

**TOP RAIL COWBOY CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION  
AND BY-LAWS**

Revised 21st day of  
August 2016

# TOP RAIL COWBOY CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Adopted 14th day of August 2012

Revised 21st day of August 2016

## **PREAMBLE**

Under the guidance and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, we the members of Top Rail Cowboy Church adopt the following constitution in order to declare and preserve the principles of our faith, the freedom of our church, and the rights and responsibilities of our individual members.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this church is Top Rail Cowboy Church and incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The church is organized and maintained to fulfill the following Mission

Purpose Statement: The mission of the Top Rail Cowboy Church is to reach the lost and unchurched people in the western culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide a church home where they can become more like Him.

The church will accomplish this mission by holding to these values:

Simplicity- The church will strive to keep all things it does as simple as possible.

Non-judgmental approach- The church will foster a nonjudgmental atmosphere in all it does, accepting people just as they are, just as Christ himself does.

Cultural relevance/Western Heritage- The church will make sure that all it does, including all of its programming and ministries will be geared toward reaching people in the western culture and those who love it.

Practice of Biblical Christianity- The church will practice biblical Christianity. This will be practiced by the leadership and the congregation.

Elimination of barriers to the cowboy culture- The church will do all that it can to lower or eliminate the barriers preventing the Gospel of Jesus Christ from reaching the western culture.

Empowerment with Accountability- The church will strive to empower as many people as it can to serve Christ through the church and bring out the

giftedness in them while holding them accountable for their actions and commitments.

Power of the Gospel- The church believes in the power of the gospel for salvation of souls and healing of body, mind and spirit.

## **ARTICLE III DOCTRINE**

### **I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

### **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

#### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

#### **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into

heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

#### C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

### III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

### IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God. C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life. D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

#### V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### IV. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing

the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Ref: Baptist Faith and Message

#### **ARTICLE IV. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIP**

Jesus Christ is the head of the church; the true source of all that the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. It is before Him that all other leadership must bow. He communicates his will for the church through His word, the Bible. He gives additional guidance by means of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit who indwells the heart of each believer. He calls forth elders in accordance with Acts 14:23 for the church to whom He gives responsibility for the oversight of the church. Persons meeting the membership requirements and making a written request for membership shall constitute the membership. As an autonomous local church, this church is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body

#### **ARTICLE V. ORDINANCES**

##### **SECTION I. BAPTISM (John 3:13-17, I Peter 3:21, Romans 6:4)**

A church is understood to be a fellowship of baptized believers brought together to carry out the work of Jesus Christ. A baptized believer is one who has been scripturally immersed and understands baptism to be a symbol of the salvation which has already been accepted in their life by the grace God through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ.

##### **SECTION II. THE LORD'S SUPPER (Luke 22:17-20, I Corinthians 26)**

The church will observe the Lord's Supper on a regular basis as led by the Pastor and Elders. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act whereby the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine,

memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming. This observance is open to anyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior and is seeking His righteousness.

## **ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the active residents present at a church conference called for that purpose.

Amendments may be proposed by the Elders or by written petition signed by 25% of the active resident members and duly presented to the Elders.

Proposed amendments for church consideration shall be announced at the regular worship service and made available in written form to the congregation two weeks prior to the called church conference in which they will be voted on.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1. ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Church is open to anyone who meets the following qualifications:

A. A member must be a born again believer in Jesus Christ that by the grace of God through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ has received salvation.

B. A member must have been baptized by immersion after faith in Christ as a testimony of salvation.

C. Membership may be established in the following ways:

By Statement:

Candidates may join by affirming that they are baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, holding to the basic doctrinal teaching of this church. Members joining by statement of faith that hold membership in another church are responsible for notifying their former church of their new membership in Church.

By Baptism:

Candidates accepting Christ as their Savior and requesting believer's baptism by immersion may be accepted as members upon baptism.

D. All candidates for membership shall give a verbal testimony of their conversion, baptism, and current relationship with Christ and acceptance of the church's mission statement and doctrinal teaching to the pastor or designated member of leadership.

