

The Bylaws of Faith Community Church (Hampton, New Hampshire)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church/congregation shall be “Faith Community Church.”

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purposes of this church shall be:

1. To glorify God through all that we do, including accomplishment of the rest of the church’s purposes
2. To walk in faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to him
3. To encourage and facilitate spiritual growth and obedience to Christ through preaching, instruction, discipline, and interpersonal support
4. To be regularly involved in prayer, worship, Bible study, fellowship, service, evangelism, and the exercise of spiritual gifts
5. To be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us, both tangible (e.g., money, possessions, family, etc.) and intangible (talents, abilities, time, etc.)
6. To advance the kingdom of God by doing his will and spreading the gospel through individual witness, corporate outreach, and cross-cultural missions, seeking to make disciples of all nations and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded
7. To reflect and honor the God of love through loving one another.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL POSITION

The fundamental doctrinal position of this church shall be the following, which we believe to be the essential doctrines of genuine biblical Christianity:

1. **THE BIBLE:** Consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, the Bible was, in its original writing, inspired by God and is the only infallible, inerrant, and authoritative guide in matters of faith and practice.
2. **THE TRINITY:** There is one God who exists eternally in three persons: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are distinct from one another, yet co-equal.
3. **JESUS CHRIST:** Through His virgin birth, Jesus Christ became the incarnate God (fully God and fully man). He lived a sinless life, dying on the cross as a substitute for sinners. He arose bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He intercedes for us.
4. **MANKIND:** Through willful disobedience and Satan's deception, mankind has fallen from its original sinless state and as a result is condemned to eternal spiritual death,

banished from the presence of a holy God. It is not within the power of mankind to remedy this situation.

5. SALVATION: Salvation from sin and its penalty is found only in Jesus Christ: by virtue of His death on the cross, received by faith, made effective by the Holy Spirit - all by the grace of God.
6. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: Believers have available to them the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to live holy lives and exhibit godly character (the fruit of the Spirit). They are to identify with the cause of Christ through the local church and contribute through word and deed to spread the gospel.
7. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly at the end of the age to fully establish God's Kingdom. The dead will be raised and all men will be judged. The wicked will be condemned to eternal death and the righteous will inherit eternal life.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as the head of this church and believe that he exercises his headship through God-appointed leaders and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church body. Thus, this church will be ruled by elders who seek to be sensitive to how God might lead them in their decision-making through the church body. This does not mean that the elders will simply seek to implement the will of the church body in its decisions, but that all decision-making authority in the church will be in the hands of the elder(s) and that the elder(s) will seek the church body's input on major decisions and take that input into consideration in their decision-making. Faith Community Church is to be and operate as a church/spiritual family, with the elders serving the church and leading it in the will of God for the glory of God and good of the church, and church members submitting to the elders and supporting them in their leading of the church in the will of God.

A. The Office of Elder

1. Definition and Duties

- a. Elders are to be the recognized leaders of the church, exercising authoritative oversight of all areas of church life (both the "spiritual" and the "secular") and shepherding/pastoring the church.
- b. The titles of "elder," "pastor," and "overseer" all refer to the same church office in these bylaws.
- c. Elders may be either "vocational" or "lay" pastors.
- d. Elders are to pray for the church and are to provide spiritual care, counsel, guidance, teaching, preaching, leadership, protection, and an example of godliness/Christlikeness.

