



## **By-Laws**

**Version 1.1**

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## **I. Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Q: What are by-laws and why were they created?**

**A:** The by-laws are a set of standards and procedures that are used to govern the affairs of the church. They were created because many of the standards and procedures were being used informally, but not explicitly stated. The elders and deacons saw value in making them formal, so that they can be used by all future generations of church leadership.

**Q: Why are by-laws important?**

**A:** By-laws provide members with a guide to how the church is governed. While by-laws do not ensure good governance, they reduce the risk of bad governance. The by-laws will be used by leadership to manage important aspects of ministry such as how to collect donations, when to publish quarterly reports, how to install a new elder or deacon, and even how to properly run a meeting.

**Q: What's the difference between the constitution and the by-laws?**

**A:** The constitution is the foundational document that declares the purpose, core value, and statements of faith for the church. The by-laws use this foundation to provide details of how the church works logistically. For example, the constitution simply states that the church should designate deacons. The by-laws give instruction on how deacons are to be selected and who is eligible.

**Q: What's the difference between a pastor and an elder?**

**A:** The elders have the overall responsibility of preaching, teaching, and shepherding the church. A pastor is an elder who is on staff since they are employed by the church.

**Q: What's the difference between elders and deacons?**

**A:** Elders are responsible and accountable for the teaching and shepherding of the entire church whereas the deacons serve the church by meeting its physical needs and the needs of the surrounding community.

**Q: What is the purpose of the elder and deacon boards?**

**A:** A board is a smaller group that makes governing decisions on behalf of their team for the church. The Elder Team chooses its own board to make decisions for the elders and the Deacon Team does likewise. This eliminates having excessively large groups trying to make decisions.

**Q: Why do we address dissolution?**

**A:** As a non-profit organization which is bound by the laws of the state of Illinois, the church looks to express its wishes so that the church, not the state of Illinois, decides what is done with its assets in the case that the church is forced to dissolve.

## **II. Governing Documents**

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### **A. Constitution**

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1. The constitution is a foundational document for church government and describes the church's legal organization, basic structure, and beliefs.
2. The by-laws must always be consistent with the constitution. If there is a material conflict between the by-laws and the constitution, the constitution will always have precedence.

### **B. By-Laws**

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1. The by-laws are used by the church to govern its affairs. They also serve to define the roles within the organization. If conflict exists between federal or state law and by-laws, then federal or state law will take precedence.
2. Although by-laws assist in governance, they are not meant to govern every process or procedure used in the church.
3. In general, the by-laws establish requirements and standards. Occasionally, they may also suggest guidelines. Guidelines are worded in a fashion to imply that they are not requirements or standards (e.g. "may" or "should")

### **C. By-Laws Review**

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1. The by-laws will be reviewed annually by the Elder Board for any additional changes.
2. Any active member of the congregation can propose changes, but these proposed changes will be reviewed and implemented at the discretion of the Elder Board.
3. See Amendments

### **III. Membership**

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#### **A. Types**

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1. Active – Persons who have met the requirements of membership and are actively involved in the ministry of the church
2. Inactive – Persons who have met the requirements of membership, but are not actively involved in the ministry of the church.
3. Under Discipline – Persons who have met the requirements of membership, but have become inactive due to church discipline.

#### **B. Accountability**

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1. All members will commit themselves to faithfully pursue spiritual growth and mutually will purposefully become accountable to one another. This commitment is not a license to judge one another but is a responsibility to actively encourage each other to remain obedient to the guidelines of Scripture.
2. All members will submit themselves to the authority of the church elders as the elders, in turn, submit to Christ.
3. Should any member choose to reject the commands of the Bible, the church body will be actively involved in personally confronting and encouraging them to repent, make reconciliation or restitution when necessary, and resume obedience to God.
4. Unrepentant sin is a cause for discipline, and these sins may typically be categorized as violations of Christian love, unity, law, or truth (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Titus 3:10). See [Church Discipline](#).

#### **C. Qualifications and Eligibility**

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1. Membership candidates must proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
2. Membership candidates must have been baptized\_(this can be waived by a majority vote of the Elder Board).
3. Membership candidates must meet the requirements of the membership class and subscribe to the Statement of Faith, as described in the Constitution.
4. Senior pastors, associate pastors and youth ministers automatically become members upon employment.

#### **D. Application and Acceptance**

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1. An individual who desires to meet the qualifications and eligibility requirements may pursue membership by attending and completing a membership class.
2. The candidate will complete an application and an interview with the at least two elders to share his/her testimony of faith in Christ Jesus and discuss his/her membership, areas of giftedness, and ministry participation. Candidates that are currently under church discipline must fully disclose the circumstances of the situation to the Elder Board.
3. The name of the candidate will also be published in the church bulletin for at least two weeks.
4. Any member of the church who has a reservation/objection to the candidate's membership on Biblical or constitutional grounds must immediately inform an elder of his/her reason(s) for such reservation/objection.
5. The Elder Board will vote on the candidate. Two-thirds vote of the Elder Board is needed for approval.
6. Any candidate accepted into membership will be introduced and recognized as a member before the congregation during a subsequent Sunday worship service.

## **E. Removal**

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### **1. Reasons**

- a. Request of the member: Requests must be in writing and the person cannot be under disciplinary action.
- b. Request from another church: For those members in good standing moving membership to another church of like faith, a letter of Christian character will be provided upon request of that church.
- c. Death of the member: No church action is required.

### **2. Guidelines**

- a. A member will be removed from active membership if one or more of the following conditions apply:
  - i. A written request by the member for removal has been received by the church
  - ii. Church discipline requires membership type to be changed to "Under Discipline"
  - iii. The member has been frequently absent from regular church activities over a 6 month period without reasonable explanation to the Elder Board.
- b. The Elder Board will send written notice of its intent or decision to cancel membership.
- c. If the member does not respond with corrective action in a timely fashion, the Elder Board will vote to remove the member. A majority vote of the Elder Board is necessary to remove/reclassify a member.

## **F. Inactivity**

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1. Inactivity will be assessed by the Elder Board on a case-by-case basis.
2. The church office will contact any member that has not continued meeting with the church or supported the work of the church with some degree of regularity for a period of

six months. Special consideration will be given to those who have been providentially hindered.

3. The Elder Board will review the reasons given by the member and encourage resumption of fellowship. If there are no mitigating reasons for his/her inactivity, then the membership status will be changed to inactive for a period of one year. Status changes require a majority vote of the Elder Board.
4. If at the conclusion of that time, they have not responded to the encouragement of the church body to resume active participation, their membership will be dropped.

## **IV. Worship Services**

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### **A. Regular Worship Services**

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#### **1. Description**

- a. The purpose of this service will be to regularly commune with God and fellowship with other Christians.

#### **2. Requirements**

- a. The services are to be held weekly on Sunday mornings.
- b. There must be at least one elder or deacon present.
- c. It must be communicated to the church membership as a worship service.
- d. It must be at a location designated by the Elder Board.
- e. On the third Sunday of each month, the Lord's Supper shall be observed unless other arrangements for its observance are made by the Elder Board.
- f. Any changes to the date, time, or location of the service require a two-thirds vote of the Elder Board for approval. The changes will be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible.

### **B. Special Worship Services**

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#### **1. Description**

- a. The purpose of this service will be to commune with God and fellowship with other Christians for a special occasion, resulting in edification.

#### **2. Requirements**

- a. There must be at least one elder or deacon present.
- b. It must be communicated as a special worship service and the reason for it being special must be communicated to the congregation.
- c. It must be at a location designated by the Elder Board.
- d. Any changes to the date, time, or location of the service require a two-thirds vote of the Elder Board for approval. The changes will be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible.

## **V. Financial Management**

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### **A. General**

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#### **1. Accountability and Responsibility**

- a. The Elder Board, acting as the Board of Directors for the organization, will be held accountable for the financial decisions made by the church.
- b. The Deacon Board will be responsible for the acquisition, oversight, and liquidation of church assets.
- c. Designated staff and/or volunteer(s) will be responsible for the routine book keeping of the church.
- d. At any time, an audit committee may be assembled by either the Elder or Deacon Boards to do an unplanned audit of internal financial controls. This committee will be provided full disclosure of financial records. The results of this audit will be published to both the Elder and Deacon Boards.

#### **2. Standards**

- a. All accounting and reporting practices will conform to any applicable local, state, and federal standards. If there is a by-law that conflicts with the accounting and reporting standards of applicable governing authorities, then the by-law will be void and the local, state, or federal standard will be enforced.
- b. These standards will be documented, kept in the church office, and available to the general public upon request.