## SECTION 2. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A person's membership may be terminated in one of the following ways:

A. Death

B. Transfer of Membership

C. Exclusion

If a member conducts himself in a manner which brings the name of Christ and the church into disrepute, or is found to be undermining church unity, it will be the responsibility of the elders under the guidance of the pastor to attempt to restore the member in a spirit of love according to the guidelines set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. If the member fails to respond positively to these attempts or vocally espouses a belief system or doctrinal interpretation that is contrary to what is taught in this church and it is deemed, by the elders, to be detrimental to the spiritual health of the congregation, exclusion will require a consensus of the elder body and a written account signed by the elder body outlining the process laid out by Matthew 18:15-17 that they followed with the member. This written account will be available to members of the congregation upon request.

## SECTION 3. RIGHTS OF MEMBER

Each active resident member present, 18 years of age and older has the right vote on any issue put forth by the elders for a vote or that this document specifies. Members have the right to be considered for church leadership positions that they are qualified to hold and a right to all of the benefits of church fellowship outlined in scripture.

## ARTICLE II. MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

### SECTION 1. PASTOR (Ephesians 4:11-13, I Timothy 5:17)

A. Call

Upon a vacancy in the pastorate the Elders are responsible for

determining the process for calling a pastor in accordance with the bylaws. In accordance with Acts 14:23 the Elder body must be in consensus on a single candidate before he is presented to the church for affirmation. Spiritual authority will be given to the new pastor by a 3/4 vote of the congregation present and voting at a special called meeting. The congregation will affirm his appointment and submission to his spiritual authority by extending a call.

#### B. Duties

The pastor, along with the counsel of the Elder's, shall be the spiritual leader of the congregation. He shall preach and teach the word of God, lead the church in a regular worship services, administer the ordinances of the church, serve as moderator at church conferences, provide leadership to the ministerial staff, serve as overall administrator of the church with counsel and accountability of the elders, work to implement the model of church structure and function laid out in this constitution and generally fulfill all his pastoral duties as set forth in Scripture.

#### C. Termination

The Pastor's duties may be terminated by consensus of the elder body, excluding the pastor if the pastor has engaged in immoral, unbiblical or unethical behavior that brings reproach on the church or Christ, if these issues cannot be resolved through biblical intervention. If the elder body fails to resolve any matters relating to pastor biblical accountability, the active resident members can call for a vote of removal by a written petition 50% of active resident members presented to the elders. After receiving a petition for removal with 50% of active resident members as signatures the elders will call for a vote of removal. The pastor may be removed by a vote of 75% of active resident members.

### SECTION 2. ELDERS (Acts 14:23, 15:2, 20:17, Titus 1:5, James 5:14, I Peter 2:25, 5:1-4)

#### Purpose and Function

Elders shall serve to provide spiritual leadership and accountability to the church in accordance with scripture. They will provide a brotherhood of support and accountability for the pastor, assist the ministry teams with difficult issues, serve as arbiters in matters of conflict or church discipline, and in general provide spiritual leadership, guidance, and assistance wherever and whenever appropriate. The elder body shall be made up of no less than two and no more than five

appointed men including the pastor, who is the lead elder, and an associate pastor, if applicable.

### Spiritual Authority

Spiritual authority comes from God through His Holy word and through his calling of men. Once an elder's calling has been recognized, upon his appointment to the elder position in the church he will assume all spiritual authority granted to him through scripture.

### Decision Making Body

The only time when the elders become a decision making body is when they are called on by the Pastor to help him make a decision, (2) when a ministry team cannot reach consensus on an issue or asks for the elders help, (3) when the functional structure does not exist or breaks down, (4) in matters of church discipline.

### Confidentiality

All discussions between the elders are strictly confidential; this includes not discussing elder issues with the spouses of elders or other church members. Breaking confidentiality is grounds for removal. Elders do not meet without all the elders present including the pastor if this is possible and absolutely never meet to discuss problems about the pastor or another elder without them present. The Pastor-Elder and Elder-Elder relationships must be 100% transparent.

