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**NORTHWEST COMMUNITY
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH**

BY-LAWS

Once this process has begun, the member agrees to comply with it, or else resign their membership and agree to leave the fellowship of Northwest Community Church.

C. Termination of Membership

Any member who wishes to terminate his/her membership may do so by submitting a letter to the Board of Elders requesting that their name be removed from the list of church members.

Any member of this church who for a period of one year or more has not attended the regular services and who has not supported the work of the church with some degree of regularity, provided such person is not hindered by sickness, distance, or disability, may be contacted by the Board of Elders to ascertain their desire regarding church membership. If sufficient reason for the absence cannot be obtained by the Board of Elders, the membership may be terminated. A member may be involuntarily dismissed from membership as a result of church discipline. Such persons may be accepted again for membership, upon repentance, in the normal manner of receiving members as directed by the church Constitution and By-Laws. (1 Cor. 5:5-3, 12-13)

Article 13 - Authoritative Interpretation of Scripture

The final authority for interpreting and applying the Scriptures to matters of Northwest Community Church life shall be the Elders. In the case that there are irresolvable conflicts within the church, the Elders or the congregation or members in the congregation may appeal to the Texas/Oklahoma District of the Evangelical Free Church of America for mediation and/or arbitration.

Article 14 - Revisions or Amendments to the By-Laws

These By-Laws may be revised or amended at any business meeting of the church (Annual or Special) by at least 2/3's majority of the votes cast. The revision or amendment must be presented to the congregation in written form at least thirty days prior to the meeting.

We, the members of Northwest Community Evangelical Free Church, do hereby declare and establish By-Laws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner and to maintain the autonomy of this church in freedom of action in relation to other churches and organizations.

Article I - Meetings

A. Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the business meetings of the church.

B. Special Meetings

The Church membership may call a special business meeting by presenting a petition signed by at least 10% of the church membership to the Church Chairman or Board of Elders.

The petition must be accompanied by a list of items to be acted upon by the church at the special business meeting. Only the items listed will be addressed at the meeting. The Board of Elders, by a majority vote, may also call a special business meeting.

C. Absentee Voting

Members may vote who are absent from the meeting. The church will provide ballots which the member may use to vote on items at a regular or special meeting. The member should turn in the filled in and signed Absentee Ballot to an Elder or Deacon prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

Article 2 - Elders

A. Elder - Selection

(1). Becoming an Elder Candidate

To be considered for nomination as an Elder, a man¹ must be an active member of the church and must aspire to the position. His aspiration to the position of Elder may be ascertained by a discussion with a current Elder or Pastor, or by his submission of a letter to the Board of Elders, which states his desire to be considered for the position of Elder. Members of the congregation may also recommend that the Elders consider a man for Elder candidacy.

(2). The Selection Process

The Board of Elders will compile a list of candidates whose lives are consistent with biblical standards of behavior. These candidates will go through the following selection process.

(a). Interviews

There will be an Elder interview of every Elder candidate. If he is married, there will be an Elder interview of the candidate's wife by at least two Elders. The candidate may or may not be present at the wife's interview as he and his wife determine.

(b). Leadership Review

There will be a review of the candidate relative to the biblical requirements for Elder (cf. 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5) and to his understanding of and commitment to the unique mission and vision of the church by the current Elder board, without the candidate being present.

(c). Prayer

The entire evaluation process will be accompanied by prayer by the Board of Elders, the candidate, and the congregation. All candidates must be agreed upon by a consensus of the Board of Elders before being put before the congregation. The congregation will vote on the Elder candidate at a Business Meeting of the church called for this purpose.

¹ Based on 1 Timothy 3, our understanding is that an Elder is to be a male.

Article 10 - Marriage

We believe that marriage is a union between one man and one woman and that marriage is the only legitimate and accepted sexual relationship. (Genesis 1, 2; Ephesians 5; Romans 1)

We therefore reserve the right to allow our understanding of what the Bible teaches regarding marriage and our understanding of what is good for all people to guide us in our decision as to who will join our paid or volunteer staff and in deciding for whom we will conduct weddings.

The final decision regarding whether a wedding will or will not be allowed at Northwest Community Church will be made by the Elders.

Article 11 - Facility Use

The final decision regarding facility use will be made by the Elder Board. Details regarding permitted uses can be found in the General Information for Building Use document.

Article - Membership

A. Becoming a Member

Anyone wishing to become a member of Northwest Community Church should contact any member of the Elder Board and request a Membership Interview. At least two Elders will be present for every Membership Interview.

Anyone can be welcomed into church membership who:

- gives testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life;
- is in essential agreement with the church's Statement of Faith (found in the church's Constitution); and
- agrees to abide by the By-Laws of the church.