2. Plurality

- a. Ideally, there should be a plurality of elders pastoring the church together in accordance with the pattern seen in the New Testament. But no minimum or maximum number of elders will be required.
 1. The terms “board of elders” and “elder board” refer to the eldership of the church no matter the number of elders, whether there is only one elder or multiple elders.
- b. In the event that there is only one elder, an advisory board is to be formed of at least three male members of the church consisting of the church’s deacons (as many as are willing to serve on the advisory board) and any number of church members necessary to bring the number of male advisory board members to three. This allows for female members of the church to be chosen for the advisory board as long as at least three of the advisory board members are male.
 1. If there are less than three male deacons willing to serve on the advisory board, then the deacon(s) will select enough male church members to bring the number of male advisory board members to three. They may also select female members of the church as long as there are at least three male advisory board members.
 2. If there are no deacons, the elder will select at least three male members of the church to serve on the advisory board.
 3. The advisory board will meet regularly with the elder (no less than once a month) to discuss the affairs of the church and to advise him concerning oversight of the church. All decision-making authority will remain in the hands of the elder, but he is to take advisory board members’ advice into serious consideration for his decision-making.
- c. In the event that there is no elder, a temporary board of elders is to be formed of at least three male members of the church consisting of the church’s male deacons (as many as are willing) and the number of male church members necessary to bring the number of temporary elders to three. This temporary board of elders is to function to the best of its ability as the elder board described in these bylaws.
 1. If there are not three male deacons willing to serve on the temporary board of elders, then the deacon(s) will select the number of male church members necessary to bring the number of temporary male elders to three.
 2. If there is no elder and no deacon, then the congregation will select three male members of the church by a secret ballot vote to serve as a temporary board of elders that will function to the best of its ability as the elder board described in these bylaws.

3. One of the top priorities of the temporary elder board shall be to lead the church in finding and installing a permanent elder, which, when successfully accomplished, shall automatically transform the temporary board of elders into the advisory board described in IV.A.2.b above.
 - a. In such an eventuality, the new elder will function as the regular elder of the church for one year in accordance with the role and authority granted to the office in these bylaws except that he will not be able to nominate any elder during that one-year time period. The church will hold a secret ballot vote one year after his installation to confirm whether or not he will continue as the church's elder, and a positive vote of 75% of voting members present at the voting meeting will be required for confirmation of his eldership. If confirmed by that vote, then the new elder shall assume the eldership with no restrictions upon the role and authority granted to the office.

3. Equality of Role

- a. All elders will be equal in authority.
- b. All elders must agree for a decision to be put in effect.
 1. This does not mean that all the elders must think a particular decision is the best course, but that they must all consent to the decision being put into effect.
 2. The elders should foster a spirit of love and cooperation and mutual deference such that they will sometimes consent to decisions that they might not think the best course but agree to out of humility and in deference to (an)other elder(s), though this is never required.
 - a. It is difficult to capture the envisioned dynamic in writing, but examples of times for such deferential consent include small matters about which one or more elders feel more strongly than the other(s) or in which one or more elders is/are uncertain and is/are inclined to trust the wisdom of (a) fellow elder(s).
- c. One elder shall be designated as the Senior Elder/Pastor, who is to be regarded as the first among equals.
 1. While the Senior Pastor shall not have greater authority than the other pastors, the other pastors should accord the Senior Pastor special honor and deference.
 2. The Senior Pastor shall be a vocational elder if one is available and shall be appointed by a unanimous vote of the eldership.