#### **3. Accounting and Reporting Cycle**

- a. The fiscal year will be from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. All accounting and reporting cycles will be based on this fiscal year.
- b. The following dates will define financial accounting and reporting periods
  - i. First Quarter = July 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. Second Quarter = October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>
  - iii. Third Quarter = January 1<sup>st</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>
  - iv. Fourth Quarter = April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>

### **B. Donations**

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#### **1. Cash Donations**

- a. All checks and money orders given to the church should be made out to the corporate name and not to an individual or group within the church.
- b. All donations will be added to the General Fund, unless otherwise noted. A benefactor may indicate a fund to which he/she would like their donation applied. If no such fund exists, then their monies will not be accepted.
- c. All donations must be counted in a secure location and in the presence of a deacon. A third party must be present if the counting deacons are related and/or male/female. All counters must be active members in good standing with the church.
- d. Any envelope used in collections should have the correct amount written clearly on it. If no amount is shown on the envelope, or the amount shown is incorrect, the person in charge of collections will write the correct amount on the envelope with his/her initials. All envelopes used in collections will be kept as a record for at least 5 years.

- e. All cash and checks must be deposited into the appropriate bank account within 48 hours of service collections.
- f. Anyone depositing donations will deposit the entire amount and not receive cash back. The Elder Team will instruct all financial institutions that hold funds on behalf of the church to prohibit its cashiers from providing cash back from a deposit.
- g. Any cash or check donations received outside of the regular worship service must be received by a staff person not responsible for the financial bookkeeping.

## **2. Donated Goods, Services, and Real Estate**

- a. This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be in the name of the church.
- b. Donated goods, services, or real estate will be accepted at the discretion of the Elder Team.
- c. In accordance with state and federal regulations, the value of these goods will not be determined by the church. The church will not provide a statement of value to the benefactor.

## **3. Donated Securities**

- a. In general, any securities that are donated to the church will be liquidated at the earliest convenience of the Elder Team. The Elder Team will select a broker/dealer representative to sell the securities.
- b. If the donor of the securities clearly states that he/she wishes the securities to be retained by the church to fund a specific purpose, then the Elder Team will facilitate the creation of an endowment.
- c. If a fund does not exist already for the stated purpose of the donated securities, then the gift must either be designated for an existing fund (e.g. the General Fund) or rejected.

## **4. Giving Statements**

- a. The business administrator, the treasurer, or a designee, will produce quarterly giving statements (tax deductible gifts only) showing how much was given to the church by a person or entity within a given period.
- b. Annual and midyear giving statements should be mailed by July 20<sup>th</sup> and January 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **C. Budgeting**

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### **1. Annual Budget Process**

- a. The Elder Team or designee will announce to the Elder and Deacon Boards its intention to begin budget planning for the next fiscal year at least 120 days in advance of the intended congregational vote. The Elder Team or designee will work with ministry leaders to develop a proposed budget.
- b. The proposed budget will show the budgeted amount from the previous year, the actual amount realized in the previous year, and the budgeted amount for the proposed year for each income and expense category.
- c. The Elder Team will present the proposed budget to ministry leaders responsible for budgeting within their respective ministries for a 30-day review. During that time, the Elder Team will solicit feedback on the budget and schedule at least one joint leadership meeting for discussion.
- d. At the conclusion of the budget review, the Treasurer will present the proposed budget to the Elder Board for review in a regularly scheduled Elder Board meeting. A two-thirds vote of the Elder Board is necessary for approval.
- e. Once the Elder Board has approved the proposed budget, the congregation will be given a copy of the proposed budget and allowed a minimum of two weeks to review it.
- f. Informational meetings will be held at various times to allow members to provide feedback and ask questions during the review period.
- g. The proposed annual budget will be voted on in a business meeting. A majority vote of a quorum of the active members is required to approve the budget.
- h. The annual budgeting process may be suspended for up to a maximum of one fiscal year. During that time, the church may operate without an approved budget. The Elder Team must approve the suspension by two-thirds vote. The church may not suspend the annual budgeting process for two consecutive years.
- i. Until a new budget is approved, the last approved budget will be used.

### **2. Budgeting for Missions**

- a. The Missions Reserve Fund (MRF) is a fund created internally for the management of annual surpluses or deficits in donations to missions.
- b. Ten percent (10%) of any annual surplus in the General Fund will be transferred to the MRF at the discretion of the Elder Board.
- c. The MRF will appear on the annual financial report as a separate line item.

### **3. Budget Changes**

- a. All requests for a budget change must be submitted in writing to the Elder Team. The Elder Team must approve any request by two-thirds vote before a budget change is made.
- b. The Elder Team will submit a written response to the requesting party and communicate the decision to the congregation as determined necessary by the Elder Team.

## **D. Financial Reporting**

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### **1. Monthly Financial Reports**

- a. These reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Monthly Profit and Loss vs. Budget
  - ii. Monthly Fund Balance Statement

- b. The monthly reports will be submitted to the Elder Board for review after the close of each month. The board will communicate these reports to the ministry point persons as they see fit.

## 2. Quarterly Financial Reports

- a. These reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Quarterly Profit and Loss vs. Budget
  - ii. Quarterly Balance Fund Statement
- b. The Elder Board will approve the quarterly report before the next quarterly business meeting. A majority vote of the Elder Board is required for approval.
- c. Once the Elder Board has approved the reports, they will be published and presented at the next quarterly business meeting.

## 3. Annual Financial Reports

- a. These reports may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Annual Profit and Loss vs. Budget
  - ii. Annual Balance Fund Statement
- b. The treasurer will submit the annual financial reports to the Elder Board for approval by July 15<sup>th</sup>. A majority vote of the Elder Board is required for approval.
- c. Once the Elder Board has approved the reports, they will be published and presented at the next quarterly business meeting.

## **E. Expenses and Approvals**

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### 1. Petty cash

- a. Oftentimes, small amounts of cash (a.k.a. “Petty Cash”) are needed for expenditures when it is not practical to make the disbursement by check.
- b. The petty cash fund would be created by issuing a check for the desired amount. The entry for this initial fund will show as a debit to “Petty Cash” and a credit to “Cash”. The petty cash fund will not exceed \$250.
- c. As expenditures are made to petty cash, the business administrator, an Elder, or a designee will reimburse staff/volunteers and secure a voucher in return. At any given time the total of cash on-hand plus reimbursed vouchers must equal the original fund amount.
- d. The business administrator, an Elder, or a designee submits the vouchers for reimbursement when the petty cash fund gets low. Once the check is cashed, the petty cash fund has a balance at the original amount.
- e. Example: A \$100 check is written to “Petty Cash” from the primary checking account to start the petty cash fund. Assuming \$80 in cash was used to purchase office supplies, \$80 worth of vouchers was obtained. An \$80 check is then written to “Petty Cash” and an \$80 debit towards office expenses is marked.

### 2. Requisitions

- a. Any expected expense less than \$250 does not require a requisition request.
- b. If an expense is expected to exceed \$250 and is not a regular operational expense, then a requisition request must be completed by the party expecting the expense. The business administrator, an Elder, or a designee must approve the request in advance of the purchase.
- c. If a requisition request is denied, then it may be appealed to the Elder Board at the Board’s discretion. Final approval by the Elder Board requires a two-thirds vote.

- d. No signed blank checks will be provided for any requisition.
  - e. A copy of an original receipt with a copy of the approved request must be submitted to the church office within five (5) business days of any expense. If the expense is incurred while on a trip, the receipts may be submitted within five business days of returning home from the trip.
3. Any non-budgeted expense that exceeds 5% of the overall annual budget will require the following:
- a. A written proposal submitted to the Deacon Board.
  - b. A majority vote of the Deacon Board is required for approval.
4. Any non-budgeted expense that exceeds 10% of the overall annual budget will require the following:
- a. A written proposal submitted to the Deacon and Elder Boards
  - b. A two-thirds vote of the Deacon Board, then the Elder Board, and finally the active members

## **F. Signature Authority**

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1. The treasurer or any Elder may be granted signature authority by the Elder Board. This authority will allow him/her to sign checks on behalf of the church for all financial accounts. One staff member may also be granted signature authority.
2. Exclusions: The senior pastor, the secretary, and any other staff given the responsibility of keeping financial records are not eligible to have signature authority. This exclusion provides a safeguard against fraudulent use of funds by separating those who are keeping the records from those who are able to withdraw funds.

