alert, watchful, clear thinker. He does not allow moral, political, material, or social concerns to divert him from his primary purpose in life, which is to carry out the Lord’s Great Commission, no matter what his profession. 1 Timothy 3:2.

Self-controlled: Well disciplined, orders his priorities, serious about spiritual things. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8.

Respectable: Orders his life so as to be worthy of respect. If a leader cannot order his own life, how can he bring order to the Church? He must demonstrate good behavior. 1 Timothy 3:2.

Hospitable: Able to love strangers. Must be approachable and available. Their home life and personal life must be characterized by hospitality. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8.

Not violent: They must not be a “striker”, or a person given to physical or verbal violence, but one who is characterized by forbearance and tenderness. They must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently. 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7.

Gentle: Considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious; one who easily pardons human failures. Remembers good, not evil; does not hold a grudge; has no thought of retaliation. 1 Timothy 3:3.

Not quarrelsome: Peaceful. To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony and seriously hinder the effectiveness of the leadership team. 1 Timothy 3:3.

Not a Lover of Money: Must not be greedy, stingy, or financially obsessed. A Servant Leader must be motivated by love for his people, not love of money. Although tithing is not a requirement to be a Servant Leader it is encouraged because of the blessings and faith that result. 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:2.

Manage his own family well: There is a definite link between providing leadership in the home and leadership in the Church. Although no parent is perfect and certainly no family, there is a connection between a man who can manage his family and his leadership in the church. The family is a proving ground for leadership skills. If he succeeds in his family, he is likely to succeed in God's family; if not, he probably will not make a good leader in church. 1 Timothy 3:4-5, Titus 1:6.

Must not be a recent convert: Spiritual maturity. A Servant Leader is drawn from mature men and women in the Church. However, they do not need to be a Christian as long as an Elder or have all the attributes or responsibilities of an Elder. 1 Timothy 3:6.

Has a good reputation with outsiders: A Servant Leader has a godly character (his moral excellence and firmness) which must be exhibited in his personal and work life, in the Church, and in his home, and be evident to those outside the Church. A Servant Leader's character is to be certified by the testimony of those outside the Church as well as Church members. 1 Timothy 3:7.

Not self-willed: Not stubborn, one who always tries to have his own way. He must not be an insensitive person, forcing his own ideas and opinions on other people. 1 Timothy 3:7.

Faithful: A man or women who can be depended upon to serve time after time consistently. They are not the kind of person who shows up to help one time, and when it is inconvenient simply not show up the next time. They can be depended upon when church is running smoothly, and when it is difficult. Matthew 25:21.

Love what is good: Must not follow after and desire those things which are evil and sinful. He must be the kind of person who desires to do the will of God in everything. 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Just: Must be fair and impartial; one who can make objective judgments based on righteous and holy principles. Titus 1:8.

Service: One year of fruitful ministry as a member of the Church in support of its mission statement. A man or woman who has completed 101, 201, 301, and 401 and is involved in a small fellowship in addition to attending Sunday mornings. 1 Timothy 2:15-16.

## **APPENDIX B: Elders Attributes**

Generally: “If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” 1 Timothy 3:1b. He may be set apart to his responsibilities as an Elder when the Church clearly recognizes his giftedness, virtue and service by the standards given in these references. 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Godly man: An Elder should be a man. Although there were both men and women deacons and deaconesses in the early church such as Phoebe in Romans 16:1-3 there was never mention of women Elders. We will have women Servant Leaders which we have described as equivalent to deacons and deaconesses but not women Elders. This is not a belittling statement toward women. We believe men and women are of equal worth in the eyes of God. However, we believe that just as man is to be the leader in the home, he should also be the leader in the church. Indeed, it is not a great position of privilege to be lorded over others; it is a position of great responsibility that should be humbly and fearfully administered by men. Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Timothy 3:1-5.

A born-again believer: A man who has given his life to Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Baptized: A man who has been baptized by immersion in a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church. Matthew 27:19, Acts 2:41.

A man who does not gossip: He can be trusted with confidential knowledge within and without the church. Proverbs 20:19, 1 Timothy 5:13.

A man of prayer: He has a daily quiet time and believes in the power of prayer. James 5:16, Acts 1:14.

A bold man for Jesus: A man who is not ashamed to live for Christ in public and has a passion for Jesus. Ephesians 3:17.

A servant: A person who serves others around them; who graciously and without complaint serves others in the body of Christ. Matthew 20:26, Philippians 2:4.

Faithful: A man who can be depended upon to serve time after time consistently. They are not the kind of person who shows up to help one time, and when it is inconvenient simply not show up the next time. They can be depended upon when church is running smoothly, and when it is difficult. Matthew 25:21.

A leader: A man who inspires people to follow him but can also follow others with humility. 2 Timothy 2:2.