- a. If a unanimous vote of the eldership cannot be reached, then the eligible elder who has been an elder at Faith Community Church the longest shall be appointed the Senior Pastor.
 - b. Once a vocational elder becomes the Senior Pastor, he shall remain the Senior Pastor until he leaves office or relinquishes the Senior Pastor role.
 - c. If there is no vocational elder available to serve as Senior Pastor, then a lay elder shall serve as Senior Pastor until such time as a vocational elder is installed, at which time the latter will become the Senior Pastor.
 - d. If the elders cannot reach agreement on a matter, then any elder has the right to have the matter brought by the elder board to the congregation for discussion in a church community meeting that would be followed by a second community meeting to hear the church body's judgment after having opportunity to think and pray about the issue. Voting members present at that second meeting will vote on the issue.
 - 1. This process should not be invoked by (a) dissenting elder(s) in the spirit of seeking to get one's way, but with all the elders from a genuine desire to obtain the prayerful input of the church body and to ascertain God's will.
 - 2. After hearing the church body's input on the matter, the elders should consider the issue again to see if they can come to agreement. If they do not come to agreement after further consideration and discussion, then they will follow the majority judgment of the church body as expressed at the second community meeting mentioned in IV.A.3.d above.
 - e. Each elder shall have the authority to make decisions on matters that do not externally commit any of the church's financial resources or assets beyond Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) without first consulting the other elders. But any such decision can be reversed by any other elder pending discussion and a decision by the full board of elders.
 - f. Decisions that externally commit any of the church's financial resources above \$500 are not to be made by any one elder or sub-group of elders, but by the full board of elders unless the full board of elders has granted such authority to a certain elder or sub-group of elders or there is only one elder.
4. Mutual Accountability:
- a. The elders will hold one another accountable for their lives and fulfillment of their responsibilities.
 - b. The congregation will be accountable to the elder(s), and the elder(s) to the congregation, for their lives and fulfillment of their responsibilities.

5. Requirements

- a. Men who meet the biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 shall be acceptable candidates for the office of elder.
 1. The office of elder shall not be open to women but shall only be open to men.
- b. The requirement of being “the husband of one wife” is not to be taken as meaning that a man who has married more than once cannot hold the office of elder without exception, but is to be taken as requiring a man who is faithful to his wife (if he has one). This would also require that a divorced man has met all remaining biblical obligations regarding a previous marriage.
- c. The requirement of having children who are believers or faithful (if the elder happens to have children) is to be taken in the latter sense of having faithful character rather than that they must be believers. This requirement applies only to children in the home under the direct authority of their father.

6. Selection Process

- a. A candidate for eldership may be nominated by the elder(s) when they recognize the apparent qualifications, calling, and gifts in an individual.
- b. Once the elders have decided to nominate a man for eldership, they shall inform the church of the nomination and give at least two weeks’ notice of a church community meeting at which the candidacy can be discussed, the candidate can be questioned by church members, and the church can pray over the candidacy.
- c. After the first community meeting just described (see A.6.b.), the church community will be given at least two weeks to further consider and pray over the candidacy. After at least two weeks, another church community meeting will be held at which church members will vote on whether to confirm or reject the candidate as a provisional elder.
 1. A positive vote of 75% of voting members present at the meeting will be required for confirmation.
- d. Once a man is confirmed as a provisional elder, he will enter a one-year probationary period in which he will be oriented to, and function in, the office, and the church will have the opportunity to observe his functioning in the office. At the end of this period, the provisional elder will discuss with the elder(s) his suitability for the office. After exposure to the actual demands of the office, he will be free to decline the position and the elder(s) will have the right to remove him from the position.

- e. At the end of the probationary period, if both the provisional elder and the elder(s) agree that the former should become a regular elder, then a church community meeting will be called at which voting members will vote on whether to install the provisional elder as a regular elder.
 - 1. A positive vote of 75% of voting members present at the meeting will be required for installation to regular eldership.
 - a. Installation to regular eldership is equivalent to ordination to the ministry of pastor/elder.
 - b. If the church decides to install/ordain the provisional elder to regular eldership, then an installation/ordination service shall be held at which the provisional elder shall formally be installed/ordained to the office of elder/pastor without qualification and with prayer and pronouncement of his installation/ordination.

7. Term of Office

- a. Elders will serve for an indefinite period of time.
- b. An elder may be removed from office by
 - 1. Resignation
 - 2. Disciplinary action
 - a. An elder may be removed from office for any of the following: (1) chronically failing to live up to the qualifications of the office; (2) failing to fulfill the duties of the office; (3) failing to adhere to the church's statement of faith; (4) refusal to repent of sin.
 - b. Any concerns or grievances against an elder should first be expressed to the elder in question. If the matter is not resolved, the rest of the elders (or the advisory board – see IV.A.2.b above) should be notified. They will then attempt to bring resolution between the parties involved. If resolution is not achieved, they will, after prayerful deliberation and consultation with the parties involved, recommend a course of action to the parties, and if appropriate, to the congregation, within the bounds of IV.7.b.2.e below.
 - c. An elder may be removed from office for one or more of the reasons set out in (a.) above by either:
 - 1. a unanimous decision of the rest of the eldership (or of the advisory board – see IV.A.2.b above) coupled with agreement of at least 50% of

voting members who vote at a church community meeting on the matter.