## **VI. Business Meetings**

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### **A. Regular Business Meetings**

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1. Quarterly business meetings will be held by the following dates to review quarterly financial reports:
  - a. Present Financial Reports for First Quarter by October 31<sup>st</sup>
  - b. Present Financial Reports for Second Quarter by January 31<sup>st</sup>
  - c. Present Financial Reports for Third Quarter by April 30<sup>th</sup>
  - d. Present Financial Reports for Fourth Quarter by July 31<sup>st</sup>
2. Annual business meetings will be held in conjunction with the fourth quarter business meeting and do not require a separate meeting.
3. All active members will be given sufficient notice of business meetings. These notices will be a combination of bulletin announcement and mailings to the addresses on file with the church office well in advance of the meeting.
4. All meetings will have a written agenda and will produce notes. The agenda will be established by the Elder Team and should allow sufficient time to review and receive feedback on the presented financial reports.
5. A copy of all meeting documents will be kept on file in the church office. Access to these documents will be limited to active members of the church.

### **B. Special Business Meetings**

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1. Special business meetings may be called at the discretion of the Elder Board with at least 5 business days notice. These meetings must have a quorum (at least 50%) of the active membership present to proceed.
2. Special business meetings may be called for specific reasons that will dictate the agenda of the meeting.

## **VII. Congregational Voting**

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### **A. Eligibility**

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1. Congregational votes will allow both members and non-members to cast a ballot. Any person who regularly attends and considers the church to be their place of worship has the right to vote.
2. Only the vote of active members will be binding and used to determine the outcome of the vote. Any person who is classified a non-member, inactive, or under discipline, may vote only as a non-member and their vote will not be binding nor used to determine the outcome of the vote.

### **B. Methods**

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#### **1. Blind Ballot**

- a. All voting done by the congregation of the church will be blind ballots.
- b. The members will get a piece of paper on which the options to be voted on will be written.
- c. The members will check the box for their choice.

#### **2. Absentee Ballot**

- a. In the case that a member of the church cannot be present, they are allowed to obtain an absentee ballot.
- b. The absentee ballot must contain the person's name.
- c. The absentee ballot must be turned in to the church no later than the Friday before the vote.
- d. The absentee ballot is void if the person is in attendance the day of the vote.

#### **3. Thresholds**

- a. Any proposal relating to the following areas must be approved by a two-thirds vote of active membership in order for that proposal to pass.
  - i. Annual budget
  - ii. Purchase or sale of real estate
  - iii. Staff acquisition and removal
  - iv. Confirmation of elders and deacons
  - v. Affiliation

### **C. Voting Procedure**

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1. A congregational vote must be announced at least two weeks in advance of the date of voting. The announcement must occur during a regular worship service and recur weekly until the date of voting.
2. All congregational votes must occur during a business meeting. It is recommended that business meetings not occur during worship, but the timing of the meeting will be at the discretion of the Elder Board.

3. The elders and/or deacons will be provided a list of absentee voters, inactive members, and members under discipline. The elders and/or deacons will accordingly distribute ballots that are clearly marked for members and non-members.
4. At least two from among the elders or deacons will count the votes and certify the results. A designated elder or deacon will communicate the results to the Senior Pastor or someone he designates to announce the result to the congregation.
5. If the vote pertains to a specific deacon or elder, that person may not count or certify the votes.

## VIII. Staff and Volunteers

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### A. Staff Acquisition and Removal

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#### 1. Description

- a. Staff is those persons employed, either full or part-time, by the church.
- b. Volunteers are those persons serving the church in a non-staff role.

#### 2. Qualifications and Eligibility

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)

#### 3. Staff Vacancies

- a. If a current staff member vacates a position, then it is at the discretion of the Elder Team to search for a replacement.

#### 4. Creating a New Staff Position

- a. As a need occurs, new staff positions must be created. Each position must have a job description created that explains the responsibilities of that position and proposed hourly or annual compensation.
- b. Once a proposal is created, it will be reviewed and approved by the other Elder Board. A two-thirds vote of the Elder Board is necessary for approval.
- c. The proposal will be presented to the congregation and a two-thirds vote of the active members is necessary for approval.

#### 5. Pastoral Search Team

- a. Pastoral staff include the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and the Student Pastor/Minister.
- b. In the event that a new pastoral staff position is approved or a current pastoral staff position is vacated, the Elder Board will commission a Search Team to look for a suitable candidate.
- c. Team Setup
  - i. The appointment of the Search Team should be made as soon as possible, within a time frame not to exceed three months.
  - ii. The team will consist of no more than three elders, two members of the Deacon Board, and two persons from the congregation at large (non-deacon, non-elder).
  - iii. The chairperson will be appointed by the elders. A secretary shall be determined by the team.
  - iv. The team will establish a regular meeting schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.).
  - v. The team will seek unanimity on any votes. Failing unanimity, a simple majority will determine the outcome.
- d. The Search Process
  - i. The team will create an outline of qualifications to be sought in a candidate.
  - ii. The team will seek candidates within the active members of the church first.
  - iii. If no candidate can be agreed upon from within the active members of the church, the team may seek candidates from other sources.
  - iv. The team will come to a majority consensus on their recommended candidate and present its recommendation to the Elder Board.

## 6. Candidate Review

- a. Each candidate will be considered and voted upon individually. Only one candidate may be considered by the congregation at a time.
- b. The Senior Pastor has the ability to decline any candidate considered by the church, as he is in charge of all staff (unless the candidate is being considered for the position of Senior Pastor).
- c. The Elder Board will vote on the recommendation. A two-thirds vote is necessary to approve the candidate.
- d. Once the elder board approval is received, the candidate will be presented to the congregation for approval. A two-thirds vote of the active members is required for final approval.
- e. Before any offer of employment is made, the candidate must complete an I-9 Form under the supervision of a staff member. This form must be kept on file by the church for a minimum of three years or one year after removal (whichever is longer).

## 7. Removal

- a. The employment relationship may be dissolved by a written notice of such intention, at least 30-days in advance, by the church or the employee. A shorter notice may be given by mutual consent.

## **B. Volunteer Acquisition and Removal**

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### 1. Description

- a. Volunteers are all those who perform specific functions for the church but are unpaid.

### 2. Qualifications and Eligibility

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)

### 3. Organizational Structure

- a. Volunteers will report to the elders, deacons, or a designated person.
- b. At the time that the church accepts the volunteer, the specific oversight will be described to the volunteer and to that person's overseer.

### 4. Selection Process

- a. Volunteers will be selected by elders, deacons, or a designated person.
- b. All volunteers selected for positions of authority will be approved by the Elder Board or one of the ministry staff.

### 5. Installation

- a. All volunteers will sign a Volunteer Agreement which will indemnify and hold harmless the church from any and all claims and causes of action, including attorney's fees and unauthorized expenses incurred in volunteer activities.
- b. Volunteer Agreements will be kept on file for a year following removal.

### 6. Removal

- a. Volunteers may remove themselves at will. Notice should be given to the person to whom the volunteer reported, but may be given to any elder, deacon, or staff member.
- b. The elders, deacons, or a designated person may remove volunteers at will.

- c. For those volunteers in positions of authority, a letter of removal will be given to the volunteer and the Elder Board will determine whether the removal needs to be communicated to the congregation.

## **C. Screening Staff and Volunteers**

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### **1. Positions of Authority**

- a. Certain positions in the church require greater scrutiny because they are positions of authority. The following are considered to be positions of authority:
  - i. Elder or Deacon
  - ii. Any staff positions
  - iii. Any position that requires the authorization of financial or legal matters on behalf of the church
  - iv. Any staff or volunteer in ministries that work with minors
  - v. Ministry Point Person or any volunteer with authority over others
- b. Screening Process
  - i. Any candidate applying for a position of authority must complete all required documentation and submit to a criminal history background check. Candidates applying for a position of authority which requires the handling of church funds will undergo an additional financial history background check.
  - ii. The Elder Board reserves the right to interview all candidates and contact all references listed by a candidate.
  - iii. Any documents pertaining to the background check and interview will be strictly confidential, shared only amongst the Elder Board for the purpose of screening, and retained by the church office in a secure location.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. The candidate for a position of authority must be an active member in good standing with the church. If the candidate is not an active member, he/she will sign a statement of faith consistent with the current constitution.
- b. Anyone convicted of physical abuse or sexual misconduct will not be permitted to work with children.
- c. The screening results will be kept in a secure location and accessible to select elders chosen by the Elder Board.
- d. See [Application and Screening Process](#)

## **IX. Governing Bodies**

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### **A. Accountability and Affiliation**

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1. Under God, all leaders are accountable to the church membership.
2. Under God, the church is independent and free to manage its own affairs. It is subject to no ecclesiastical body, except by its own consent. It controls the admission, discipline, and removal of its members according to its own understanding of the Word of God.
3. Realizing the necessity and advantage of united effort, and being in general accord with the aim and scope of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), the church is affiliated with the EFCA and its Great Lakes District Conference (GLDC). The church will send delegates to their conferences, support their missions and unite in mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ, in the measure that the church itself may officially decide.