A disciple maker: A man takes the great commission seriously and strives to disciple people to maturity in Christ. Matthew 28:19.

A man of faith: A man who listens to God and believes the promises of God and is not afraid to act on faith. He uses his intelligence but knows that many things are not to be understood but acted on by faith in Jesus and His words. Hebrews 11:1-2.

Above Reproach: A model; sets an example for the congregation. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7.

A man who is truthful: He can be trusted to tell the truth in all situations. Proverbs 12:17.

Husband of But One Wife: A “one-woman man,” not referring to a leader’s marital status. The issue is moral, sexual behavior not whether or not a man has been married before. Therefore, a man who has been divorced can be an Elder if he is living a pure life and his new marriage is good with a strong believer, or he is single and living a godly life. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

A good family man: He manages his family well and demonstrates leadership in his own home. He loves and cherishes his wife and children, but he does not have to be married or have children and can have been married before either widowed or divorced. 1 Corinthians 7:32-36, 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

Temperate: Alert, watchful, clear thinker. He does not allow moral, political, material, or social concerns to divert him from his primary purpose in life, which is to carry out the Lord’s Great Commission, no matter what his profession. 1 Timothy 3:2.

Self-Controlled: Well disciplined, orders his priorities, serious about spiritual things. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8.

Respectable: Orders his life so as to be worthy of respect. If a leader cannot order his own life, how can he bring order to the Church? He must demonstrate good behavior. 1 Timothy 3:2.

Hospitable: Able to love strangers; must be approachable and available. His home life and personal life must be characterized by hospitality. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8.

Able to Teach: Ability to handle the Scriptures; understand and communicate the Truth to others; able to refute those who mishandle the Truth. This can be done publicly, or in small or private meetings, in a non-argumentative, non-defensive and sensitive way. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

A Non-Drinker: Although the Bible does not prohibit drinking of alcohol, and even Christ’s first miracle was turning water into wine, an Elder must care for his weaker brother. As Paul stated we have a responsibility to help keep others from stumbling. They might mistake our liberties in Christ and use us as an excuse to abuse alcohol. Therefore, an Elder should sacrifice some of his liberty in order to be a Godly example to others. 1 Timothy 3:3, 1 Corinthians 10:32-33, Titus 1:7.

Not Violent: He must not be a “striker”, or a person given to physical or verbal violence, but one who is characterized by forbearance and tenderness. He must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently. 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7.

Gentle: Considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious; one who easily pardons human failures. Remembers good, not evil; does not hold a grudge; has no thought of retaliation. 1 Timothy 3:3.

Not Quarrelsome: Peaceful. To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony and seriously hinder the effectiveness of the leadership team. 1 Timothy 3:3.

Not a Lover of Money: Must not be greedy, stingy, or financially obsessed. An Elder must be motivated by love for his people, not love of money. 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:2.

A tither: A man who puts God and his church first in his finances and understands the principles putting God first in everything. Malachi 3:8-11.

Manage His Own Family Well: There is a definite link between providing leadership in the home and leadership in the Church. Although no parent is perfect and certainly no family, there is a connection between a man who can manage his family and his leadership in the church. The family is a proving ground for leadership skills. If he succeeds in his family, he is likely to succeed in God’s family; if not, he probably will not make a good leader in church. 1 Timothy 3:4-5, Titus 1:6.

Must Not be a Recent Convert: Spiritual maturity. An Elder is drawn from the most spiritually mature men in the Church. 1 Timothy 3:6.

Has a Good Reputation with Outsiders: An Elder’s godly character (his moral excellence and firmness) must be exhibited in his personal and work life, in the Church, and in his home, and be evident to those outside the Church. An Elder’s character is to be certified by the testimony of those outside the Church as well as Church members. 1 Timothy 3:7.

Not Self-Willed: Not stubborn, one who always tries to have his own way. He must not be an insensitive person, forcing his own ideas and opinions on other people. 1 Timothy 3:7.

Not Quick-Tempered: In control of his own spirit. When he does get angry (and we all do), he must not sin and let the sun go down on his anger but reconcile and forgive those he is angry with. Ephesians 4:26.

Love What is Good: Must not follow after and desire those things which are evil and sinful. He must be the kind of person who desires to do the will of God in everything. 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Just: Must be fair and impartial; one who can make objective judgments based on righteous and holy principles. Titus 1:8.

Devout: Must be committed to personal holiness, separated from sin. Titus 1:8.

Hold Fast the Faithful Word: Must be stable in his faith and obedient to the Word of God in all respects. Titus 1:9.

Church Membership and Ministry Requirements: In addition to these Biblical qualifications, no man shall be selected to serve as an Elder until he has at least had one year of fruitful ministry as a member of the Church in support of its mission statement. He must also have completed 101, 201, 301, and 401 and is involved in a small fellowship in addition to attending Sunday mornings. 1 Timothy 2:15-16.

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