### Qualifications

Gods Word gives us specific qualifications, in 1 Timothy 3:1-12, for men who are called to serve as leaders in our church. Below are the biblical and culturally relevant qualifications that apply to Elders in the Top Rail Cowboy Church.

Verse 1 -Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

Elder must acknowledge the importance and respect God gives to someone called to lead the church.

Verse 2 -Now the overseer must be above reproach ...

Elder must be someone with a good testimony in his home, the church, and in the culture God has called this church to reach. The church acknowledges that none are without sin; an Elder must be someone who is seeking righteousness.

Verse 2 - the husband of but one wife...

If an Elder is married, he must have only one wife and love her as Christ loves the church. Previous divorce alone is not grounds for disqualification.

Verse 2 - temperate & self-controlled

Elders are called to handle very difficult situations at times and must be able to control their personal feelings, emotions, and actions in order to seek what God would have them do and not their own desires.

Verse 2 - respectable ...

An Elder must be a man who is respected in the church, at home, and in the culture. An Elder must respect people in his family, the church, and his community.

Verse 2 - hospitable ...

An Elder must be willing to open his home and give of his time to meet and the serve the people in the church.

Verse 2 - able to teach ...

An Elder must spend time in Gods Word and be comfortable and willing to instruct others in the church in studying the Bible.

Verse 3 - not given to drunkenness ...

An Elder must not be controlled by alcohol or anything else that impairs his ability to make sound decisions or damages his testimony in the church, home, or culture.

Verse 3 - not violent but gentle ...

An Elder must be able to handle situations calmly without becoming verbally, physically, or emotionally abusive.

Verse 3 - not quarrelsome ...

An Elder must never be involved in matters that cause dissension in the church.

Verse 3 - not a lover of money...

An Elder must be someone who is willing to put the needs of the church above his own desire for worldly possessions.

Verse 4 -He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect ...

An Elder must be leading his family the way God directs in Scripture and be involved in the lives of his family.

Verse 6 - He must not be a recent convert ...

An Elder must not be new Christian or someone who is not maturing in his faith. While Spiritual maturity is something none of us will

completely attain until we are in the presence of God, it is also something that takes time. An elder must meet a minimum level of maturity as outlined in Hebrews 6:1-2.

Verse 7 - He must have a good reputation with outsiders ...

An Elder must be in good standing with people who are not a part of the church. He must have credibility with the rural/western culture we are seeking to reach.

Verse 9 - They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience

An Elder must look to Gods Word for the direction and words used to lead our church.

Verse 10 - They must first be tested ...

An Elder must be someone who has led others in our church, (ministry teams, worship, etc.) or is active in church events/services.

An Elder must be an active resident member of the Top Rail Cowboy Church. Elders must be men of spiritual maturity. An Elder must preclude his role and authority in any situation that is or could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

An Elder must have an understanding and desire to see that the Mission of the Top Rail Cowboy Church and its values are upheld.. Elders must be willing to rearrange their daily schedules or do whatever it takes to ensure the Mission of the Church and any business necessary is fulfilled.

If arguments and disagreements arise in the church an Elder must be able to take a neutral position, suspend judgment, hear both sides, and seek only Gods direction based on Scripture.

Selection and Term of Office

Thereafter on or about January 1st of each year, in accordance with Acts 14:23, the elder body will appoint the new elder(s). All terms will be three years. Which elders will serve short terms, to keep open offices staggered, will be determined by lottery. The congregation will affirm the elder selection. Best practice would be: after an elder has rotated off for a year he will be eligible to be a candidate for elder again if it is determined that he is still qualified, however if there are no scripturally qualified men to serve in the elder role the elder can serve multiple terms by mutual consent of the pastor and elders.

### Removal

Elders other than the Pastor may be removed from office by their own decision or by consensus decision of the other elders. Removal shall be based upon being spiritually unqualified, the inability to serve or as a result of the process laid out in Matthew 18:15-17 and other scriptures or failure to fulfill their commitments as an elder.