### **B. Elder Board**

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1. The primary duty of the Elder Board is to make administrative decisions for the spiritual welfare of the church.
2. The Elder Board is the Board of Directors of the organization for the purpose of state law. No member of the Elder Board will be held personally responsible for the debts of the church.
3. The Elder Board will consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven members (excluding the treasurer). Staff may not exceed 50% of the Elder Board.
4. At a minimum, the Elder Board must include the senior pastor, two other elders, and the treasurer. If there are only three elders in the congregation, they must all be on the Elder Board. See **Organizational Structure**.
5. The treasurer, if not an elder, is an ex-officio member of the Elder Board; he is a non-voting member representing the Deacon Board. The treasurer, at a minimum, will attend Elder Board meetings once a month. He may be invited to attend additional meetings as deemed necessary by the Elder Board.
6. The Elder Board will annually select a chair and secretary from among its members to facilitate Elder Board meetings. The senior pastor may be named as the chair of the Elder Board, but this is not necessary.
7. If there are seven or more elders in the congregation, the following provisions will apply:
  - a. Elder Board members are selected by all elders to serve on the board for a period of three years. One-third of the members of the Elder Board shall be approved each year to occupy the positions left vacant by those completing the third year of their term of service. The senior pastor and treasurer are exempt from this rotation.

- b. Elders may serve for two consecutive three-year terms. If an elder wishes to serve another three-year term, his service will be reviewed by all the elders. Approval for three (or more) consecutive terms requires majority vote of the elders.

### **C. Deacon Board**

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1. The primary duty of the Deacon Board is to make administrative decisions for the physical welfare of the church.
2. The Deacon Board will consist of a minimum of seven and a maximum of thirteen members. The Deacon Board is composed of the treasurer, head deacon, and the governing deacons. Staff may not exceed 50% of the Deacon Board.
3. Upon entering the Deacon Board, each member will be given a role as their gifts allow. Any Deacon Board member, except the treasurer, may change roles within the Board. This role change must receive a majority vote of the Deacon Board.
4. The Deacon Board must include the treasurer and three governing deacons. If there are only seven deacons in the active membership, they must all be on the Deacon Board.
5. The Deacon Board will annually select a chair and secretary from among its members to facilitate Deacon Board meetings. The treasurer may be named as the chair of the Deacon Board, but this is not necessary.
6. If there are thirteen or more deacons in the congregation, the following provisions will apply:
  - a. Deacon Board members are selected by all deacons to serve on the board for a period of three years. One-third of the members of the Deacon Board shall be approved each year to occupy the positions left vacant by those completing the third year of their term of service.
  - b. Deacons may serve for two consecutive three-year terms. If a deacon wishes to serve another three-year term, his service will be reviewed by all the deacons. Approval for three (or more) consecutive terms requires a majority vote of the deacons.

### **D. Sabbaticals**

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1. An Elder or Deacon may request a sabbatical (break) from his/her duties at any time. The request should be made in writing to the head Elder/Deacon who will then meet with the team member to understand the details of the request. (Note: an Elder/Deacon may step down from the board without leaving the team. Stepping down from a board in this manner is not considered a sabbatical.)
2. A sabbatical will have a set period, not to exceed one year. While on sabbatical, the Elder/Deacon will be considered an inactive member of the Elder/Deacon team and will not be part of the Elder/Deacon board. He/she will be given the option of receiving meeting notes, updates, and other related communications during the sabbatical.
3. At the end of the agreed period, the Head Elder/Deacon will meet with the person to assess whether the team member is ready to resume duties. If the team member cannot

resume their duties after the end of the agreed period, then he/she will be granted an additional sabbatical period (up to a cumulative total of one year) or asked to step down from the team permanently.

4. Once a sabbatical has concluded, the returning Elder/Deacon may not request another sabbatical for the next two consecutive years.

## **X. Organizational Roles**

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### **A. Elders**

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#### **1. Description**

- a. Elders are defined by Scripture as those men who hold the highest office in the church under Christ.
- b. The elders are specifically set aside for preaching, teaching, and prayer. The elders are therefore those who are ultimately responsible to God for every ministry within the church.
- c. Pastors are defined as elders who are employed by the church.
- d. Types
  - i. Senior Pastor
  - ii. Associate Pastor
  - iii. Governing Elder (on the board)
  - iv. Non-governing Elder (not on the board)

#### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. Eligibility will be determined by the Elder Board.
- b. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- c. The elder candidate must possess the qualifications as established by Scripture (I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).
- d. The elder candidate who is married or has children is also instructed to be a husband of one wife, to manage his own family well, and to see that his children obey him. Candidates who are single, childless or divorced may also be eligible to become an elder.
- e. The candidate may be ineligible if any of the following conditions exist:
  - i. The candidate initiated separation or divorce while proclaiming to be a Christian
  - ii. The candidate's reasons for separation or divorce was not related to spousal unfaithfulness, as defined in Scripture
  - iii. The candidate has not sought restoration with his spouse.
- f. Since they must be able to teach and not new believers, elders are expected to have a living knowledge of the Bible so that they may be the ones who instruct the church in Christian living and doctrine.
- g. The candidate must uphold and support the Statement of Faith and Constitution of the church.
- h. Except in the case of staff acquisition, the candidate must have been an active member of the church in good standing for at least one continuous year prior to approval.

#### **3. Organizational Structure:**

- a. The elders report to the Elder Board, of which the Senior Pastor is the Head. All elders, except the associate pastor(s), are peers to the senior pastor.

#### **4. Process of Selection:**

- a. The elders will recommend eligible candidates who are already exhibiting the qualities of an elder within the body.
- b. Those candidates are approached by an elder to determine the candidate's willingness and availability to become an elder. The candidate will be asked to consider the opportunity and respond within a two week period.

- c. If the candidate is willing and able to serve, then he and his spouse will be interviewed by at least two other elders. The two elders will provide a report to the Elder Board as to the candidate's readiness to serve as an elder.
- d. The Elder Board will convene to interview and vote on the candidate. Approval requires two-thirds vote of the Elder Board.
- e. After Elder Board approval is received, the candidate will be presented to the congregation for approval. Approval requires a majority vote of active members.

## 5. Removal

- a. Reasons for Removal
  - i. Removal due to moral failure
  - ii. Replacement due to incapacity to fulfill elder functions
  - iii. Resignation for personal reasons or ministry change
  - iv. Death
- b. Procedure
  - i. Any active member of the church can propose removal. A written proposal must be submitted to the Elder Board that explains why removal is necessary.
  - ii. The elders will discuss the proposal in an Elder Board meeting and will consider the proposal using biblical principles. The elder in question may participate in the meeting, but will be excluded from the vote.
  - iii. A decision to remove an elder requires a two-thirds vote of the elders.
  - iv. Written confirmation of removal will be sent to the elder upon removal and the active members will be notified.

## B. Senior Pastors

---

### 1. Description

- a. The senior pastor is the full-time staff person who has the primary responsibility for preaching within the church and to whom the staff is accountable.
- b. The senior pastor is an elder.

### 2. Qualifications and Eligibility

- a. See [Elder Qualifications and Eligibility](#)
- b. All pastors will attain their credentials through the EFCA or transfer their credentials to the EFCA within 18 months of date of hire.

### 3. Organizational Structure

- a. The senior pastor is the head of the pastors and all staff.
- b. The senior pastor is the head of the elders.
- c. The senior pastor is a defacto member of all groups in the church.

### 4. Selection Process

- a. See [Pastoral Search Team](#)

### 5. Removal

- a. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by a written notice of such intention, three months in advance, by the church or the senior pastor. A shorter notice may be given by mutual consent.
- b. See [Elders > Removal](#)

- c. See [Staff > Removal](#)

## **C. Associate Pastors**

---

### **1. Description**

- a. Associate pastors are any pastor employed by the church other than the senior pastor.
- b. Associate pastors are elders.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. See [Elder Qualifications and Eligibility](#)
- b. All pastors will attain their credentials through the EFCA or transfer their credentials to the EFCA within 18 months of date of hire. A two-thirds approval of the Elder Board is necessary to grant a waiver of this requirement.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. All associate pastors report to the senior pastor as the he is the primary authority among the staff under God.
- b. No associate pastor may ever be the head of the elders, as this would conflict with the senior pastor being the head of the staff.