2. or a 75% vote of voting members in favor of removal at a church community meeting on the matter.
 - a. The church body can initiate a church community meeting to discuss the removal of an elder with signatures of at least 50% of the church's membership in favor of holding such a meeting. A second meeting would then be held two weeks later for the congregation to vote by secret ballot on whether the elder should be removed from office.
 - d. Excommunication of an elder (see article VII on church discipline below) automatically removes him from office.
 - e. No accusation against an elder will be entertained unless it is brought by at least two or three witnesses (see 1 Tim. 5:19).

B. The Office of Deacon

1. Definition and Duties

- a. Deacons are to be specially recognized servants of the church who serve under the oversight and direction of the elder(s) so that the elder(s) may focus on their primary calling of caring for the spiritual life and needs of the church.
- b. The specific duties of the deacons at any given period of time are to be determined by the elders. But the general vision for the role of the deacons is that, under the oversight and direction of the elders, they are to give care to the physical needs of the church. However, as assistants to the elder(s) with exemplary godly character, they might be called on to minister to the spiritual needs of church members as deemed fitting by the elder(s).

2. Plurality

- a. Ideally, there should be a plurality of deacons serving the church together in accordance with the pattern seen in the New Testament. But no minimum or maximum number of deacons will be required.
- b. The deacons should foster a spirit of love and cooperation and mutual deference as they make decisions concerning their work and as they carry out their work.
- c. All deacons will be equal in their authority to carry out their ministry.

- d. All deacons are to report on their activity as deacons to the Head Deacon if there is one (see immediately below).

3. Head Deacon

- a. If there is a plurality of deacons, the elder(s) may designate one of the male deacons (if there is one) as the Head Deacon (if there is no male deacon, then a female deacon may be chosen). This appointment is at the discretion of the elder(s) and may be changed by the elder(s) at any time.
 - 1. The elder(s) may choose not to have a Head Deacon when there is a plurality of deacons. The guidelines for the Head Deacon below are to apply only if the elder(s) choose to appoint a Head Deacon.
- b. The Head Deacon shall be regarded as the first among equals.
- c. The Head Deacon is to take a lead in fostering a spirit of love and cooperation and mutual deference among the deacons.
- d. The Head Deacon shall serve as the representative and main contact point between the Board of Deacons and the elder(s), and between the Board of Deacons and the congregation.
 - 1. This does not mean that other deacons cannot communicate directly with the elder(s) or the congregation but is meant to ensure that the Board of Deacons is communicating with the elder(s), and when appropriate, the congregation.
 - 2. The Head Deacon shall report any relevant needs or information to the elder(s).
- e. The Head Deacon is to call and lead deacon meetings, which are meant to facilitate the work of the deacons and communication among them so that they can function in unity, cooperation, and mutual support.

4. Requirements

- a. Men or women who meet the biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 shall be acceptable candidates for the office of deacon.
- b. The requirement for male deacons of being “the husband of one wife” is not to be taken as meaning that a man who has married more than once cannot hold the office of deacon without exception but is to be taken as requiring a man who, if married, is married to only one woman and is faithful to her as his wife. This would also require that a divorced man has met all remaining biblical obligations

regarding any previous marriage. This requirement upon male deacons is to be taken as applying to female deacons *mutatis mutandis*.