### Vacancies

Elder vacancies can occur by death, resignation, or removal. When a vacancy occurs, the existing elders shall select an interim to fill the vacancy until the next election

## SECTION 3. PROFESSIONAL MINISTERIAL STAFF

### A. Selection

If it is determined by the consensus of the elder body that additional professional ministerial staff other than the pastor is needed for fulfilling the church's mission they may be employed by the church after the position is funded by the budget. The elders will seek out candidates to fill the position. The pastor will make the final selection for the staff position.

### B. Duties

Specific and written job descriptions will be outlined by the pastor.

### C. Termination

The minister's duties with the church may be terminated by resignation, death, or dismissal. Dismissal may be made by the Pastor and the Elders.

## SECTION 3. LAY PASTORS

### A. Purpose and Function

The Lay Pastors will serve in the Biblical role described in scripture as Deacon (Acts 6:1-4, I Timothy 3:1, 8-10). They are directed by the pastor and elders to help carry out ministry duties. They are appointed and replaced by the pastor, with consensus of elders, at his discretion. Lay Pastors may be attached to one or more ministry teams. Lay Pastors do not run or lead the teams, they resource the team and act as a liaison between the team and the pastor.

### Ministers in Worship

Lay Pastors may be called on to participate in the worship service, i.e. announcements, prayer requests, administering ordinances, assisting in baptism etc. Lay Pastors may also be called upon to bring devotions, preach, pray or lead bible studies depending on their gifts, talents and spiritual maturity.

### Ministers to the Congregation

Lay Pastors help the pastor minister to the needs of the congregation in many ways, such as, visitation, meeting member's physical needs as well as the physical needs of the church.

#### B. Selection

Lay pastors shall be appointed as needed by the senior pastor with consensus of elders.

#### Qualifications of Lay Pastor

Lay pastors must be active resident members in good standing, be growing in the Lord and have an active daily relationship with Jesus.

Lay pastors must have a stable home life and be respected by others in the western culture and the community and not engage in activities that would bring reproach to the Lord or the church. Divorce alone is not grounds for disqualification.

#### Tern of Office

The term is one year but multiple terms may be served by mutual consent.

#### Removal

A Lay pastor may be removed before their term of office expires by death, resignation, or dismissal by the pastor and or elders.

## **ARTICLE III. SUPPORT STAFF**

#### A. Selection

The pastor and or elders determine the need for support staff. Once a need is determined, budget approval by the church must be in place before a position can be filled.

#### B. Duties

Support staff persons will have specific and written job descriptions as outlined by the pastor and elders.

#### D. Termination

Dismissal may be made by the Pastor and the elders.

## ARTICLE IV TEAMS

SECTION 1 GENERAL MINISTRY TEAMS (Mark 3:13-18, 6:7-13, Luke 6:12-16, I Corinthians 12:17-31)

### Purpose and Function

Ministry teams shall be organized to carry out the specialized ministries of the church. Each ministry team shall have specific functions and responsibilities as assigned or approved by the pastor and/or elders.

### A. Structure

The elder body is to appoint members of the congregation to a team and empower them to make ministry decisions for a specific area of ministry. Those empowered to make decisions are called consensus members. The best practice is to have no less than 4 no more than 10 consensus members and as many supporting members as needed to carry out the mission of the ministry team. Teams will function by consensus, not majority vote. If consensus cannot be reached, the matter must either be tabled or prayed about before being addressed again or placed before the elder body for a final decision.

Team representatives are responsible for attending regularly scheduled ministry team meetings and reaching consensus on decisions. The

Teams make their own decisions about what they will do in their particular areas of ministry, however, all major decisions that could affect church direction or church sponsored activities should be brought before the leadership team before being implemented.

### B. Qualifications

Consensus members must be active resident members of the church in good standing Non church members can be active on ministry teams as supporting team members but cannot be consensus members.

### C. Formation of Teams

General Ministry teams may be formed as needed by the pastor and elders.

### D. Selection and Term of Office

Consensus members of general ministry teams are appointed by the pastor and elders or by someone they enlist to appoint members. The term of office for general ministry team members will be one year, but members may serve multiple terms by mutual consent.

### E. Removal

If a team member causes conflict or fails to carry out his or her responsibility to the team they may be removed from the team by the

elders.