### **4. Selection Process**

- a. See [Pastoral Search Team](#)

### **5. Removal**

- a. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by a written notice of such intention, three months in advance, by the church or the senior pastor. A shorter notice may be given by mutual consent.
- b. See [Elders > Removal](#)
- c. See [Staff > Removal](#)

## **D. Pastor Emeritus**

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### **1. Description**

- a. A pastor emeritus is any pastor who has retired from full-time church ministry.
- b. A pastor emeritus is a type of associate pastor who may or may not be employed by the church.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. See [Elder Qualifications and Eligibility](#)

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. A pastor emeritus reports to the senior pastor.
- b. No pastor emeritus may ever be the chair of the Elder Board.

### **4. Selection Process**

- a. The Elder Board will approve a pastor by a two-thirds vote to become pastor emeritus.
- b. Once the candidate is selected by the elders, he will be presented to the congregation. A two-thirds majority vote of the congregation is required for approval.

## 5. Removal

- a. See [Associate Pastors > Removal](#)

## E. Deacons

---

### 1. Description

- a. Deacons are the male and female leaders of the church who are charged with overseeing the material needs of the church body and the surrounding community.
- b. Types
  - i. Head Deacon
  - ii. Governing Deacon (on the Board)
  - iii. Non-governing deacon (not on the board)

### 2. Qualifications and Eligibility

- a. Eligibility will be determined by the Elder Board.
- b. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- c. The deacon candidate must possess the qualifications as established by Scripture (I Timothy 3:8-12).
- d. The candidate who is married or has children is to be a husband of one wife (or wife of one husband), to manage his/her own family well, and to see that his/her children obey him/her. Candidates who are single, childless or divorced may also be eligible to become a deacon.
- e. The candidate may be ineligible if any of the following conditions are determined true by the elders:
  - i. The candidate initiated separation or divorce while proclaiming to be a Christian
  - ii. The candidate's reasons for separation or divorce was not related to spousal unfaithfulness, as defined in Scripture
  - iii. The candidate has not sought restoration with his/her spouse.
- f. The candidate must uphold and support the Statement of Faith and Constitution of the church.
- g. The candidate must have been an active member of the church in good standing for at least one year prior to approval.

### 3. Organizational Structure

- a. All deacons report to the Head Deacon.
- b. The Head Deacon reports to the Elder Board.

### 4. Selection Process

- a. The elders will select candidates from among a list provided by either the Deacon or Elder Boards.
- b. A candidate will be approved by at least two-thirds of all the elders.
- c. Once elder approval is received, then the candidate will be approved by at least two-thirds of all the deacons.
- d. Once Deacon Board approval is received, then the candidate will be approved by at least majority vote of all active members.

### 5. Removal

- a. Reasons for Removal
  - i. Removal due to moral failure

- ii. Replacement due to incapacity to fulfill functions
- iii. Resignation for personal reasons or ministry change
- iv. Death
- b. Procedure
  - i. Any active member of the church can propose removal. A written proposal must be submitted to the Elder Board that explains why removal is necessary.
  - ii. The Elder Board will consider the proposal in a joint leadership meeting using biblical principles. The deacon in question may participate in the meeting.
  - iii. A decision to remove a deacon requires a two-thirds vote of the elders.
  - iv. Written confirmation of removal will be sent to the elder upon removal and the active members will be notified.

## **F. Treasurers**

---

### **1. Description**

- a. The treasurer oversees all financial matters within the church.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. The treasurer is an elder or deacon in good standing with the church.
- b. See [Qualifications and Eligibility for deacons.](#)
- c. The treasurer must be a male (due to Elder Board participation) and at least twenty-one years of age.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. The treasurer reports to the Elder Team and is present at Elder Team meetings as needed.

### **4. Selection Process**

- a. The elders will select a candidate from among a list of elder and deacon candidates.
- b. A candidate will be approved by at least two-thirds of all the Elder Team.
- c. Once Elder Team approval is received, then the candidate will be approved by at least two-thirds of all members.

### **5. Removal**

- a. See [Deacons / Removal](#)

## **G. Youth Ministers/Pastors**

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### **1. Description**

- a. The youth minister/pastor is responsible for the oversight of all ministries for youth between seventh and twelfth grades.
- b. The title “Youth Pastor” will only be given to those who are/will be an elder.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- b. The youth minister must fulfill the moral qualities of an elder.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. The youth minister will report directly to the senior pastor.
- b. A youth minister may not serve on the Elder Board.

4. **Selection Process**

- a. See [Pastoral Search Team](#)

## **H. Property Manager**

---

1. **Description**

- a. The property manager oversees the operation and maintenance of the church building, the grounds, and all other church assets.
- b. This position may be a paid or volunteer arrangement.

2. **Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. For the purposes of screening, the property manager will be considered a position of authority.
- b. The property manager does not need to be an attendee or member of the church.
- c. The property manager should have the skills and experience to manage a commercial building.
- d. The property manager cannot be a member of the Elder Team.
- e. See Screening Staff and Volunteers.

3. **Organizational Structure**

- a. The property manager reports to a representative of the Elder Team.
- b. The Elder Team is accountable for the work of the Property Manager.

4. **Selection Process**

- a. Candidates will be sought inside the congregation before looking outside the congregation.
- b. The Elder Team will select a property manager by majority vote.
- c. See Screening Staff and Volunteers.

## **I. Ministry Point Persons**

---

### **1. Description**

- a. Point Persons are those volunteers who represent the various ministries of the church
- b. Point Persons must be attendees of the church in good standing.

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- b. The specific gifts and talents required for the task.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. Point persons will report to the person designated by the elders or deacons.

### **4. Selection Process**

- a. The Elder and Deacon Boards will annually review and approve a list of potential point person candidates. Candidates will be selected from this list by the Board that governs the ministry.
- b. The board members will approve the candidate with a majority vote.

## **J. Secretaries**

---

### **1. Description**

- a. The secretary is responsible for general office duties and other designated functions.
- b. This position may be a paid or volunteer arrangement

### **2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- b. For the purposes of screening, the secretary will be considered a position of authority.
- c. The secretary does not need to be an attendee or member of the church.
- d. The secretary should have the skills and experience to perform general office duties such as typing, filing, answering phones, and other administrative duties.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

- a. The secretary reports to the senior pastor or designated staff.
- b. The Senior Pastor (or designated staff) is accountable for the work of the Secretary.

### **4. Selection Process**

- a. See [Screening Staff and Volunteers](#)
- b. Candidates will be sought inside the congregation before looking outside the congregation.
- c. **The senior pastor will select a secretary.**

## **XI. Governance Meetings**

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### **A. Definitions**

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1. Quorum: a majority of group members
2. Attendance: presence in person, by phone, or by written communications.
3. Call a meeting: the request to hold a meeting. A call for a meeting may not result in a meeting if a quorum is not in attendance.
4. Group: a quorum of members that attend a meeting.
5. Chair: the recognized facilitator of the group.
6. Defacto member: A member by virtue of position within the organization. For example, the senior pastor is a defacto member of all groups in the church and, therefore, has the right to attend any meetings of that group. The treasurer is a defacto member of the deacon team.
7. Ex-officio: A non-official member who cannot officially vote on matters for that group (e.g. the treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Elder Board).

### **B. Elder Board Meetings**

---

#### **1. Description**

- a. The purpose of these meetings will be to assess and address church issues as they relate to the elder ministries.

#### **2. Requirements**

- a. An Elder Board meeting may be called by at least two elders. These elders do not have to be members of the Elder Board.
- b. A quorum (50% or more) of Elder Board members is necessary to hold a meeting. At least one non-staff member must be in attendance.
- c. The chair will preside at Elder Board meetings and produce the agenda. In his absence, another elder will preside.
- d. All board meetings will have a written agenda and will produce notes. A copy of all meeting documents will be kept on file in the church office. Access to these documents will be limited to elders and those designated by the Elder Board.