5. Selection Process

- a. A deacon may be appointed by the elder(s) from the members of the church when they recognize the apparent qualifications, calling, and gifts in an individual.
- b. Once the elder(s) have provisionally decided to appoint a church member to the office of deacon, they shall inform the church of the intended appointment and give at least two weeks' notice of a church community meeting at which the intended appointment can be discussed, the candidate can be questioned by church members, and the church can pray over the intended appointment.
- c. After the first community meeting just described (see B.5.b.), the church community will be given at least two weeks to further consider and pray over the intended appointment, during which time church members may give input to the elder(s) concerning the matter. After that time period, another church community meeting will be held at which the elder(s) will communicate their decision about the appointment to the congregation.
 1. If the decision is to make the appointment, then the elder(s) will officially appoint the church member as a deacon at that meeting, and the congregation will pray for the new deacon and his or her service in the office.

6. Term of Office

- a. Deacons will serve for an indefinite period of time.
- b. A deacon may be removed from office by
 1. Resignation
 - a. If a deacon resigns, the elder(s) are to inform the congregation by the first Sunday following the resignation. The resignation is to be discussed/processed with the congregation at the next community meeting that takes place.
 1. Ideally, a deacon will make the decision to resign in the context of prayerful discussion with the elders and/or the congregation and an announcement of resignation will not be a surprise (at least to the elders).
 2. Disciplinary action

- a. A deacon may be removed from office by decision of the elder(s) for any of the following: (1) chronically failing to live up to the qualifications of the office; (2) failing to fulfill the duties of the office; (3) failing to adhere to the church's statement of faith; (4) refusal to repent of sin.
- b. If the elder(s) decide to remove a deacon from office, they are to hold a community meeting no later than the second Sunday after the deacon is informed in order to inform the congregation and process the decision with them.
- c. Excommunication of a deacon (see article VII on church discipline below) automatically removes him or her from office.

C. The Office of Treasurer

- 1. A treasurer shall be appointed by the elder(s) to an indefinite term of office that is subject to the determination of the elder(s).
 - a. The treasurer's term of office can end by voluntary resignation or by the elder(s) removing the treasurer at their discretion.
- 2. The treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the church.
- 3. The treasurer shall provide giving receipts to givers in accordance with the policy set forth by the elders.
- 4. The treasurer shall hold the checkbook and pay church bills from the church's finances.
- 5. The treasurer shall provide reports of the church finances when requested by the elder(s).

ARTICLE V: CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

The Corporation shall have no members. Any action which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members shall only require approval of the Board of Elders (also known as “the elder(s)”). All rights which would otherwise vest in the members shall vest in the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. Nothing contained in Article V of these bylaws shall be construed to limit the right of the Corporation to refer to persons associated with the Corporation as “church members” even though such persons are not members of the Corporation, and no such reference in or outside of these bylaws shall constitute anyone being a member of the Corporation, within the

meaning of RSA 292 of the New Hampshire Voluntary Corporation Law. The Corporation may confer by amendment of its Articles or of these Bylaws some or all of the rights of a member, as set forth in the New Hampshire Voluntary Corporation Law, upon any person or persons who do not have the right to vote for the election of officers or on a disposition of substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or on a merger or on a dissolution or on changes to the Corporation's Articles or Bylaws, but no such person shall be a member within the meaning of said RSA 292.

- B. The church will consider anyone to be a member of the church who: (1) confesses and trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, (2) has been baptized in water, (3) regularly attends the church's worship services and/or Bible studies/prayer meetings, and (4) has the approval of the elder(s) for membership.
1. Children fifteen years old and under who confess and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, regularly attend our worship services, and have the approval of the elders for membership, but have not been baptized in water, shall also be considered members of the church.
 2. A church member who cannot continue to fulfill the condition of attending the church's worship services and/or Bible studies and prayer meetings due to health issues may remain a member if he or she so chooses, and the elder(s) agree(s).
- C. Church members are expected to seek to live out our statement of church life by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit (see V.D below).