## SECTION 2 STANDING TEAMS

### A. Purpose and function

Standing teams shall be in place to assist in finding and providing the tangible resources necessary to effectively carry out the church's ministries and business.

### B. Structure

Standing teams are structured the same as ministry teams.

### C. Qualifications

Qualifications are the same as those of general ministry consensus members.

### D. Standing Teams

The standing teams of the church shall be:

#### 1. Facility Team

This team is responsible to ensure that the church has adequate facilities to effectively carry out its ministries. They will oversee the care, maintenance, and use of all facilities and grounds except the arena. They will not oversee paid staff.

#### 2. Audit Team

The Audit Team is made up of no less than 3 no more than 7 members. They meet once a month to audit the financial records. They only verify and report. They have no decision making authority about how money is spent.

#### 3. Arena Team

The arena team shall be responsible for the oversight, care, maintenance, and use of the arena and all arena ministry events.

### E. Selection and Term of Office

Members of standing ministry teams may be appointed by the pastor and/or elders, or be enlisted by others who have been given that authority by the pastor and elders and do so under their supervision. The term of office for standing ministry team members will be two years with two members rotating off each year.

### F. Removal

If a standing team member causes conflict, fails to carry out his or her responsibility to the team they may be removed by the elders.

## SECTION 3. LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Purpose and Function

The Leadership Team will serve to provide a forum in which the various ministry teams can brainstorm, coordinate activities and events, share resources, and generally work together to enhance the overall effectiveness of the church's ministries. It will be responsible for setting the church calendar and holding all ministry teams accountable to the church's mission statement, values and constitution. It will be responsible for making decisions that do not fall under specific ministry teams and decisions affecting church direction or involve multiple ministries. The leadership team may be used by the pastor to help him make decisions involving church direction or ministry.

### Structure

The Leadership Team will consist of the team leaders from each ministry team, the pastor, the elders, the lay pastors, and staff. In addition, its meetings will generally be open to the participation and input of the entire church membership, however, the leadership team may meet in closed meetings but this cannot take the place of the monthly leadership team meeting which is open to the congregation. Leadership team meetings shall be moderated by the senior pastor or a person whom the senior pastor will designate.

### Meetings

The Leadership Team will meet as often as necessary to effectively plan and coordinate the activities and events of the church. At a minimum the leadership team will meet once every 2 months. Leadership Team members are expected to attend all meetings unless excused.

## ARTICLE V. CORPORATE OFFICERS

### SECTION 1. PRESIDENT

The senior pastor shall serve as the president and overall administrator of the corporation. He will serve as moderator at church conferences and be responsible for ensuring that the daily business affairs of the church are appropriately and effectively executed.

### SECTION 2. TRUSTEES

A. Purpose and function

Trustees shall sign the title to church property; all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property; all notes and loan instruments; and such other legal documents as may require execution on behalf of the church. There shall be 3 trustees.

B. Selection and Term of Office

The trustees will be the current elders or appointees by the Pastor.

C. The trustees will have no decision making authority, they will only execute the will of the church in legal matters. The elders that serve as trustee's duties will cease upon end of their term of office.

**SECTION 3. CLERK/SECRETARY**

A. Purpose and function

The Church Clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation. The responsibilities of the clerk will be to keep the minutes of all church conferences, insure that a proper file of all members is maintained.

B. Selection and Term of Office

A volunteer may be appointed by the pastor and elders. The Church Secretary shall serve as Church Clerk.

**SECTION 4. VACANCIES**

In the event a vacancy occurs in any corporate office, the elders shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.

**ARTICLE VI. CHURCH BUSINESS**

**SECTION 1. FINANCES**

A. Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the church will be on a calendar year basis beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31 of each year.

B. Accounting Procedures

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of

the Audit Team.

#### C. Budget

The Pastor and the Elders are responsible for preparing a budget for congregational vote prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. The Elders, excluding the Pastor, are to make salary and compensation recommendations for the Pastor position. A proposed budget will be presented at a monthly leadership team meeting for discussion. After consideration of Leadership team discussion the budget must be presented the congregation at a called business meeting for a majority vote of those present and voting to go into effect. Any purchase of land or other indebtedness and expenditures that exceed 20% of the budget must be preceded by a nonbinding vote of affirmation by the active members. Any policies related to finances can only be adopted by consensus of the elders.