### **C. Deacon Board Meetings**

---

#### **1. Description**

- a. The purpose of these meetings will be to assess and address church issues as they relate to the deacon ministries

#### **2. Requirements**

- a. A Deacon Board meeting may be called by at least two deacons. These deacons do not have to be members of the Deacon Board.
- b. A quorum (50% or more) of Deacon Board members is necessary to hold a meeting.
- c. The chair of the Deacon Board will preside at these meetings. In his/her absence, another deacon selected by the Deacon Board will preside.
- d. All meetings will have a written agenda and will produce notes. A copy of all meeting documents will be kept on file in the church office. Access to these documents will be limited to elders, deacons, and those designated by the Elder or Deacon Boards.

## **D. Ministry/Team Coordination Meetings**

---

### **1. Description**

- a. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss and make decisions pertaining to church ministries.

### **2. Requirements**

- a. The chair of the given ministry will preside at these meetings. In his absence, another member of the ministry team selected by the chair will preside.

## **XII. Rules of Order for Conducting Meetings**

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### **A. Usage**

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1. Whenever possible, the following rules of order should be used to conduct meetings.
2. The group may opt to temporarily waive these rules of order by a majority vote.

### **B. Order of Business**

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1. Group members who want a policy to be adopted begin the discussion by making a motion that it be approved. If another group member seconds the motion, discussion can begin; if not, the motion fails.
2. Once a motion is seconded, the chairperson opens the floor for discussion. Members are recognized by the chairperson before they may speak, and they can discuss only the motion on the floor. When the discussion has ended, the chairperson announces that a vote will be taken.
3. The easiest way to vote is by a show of hands. The secretary can then record the vote. If a majority approves a policy, it becomes the group's policy (unless the by-laws provide otherwise). It is the responsibility of the chairperson to implement that policy.
4. It is improper for individual group members to give assignments, on behalf of their group, to any staff member without prior authorization.

### **C. Rules of Order**

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#### **1. To Make A Motion**

- a. The mover of a motion addresses the Chair and introduces the motion by stating, "I move."
- b. The motion is repeated by the Chair. If the motion is long and involved, the Chair will ask the mover to submit it in writing.

#### **2. To Second a Motion**

- a. A second is indicated by stating, "Second." or "I second the motion."
- b. This may be done without rising or addressing the Chair. All important motions should be seconded.

#### **3. To Table**

- a. This motion postpones the subject under discussion in such a way that it can be taken up at some time in the near future when a motion "to take from the table" would be in order.
- b. This motion is not debatable or amendable and requires a majority vote.

#### **4. To Adjourn**

- a. This motion may not be made under the following circumstances:
  - i. When a speaker has the floor;

- ii. When a vote is being taken;
  - iii. After it has just been voted down;
  - iv. When the committee is in the midst of business which cannot be abruptly stopped.
- b. The time of reconvening must be specified.
  - c. This motion does not require debate, but does require a majority vote.

**5. Voting**

- a. Each member of the group, present and voting at the time of voting, has ONE vote on any matter before the group.
- b. Each vote is cast by a show of hands/placards or by responding "AYE" or "NO" on a voice vote or by responding "YES", "NO", or "ABSTAIN" on a roll call vote.
- c. The Chair may ask, "Is there an objection to accepting this motion, report, etc.?"
- d. If a member objects, then one of the above methods of voting is in order.
- e. A roll call vote may be requested by any member immediately before a vote is taken.

## **XIII. Conflicts, Allegations, and Discipline**

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### **A. Conflict Resolution**

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#### **1. Definition**

- a. Conflicts occur when disagreements arise between two or more people within the church and reconciliation and restoration are needed.
- b. See [Allegations of Misconduct](#) for all matters that relate to sexual or physical abuse, fraud, or any other alleged illegal behavior.

#### **2. Procedure**

- a. Any conflict must be documented by the person(s) identifying the conflict or by an elder or deacon who has been notified of the conflict. If the conflict involves allegations of misconduct, see [Allegations of Misconduct Process](#)
- b. The elder or deacon that was notified of the conflict should encourage all parties to work with each other to reconcile their differences. In the event that this reconciliation is not effective, all parties and witnesses will meet with an elder to resolve the conflict.
- c. If the elder deems this a true case of conflict and there is still no reconciliation, then all parties and their witnesses should be brought before all of the elders.
- d. If reconciliation does not occur and the elders believe there is need for it, church discipline will be enforced.
- e. In order to maintain the integrity of the church, when an irreconcilable division occurs within the body which threatens its unity and/or existence, the EFCA Superintendent, along with other members of the Great Lakes District Board of Directors, has the prerogative of taking the initiative to mediate the situation.
- f. See [Conflict Resolution Process](#)

### **B. Allegations of Misconduct**

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#### **1. Definitions**

- a. Misconduct is more severe conduct that is disgraceful, improper, unbecoming, or that shows unfitness or does not meet the standard reasonably expected (e.g. illegal behavior).
- b. An allegation is a verbal or written statement or claim that is made and hasn't been proved to be true or false.

#### **2. Procedures**

- a. Discovery
  - i. Any allegation of misconduct must be documented by the person(s) making the allegation or by an elder or deacon who has been notified of the allegation.
  - ii. If the allegation is of illegal behavior, the alleged violator will temporarily cease from executing his/her duties until the matter is resolved.
  - iii. If the alleged victim is a child and the allegation is of physical or sexual abuse, the child's legal guardians must be contacted immediately.
- b. Elder Hearing
  - i. All parties involved in the allegations and any witnesses will meet with a quorum of all of the elders within five business days of the allegation. Legal counsel must be invited to this meeting to determine if the allegations have legal merit.

- ii. If the allegations have legal merit (as determined by elders and/or legal counsel), then the elders must contact local authorities for further investigation and the alleged violator must be immediately removed from any position of authority until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the elders.
- iii. The party making the allegation must provide at least two witnesses attesting to the charge (I Timothy 5:19). If a child alleges physical or sexual abuse, then witnesses are not needed to validate allegations.
- iv. If the elders determine that the allegation is true and misconduct occurred, the violator must be permanently removed from any position of authority relating to the misconduct
- v. The congregation must be informed of the misconduct and removal, though the details do not necessarily need to be disseminated (I Timothy 5:20).
- c. Corrective Action
  - i. If the violator is repentant, the person must be restored to fellowship within the church and positions of authority may be granted only after the elders determine that restoration has been made.
  - ii. If the guilty person is not repentant, then church discipline must be enforced.
  - iii. If the person is not guilty, then reconciliation between the parties must be attempted.
- d. See [Allegations of Misconduct Process](#)

## C. Church Discipline

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### 1. Definitions

- a. Restoration is the complete process of forgiveness and closure between two or more people within the church. It does not refer to the reinstatement of all previous offices and responsibilities.
- b. Reconciliation is the restoration of broken relationships within the context of the church family.
- c. Repentance is the verbal admittance of wrong doing accompanied by a humble and contrite spirit.
- d. Guarding the table is the process of not allowing someone within the church to partake of the Lord's Supper. This includes, but is not limited to, informing those who serve the elements that the person under discipline is not allowed to partake of the elements.

### 2. Principles of Church Discipline

- a. Church discipline is only invoked after the steps for conflict resolution or allegations of misconduct have been taken and it's clear that the person has not repented from sin.
- b. The disciplinary process progressively moves from personal confrontation, to confrontation with the inclusion of witnesses, to confrontation with leadership, to addressing the issue publicly with the entire church body. The goal of this process is always restoration of the individual, and must be done with a spirit of love and humility (Galatians 6:1).
- c. If at any time during the process the elders believe repentance has occurred, the process will be halted and guidance for reconciliation and restoration is given. If, however, the person seeks restoration continues to reject the counsel of the church, he/she will remain under discipline and lose the privilege of fellowship within the body (1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10).
- d. The elders will decide how long to take between steps per each occurrence as circumstances warrant.

- e. Once restoration is begun, the elders will decide when to change the status of the person from “under discipline” to “active”.
- f. If the member is an elder and there are at least two witnesses bringing accusations, then it will be brought before the Elder Board.

### 3. **Procedures of Church Discipline**

- a. The elders will inform the person that discipline will be enforced.
- b. If this does not result in repentance, then the elders will instruct leadership to guard the table from that person.
- c. If this does not result in repentance, then the elders will change the person’s status to “under discipline”, and inform the person of this change in status. While a member is “under discipline”, he/she no longer may vote on church matters.
- d. If this does not result in repentance, then the congregation will be informed that the person has been removed from active membership and is to be considered an unbeliever. The person will also be asked to refrain from attending the church and local churches will be informed of the action taken.
- e. Even if the member involved in the disciplinary process requests their name be dropped from the membership, he/she will remain a member under the category of “under discipline” and these disciplinary procedures will still be followed.
- f. See [Church Discipline Process](#)

## **XIV. Location, Usage and Records**

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### **A. Office Location**

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1. The registered office and mailing address of the corporation is located at 40413 N. Delany Road, Wadsworth, IL 60083.
2. Any change in the physical or mailing addresses of the church will be communicated to the congregation within ten business days of any such change.