D. Statement of Church Life

We believe Jesus instituted the church to glorify God and to advance His Kingdom through His disciples. We also believe God has a specific place for every Christian within the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-27). It is our intention to assist the people in this local body to walk daily with Jesus and to find their place in the body of Christ (whether here or in another local body). We expect every member of this fellowship to exhort and encourage one another to become mature disciples (Hebrews 3:12,13; 5:14; & 10:23-25; Ephesians 4:11-13).

As members of this body:

We believe that we have been led to join together in the worship, witness, and fellowship of this local church.

We affirm wholeheartedly the essential doctrines of biblical Christianity (see Article III above).

We commit ourselves to Christ and to one another. This means the church will play a central role in our lives. Our decisions will be based not only on what is good for our Christian walk but also on what is good for the church. We are to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, loving one another as Christ loves us (John 17:22-23). God has not called us to superficial

relationships based primarily on our convenience and a desire to have our needs met, but He has called us to relationships based on self-sacrifice and meeting the needs of others.

We will endeavor, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live out our Christian faith by yielding to the Lordship of Christ in the following ways:

1. To seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness.
2. To live holy lives that will honor God and represent Christ well before the world.
3. To seek opportunities individually and collectively to present Christ to the lost.
4. To relate to one another in love, settling any differences in a timely and biblical manner.
5. To spend time daily in prayer and the Word and be actively involved in ministry.
6. To support this local church by sacrificial giving, seeking opportunities for fellowship and regular attendance at meetings.
7. To be accountable in these things to one another and our God-appointed leaders.

E. Voting Privileges

1. Membership in this church shall not vest in any church member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the church member who is in good standing, is not under any disciplinary action, and who has reached his or her sixteenth (16th) birthday, to vote at a meeting of the church members on those matters that are specified in these bylaws for voting or that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for binding decision or for non-binding recommendation.
 - a. Members who cannot attend a vote for good reason may have their vote counted by informing the elder(s) ahead of time in writing of their vote and the reason they will not be able to attend.
 1. Whether the reason given qualifies to have such an absentee vote counted shall be up to the discretion of the elder(s).
 - b. The language of “voting members present” or the like in these bylaws signals that no quorum of voting members will be required for a binding vote to be taken, but the result of the vote will be determined by whatever number of votes are cast when the vote is taken (along with any votes that are cast in writing prior to the meeting by any member(s) who cannot make the voting meeting).
2. The Board of Elders shall maintain a roll of persons who are qualified as church members to vote. That roll shall be reviewed and updated at least once a year, and no less than ten

business days before a congregational meeting where voting will be undertaken. The roll shall be considered the definitive list of persons eligible to vote as members of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- A. Definition: The bringing of correction by the church to a sinning Christian associated with the church, whether through rebuke or imposed consequences, the most severe of which is excommunication.

- B. Purposes
 - 1. The holiness of the church.
 - 2. The spiritual health of the church and each of its members and any believing individuals who are substantially associated with the church.
 - a. Seeks to win the erring believer to repentance and right relationship with God so that they persevere in faith and salvation.
 - b. Protects the church/other believers from sin.
 - a. From the sinful influence of the erring brother or sister.
 - b. By way of warning and example of consequence.
 - c. Exposes sin.
 - 3. The testimony of the church to the World
 - 4. The glory of God

- C. The Practice of Church Discipline
 - 1. Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in fundamental doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the elder(s), shall be subject to church discipline, including excommunication, according to Matthew 18:15–18.
 - 2. Step 1: The first step of this process is for a member or believing regular attender of this church who has knowledge of an erring individual's (who regularly attends or fellowships with this church) heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such an erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
 - 3. Step 2: If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then the warning church member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her

repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals associated with the church who shall confirm whether he or she is in sin and refusing to repent. No specific time interval is required between the first and second warnings.