#### D. Checks, Drafts, Etc.

All checks, drafts or orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the church shall be signed by at least two people who have been designated by the Elders for that purpose. The Pastor must have administrative access to all bank accounts, however he may not sign checks. The best practice is for the pastor's spouse, an elder and or an elder's spouse or other relations of conflict of interest not serve as check signers.

#### E. Deposits

All funds of the church shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the church in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as determined by the Elders

### SECTION 2. SPECIAL CHURCH CONFERENCES

#### A. Special Church Conferences

Church conferences may be called by the elders or by written petition of 50% of the active resident members presented to the elders.

#### B. Notices

Notices of the time and place of all church conferences shall be given no later than the Sunday prior to such meetings by

publication in the church newsletter or worship bulletin, or by public announcement at a regular Sunday morning worship service.

C. Place of Church Conferences: All church conferences shall be held on the premises of the church.

D. Quorum: The active resident church members present at any duly called church conference shall constitute a quorum.

E. Proxies: Voting by proxy at any church conference shall not be allowed or recognized.

F. Will of the Church: All Ministry Teams, officers, and organizations of the church shall carry out the will of the church on any given matter, duly expressed by its vote.

G. Rules of Procedure: The order of proceedings at church conferences shall be determined by the rules of practice contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

H. Conduct of Church Business: All business of the church shall be conducted in a manner that honors Christ and respects others. The church shall strive to seek the will of God by prayerful deliberation and common consensus.

### SECTION 3. CONTRACTS

The Trustee's shall execute and deliver any contract or instrument in the name of the church which may be authorized by the church to be so executed and delivered. In this connection, the church body as a whole shall be the ultimate authority for all actions taken by the church and no other person, organization or corporate officer shall have any authority to contract or otherwise bind the church without express authorization from the church body.

### SECTION 4. BOOKS AND RECORDS

The church shall keep and maintain a complete and accurate record of all financial accounts, membership lists, and church conference minutes at its principle office. All books and records of the church may be inspected by any active resident member,

or his agent or attorney, for any purpose at any reasonable time. All giving records must be sealed and only persons appointed by the elders that are restricted by confidentiality may handle these records.

#### SECTION 5. PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING IN CORPORATE EARNINGS

No member, officer, or person connected with the corporation, or any other private individual shall receive at any time any of the net earnings of pecuniary profit from the operations of the corporation, provided that this shall not prevent the payment to any such person of a reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the corporation in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the church; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets upon the dissolution of the corporation. All members of the church shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution or winding up of the affairs of the corporation, whether voluntary or involuntary, the assets of the corporation, after all debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the officers of the church shall be distributed, transferred, conveyed, delivered, and paid over, in such amounts as the church may determine or as may be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction upon application of the church, exclusively to charitable, religious, or educational organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

#### SECTION 6. EXEMPT ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these by-laws, no member, officer, or representative of the corporation shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of the corporation not permitted to be taken or carried on by any organization exempt under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended, or by any organization contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (C)(2) of such code and regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

## **ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the active resident members present at a church conference called for that purpose. Amendments may be proposed by the elders or by written petition of 25% of the resident membership presented to the elders. Proposed amendments for church consideration shall be announced at the regular worship service and made available in written form to the congregation two weeks prior to the church conference in which they will be voted on. Amendments will be numbered, dated and attached to the original instrument.

## **ARTICLE VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

The Church recognizes the civil government as instituted by God in accordance with Romans 13:1-7, however if the civil government passes a law, that the elders of this church interpret as being in conflict with God's Holy Word the church will not recognize that law.

## **ARTICLE IX. ACTIVITIES ON CHURCH PROPERTY**

All activities on church property will incorporate worship; therefore all activities must be in obedience with all scripture found in the Holy Bible as interpreted by the elders of this church.