### **B. Acceptable Use**

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1. Planned events on church grounds must not conflict with the core values as stated in the constitution. The Elder Board has a right to determine acceptable use and refuse any request for use of church building or property that is deemed unacceptable.

### **C. Books and Records**

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1. The church will keep an original or duplicate record of the following documents:
  - a. Annual business meeting
  - b. By-laws, including all amendments approved to-date
  - c. A register of the names and addresses of the Elder Board members
  - d. Records of financial account
2. The church will keep these records at either the registered office of the corporation (as filed with the state) or at its principal place of business, wherever situated.

## **XV. Dissolution**

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### **1. Description**

- a. Dissolution is the process by which the church ends its own existence. This process includes the payment of all debts, the conclusion of all functions, and the distribution of all assets.
- b. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the church, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

### **2. Requirements**

- a. The Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church must be notified in writing within 30 days of any elder vote to dissolve.
- b. In order for the dissolution process to begin, the elders must approve by a two-thirds vote to dissolve the church. This in turn will be presented to the church for a two-thirds vote of active members.
- c. The elders must propose to the remaining active members how remaining assets will be donated. This proposal will include the names of selected 501 [C] [3] corporations and the percentage of remaining assets proposed for each donation. The Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church must be included as a beneficiary. A majority vote of active members is necessary to approve the proposal.
- d. All assets left after payment of debts will be liquidated and disbursed according to the approved proposal.
- e. All official church records will be retained by legal counsel on behalf of the church until such time as all applicable federal, state, and local laws allow them to be destroyed.

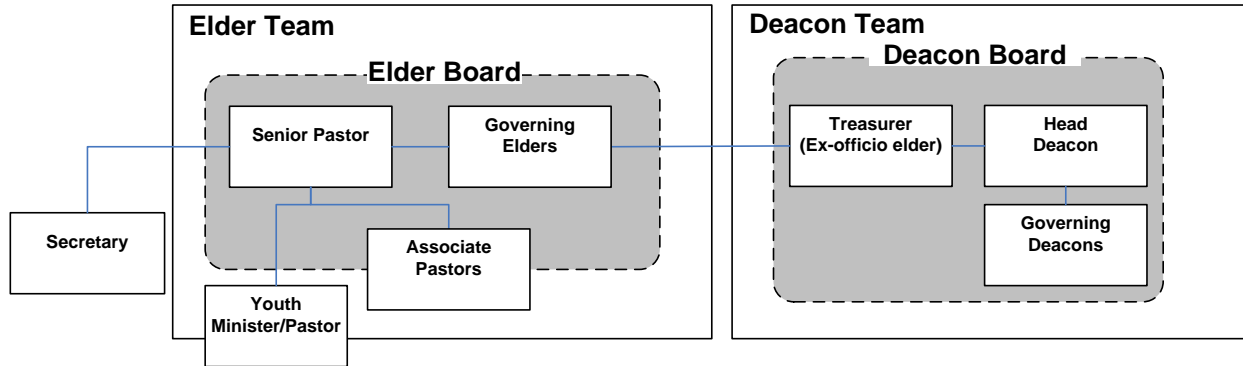
## **XVI. Amendments**

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1. Amendments made in order to comply with state or federal regulations will be made without the approval of the congregation. The congregation will be notified of any changes due to compliance with state or federal law.
2. If some immaterial wording in the by-laws needs to be updated or altered because of clarity, the Elder Board will approve the change before bringing it to the congregation.
3. If a material revision of the by-laws is proposed, the Elder Board, at their discretion, will appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the by-laws. This committee will return its recommendations to the Elder Board.
4. Any amendment to the by-laws must pass a two-thirds vote of the Elder Board.
5. Once the Elder Board approves the amendment, a two-thirds vote of active membership is required for final approval.