4. Step 3: If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then it shall be brought to the attention of the elder(s), who shall investigate the matter in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15–18 and 1 Timothy 5:19.
5. Step 4: If the elder(s) determine that there is sufficient evidence that the erring individual is in sin and refuses to repent, then the elder(s) shall
 - a. inform the individual considered to be in sin that the church will meet to consider the situation and to confirm whether he or she is indeed in sin and refusing to repent, and if such confirmation is reached, to call the sinner to repentance;
 - b. invite the alleged sinner to that meeting, in which he or she may participate and present his or her view;
 - c. call a community meeting for the church to confirm whether the alleged sinner is indeed in sin and refusing to repent, and if such confirmation is reached, to formally call the sinner to repentance as a church.
 - d. If the church judges that the person is indeed in sin and refusing to repent, then the erring individual will be formally called to repentance.
 1. This judgment will be reached by the elder(s) in consultation with the congregation. While the elder(s) will seriously consider the input of the congregation, the ultimate decision is in the hands of the elder(s).
 - e. If the alleged sinner does not attend that meeting, then he or she will be informed of the results after the meeting, including a call to repentance if appropriate.
 - f. If the erring individual genuinely repents/demonstrates repentance, as judged by the elder(s), then he or she is to be declared forgiven and treated as in good standing in the fellowship.
6. Step 5: If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church's collective call to repentance, then he or she shall be publicly excommunicated from the fellowship and/or membership of the church at a church community meeting.
 - a. The excommunicant is to be considered an unbeliever and declared to be regarded as such.

- b. Church members and others who regularly attend or fellowship with this church are not to associate with the excommunicant but to avoid him or her except for seeking to lead him or her to repentance.
 - c. The excommunicant is welcome to attend church services on the understanding that he or she is not a member of the church nor considered a believer by the church nor welcome to take Communion as long as he or she remains unrepentant.
 - d. The excommunicant is not welcome to attend church meetings that are not worship services, such as church community meetings, fellowship gatherings, etc.
 - e. If, after excommunication, the erring individual comes to genuine repentance/demonstrates repentance, as judged by the elder(s), the excommunicant is to be publicly declared forgiven and welcomed back into full church fellowship and/or membership.
7. The process laid out above is not to be regarded as rigid or only valid if conducted precisely as laid out here. The process delineated here is a basic guideline based on biblical teaching meant to be flexible and adaptable to specific circumstances and to be tolerant of imperfect execution.
- a. For example, in certain circumstances, it might be thought best for a sinning brother to be confronted publicly from the start rather than privately. Or again, certain situations might be thought to call for an immediate advance to the steps of bringing the matter before the church and excommunication. Or again, there might be more meetings seeking to resolve concerns than listed above.
8. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the excommunication or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline.
9. Members of this church, or other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, who are in the discipline process of this church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to withdraw from this church to the effect of stopping the church discipline process. Once the church discipline process has begun, it can continue even if the person involved in that process leaves the church.
10. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elder(s), a church member, non-member regular attender, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present

upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION

- A. The church may be dissolved by decision of the elder(s) if it is ratified by at least 75% of voting members present at a church community meeting.
 - 1. For such a vote to be valid, the matter of dissolving the church must first be addressed in a community meeting no less than two weeks prior to a subsequent meeting at which the church will vote on the matter. No less than two weeks prior notification of the vote must be given to the church.

- B. The Articles of Agreement set forth the dissolution provisions.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

- A. These bylaws may be amended by the elder(s) at their discretion with the following exceptions:
 - 1. Additions to the bylaws and amendment of articles II, III, VIII, or IX require the additional ratification of 75% of voting members present at a church community meeting.
 - 2. For such a vote to be valid, the amendment to the bylaws must first be addressed in a community meeting no less than two weeks prior to a subsequent meeting at which the church will vote on the matter. No less than two weeks prior notification of the vote must be given to the church.

- B. Thirty days advance notice must be given to the church before any amendment to these bylaws takes effect.

Adopted this 13th day of December, 2021, by a 2/3rds majority of the incorporators.