## XVII. Charts and Tables

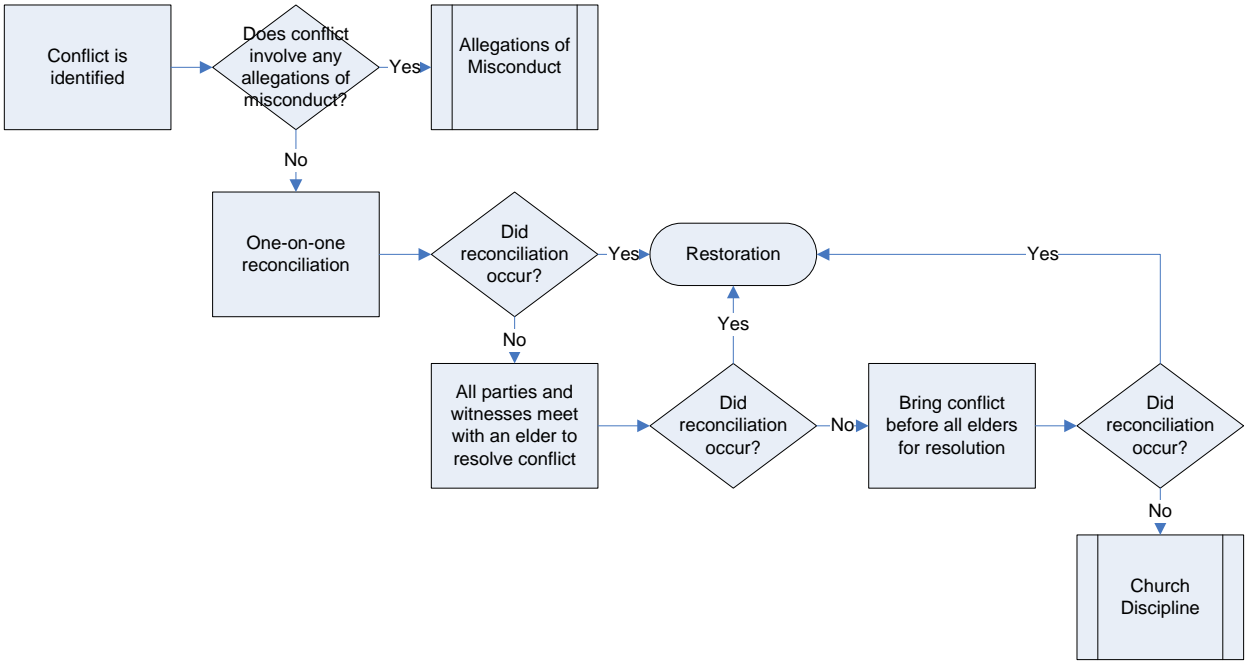
### A. Organizational Structure



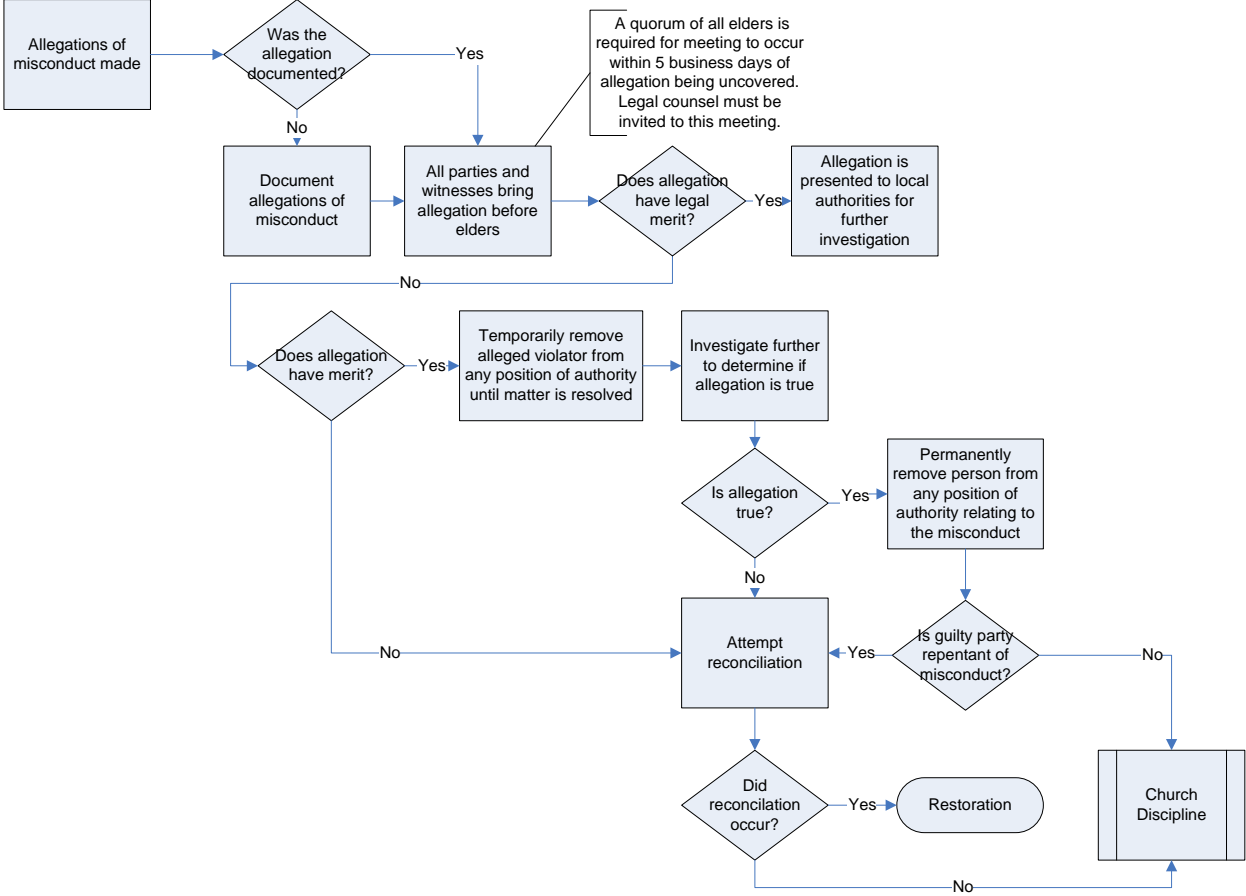
### B. Governing Body Member Limits

Governing Body	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Elder Team</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Elder Board	3	7
<b>Deacon Team</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Deacon Board	7	13
Governing Deacons (including head deacon)	4	8

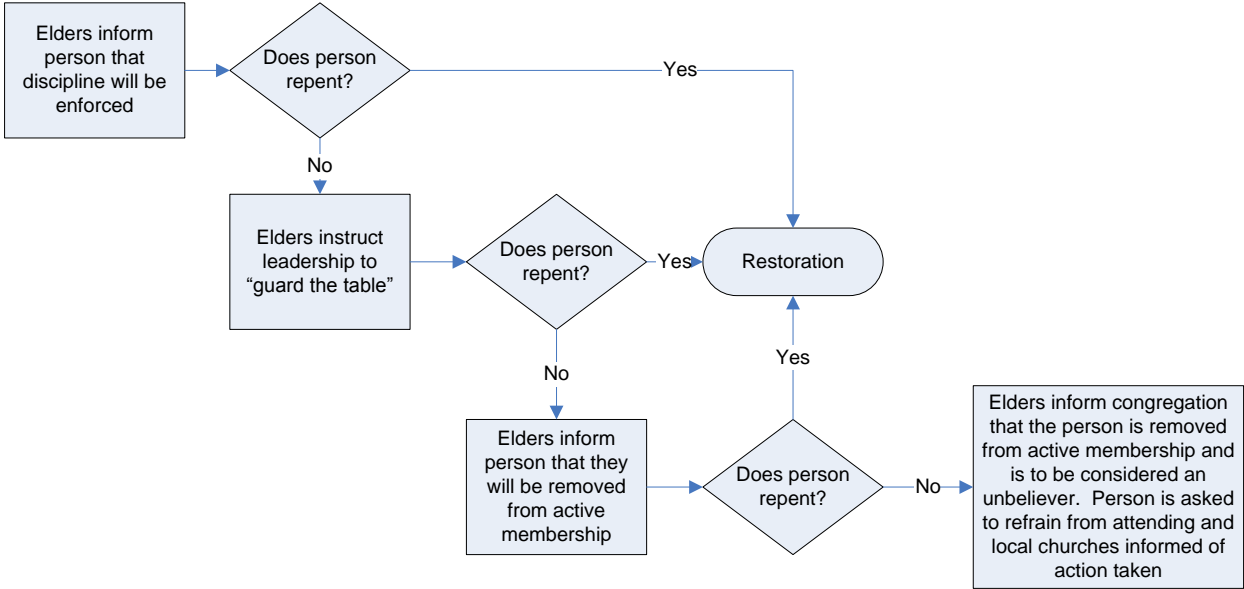
### C. Conflict Resolution Process



### D. Allegations of Misconduct Process

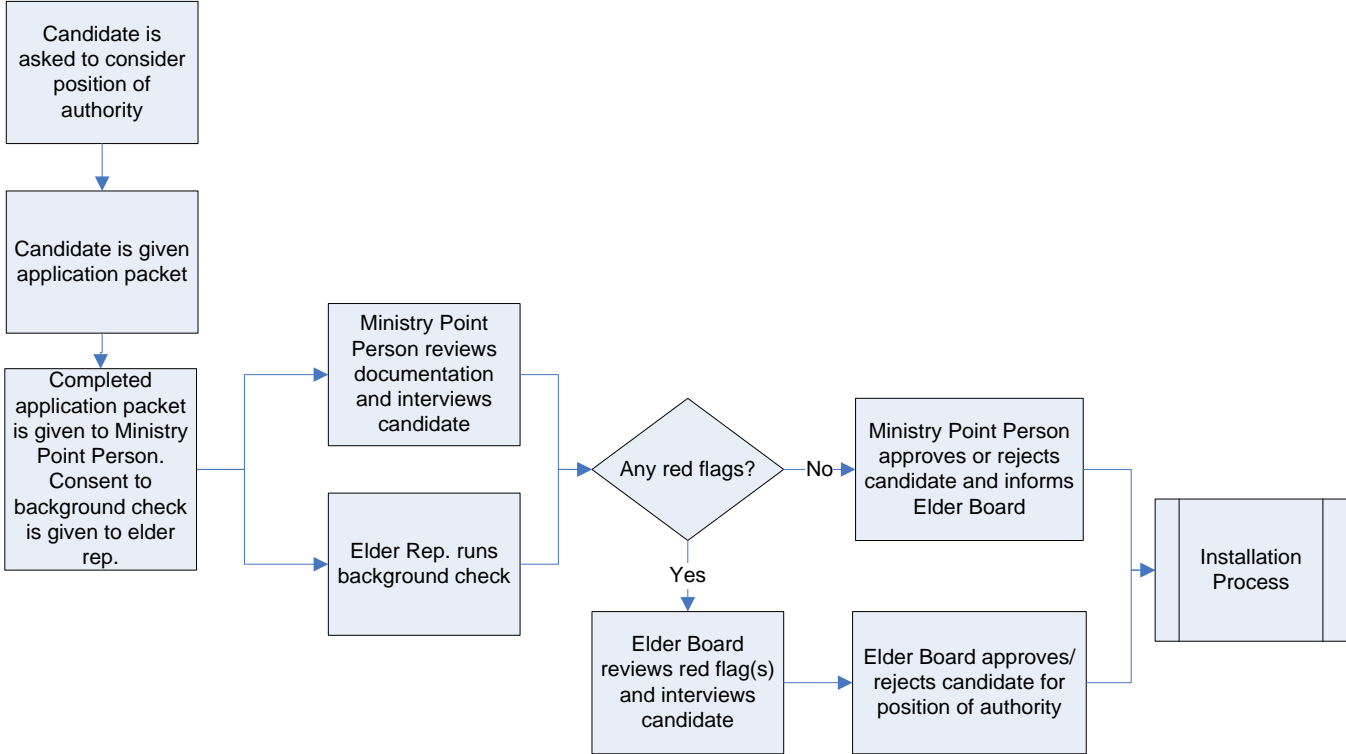


# E. Church Discipline Process



## F. Application and Screening Process

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## **XVIII. Amendments**

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### **A. Waiver of Credential Transfer for Rev. John C. Jenkins**

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Whereas, Cornerstone has decided to affiliate with the EFCA Great Lakes District, and

Whereas, Rev. John C. Jenkins has served Cornerstone faithfully since its inception and was the Senior Pastor at the time of affiliation, and

Whereas, the EFCA requires all in-coming pastors to transfer their credentials within 18 months of entering into affiliation,

Therefore, Cornerstone and the EFCA Great Lakes District grants Rev. John C. Jenkins a waiver of credential transfer for the remainder of his service to the church.