B. Discipline of a Church Member

If a member is found to be living in willful disobedience to that which is clearly taught in Scripture as applicable to Christians today, that member shall be warned in a spirit of love, with a view toward restoration, and in accordance with Scripture (Matthew 18). If that member refuses to change (repent), that member shall be dismissed from membership upon a vote of at least 2/3's of the members eligible to vote at a business meeting of the church at which this was one of the stated items to be acted upon.

D. Associate Pastoral Staff – Dismissal

(1). Reasons

An Associate Pastor may be dismissed in the case of the elimination of a job position, for moral impurity, for doctrinal defection, or for failing to fulfill his job description.

(2). Procedures

An Associate Pastor may be dismissed or the job position eliminated by a 2/3's majority vote of the Board of Elders

Article 7 - Relationship of Pastoral Staff to the Board Of Elders

The Pastoral Staff and the Board of Elders are interdependent. The Pastors will provide whatever resources of counsel, time, prayer, and energy that they have available to assist the Elders in the carrying out of their duties. Likewise, the Elders will assist the Pastors to the extent that they are able.

Ultimate decision-making authority for the direction of the church and its ministries lies with the Elders.

Article 8 - Non-Pastoral Church Staff

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the selection, the setting of compensation for, and termination of any individuals employed by the church for the proper functioning of the church. The direct supervision and development of position descriptions for employed individuals may be delegated by the Elder Board, but the final approval of any action taken with regard to non-pastoral staff must come from the Elder Board. Individuals who are on staff in non-pastoral roles must lead lives that are consistent with biblical standards of behavior.

Article 9 - Volunteers

Individuals who serve as volunteers in our church or who are on staff in non-pastoral roles must lead lives that are consistent with biblical standards of behavior. Those adults who serve in areas where there is direct contact with minors will be background checked to ensure the safety of the children under the church's care.

(d). Congregational Review

The list of Elder candidates who have passed through a), b), and c) (above) will be published for review by the congregation with a date given for the final vote. This date will be at least one month after the initial list is published. If someone in the church feels that a candidate is not qualified (ref. Constitution Article VI, Sec. 2, and any pertinent Scripture passages), such must be stated in writing, signed, and submitted to the Board of Elders before the final vote is taken. This action may or may not disqualify a candidate from standing for a vote. The Board of Elders shall make the final decision.

(3). The Final Selection of an Elder

The candidates will be voted on by the congregation at a business meeting at which this was one of the stated items of business. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the members of the church present (or voting absentee) at the meeting is required.

B. Elder - Term of Service

An Elder is elected to a two year term of office, and may succeed himself in office. If he wishes to serve a second consecutive term, the Elders may elect to waive the interview, but all other aspects of the selection process will be followed. If he wishes to serve a third consecutive term, he will submit to all aspects of the selection process. For each subsequent term, the entire selection process will be repeated every other term.

C. Elder - Responsibilities

(1). Regarding Pastoral Ministry

The Elders will involve themselves in all pastoral areas of ministry. Responsibilities in each area of ministry may be divided among the Elders as they deem appropriate.

(2). Regarding Church Involvement

Elders will regularly be present at the church's worship service(s), will support the church's ministry through financial stewardship, and will pray for the ministries of the church.

(3). Regarding Management

The Elders have primary oversight responsibility for the major aspects of the church's ministry, with emphasis on equipping the church to fulfill its scriptural mandates, as guided by the Northwest Community Church Mission Statement.

The Elders will serve as shepherds as they lend leadership and oversight to the people-intensive aspects of the church's work.

The Elders will provide oversight to the Deacons, who will handle many of the ongoing administrative responsibilities of the church

The Elders will support and give direction to Ministry Coordinators who help carry out the pastoral work of the church.

Each Elder will be expected to attend the regularly scheduled Elder's meetings. The meeting schedule will be determined by the Board of Elders.

(4). Regarding Church Membership

Elders are responsible for interviewing those individuals who wish to join the church.

(5). Regarding Pastoral Evaluation

The Board of Elders will be responsible to evaluate the ministry of each member of the pastoral staff on a yearly basis, or more frequently, if deemed necessary. This evaluation will provide feedback to the pastoral staff, and may be the basis for altering a job description.

(6). Regarding salaries for staff

The Elders will be responsible for recommending salaries and compensation packages for the pastoral, ministry and administrative staff.

These recommendations will be voted on by the congregation at the Annual Business Meeting of the church as part of the overall church budget. Only aggregate salary information will be presented to the congregation. Individual salary information may remain confidential to the Board of Elders.

C. Senior Pastor - Character

The Senior Pastor is to be growing in the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and his life must be consistent with biblical standards of behavior.

D. Senior Pastor - Dismissal

(1). Reasons

The Senior Pastor may be brought before the congregation for dismissal for moral impurity, for doctrinal defection, or for failing to fulfill his responsibilities as outlined in the By-Laws and in his job description by a 2/3's majority vote of the Elders.

(2). Procedures

If 2/3 of the Elder board deems dismissal to be the proper course of action, then this will be brought before the congregation and the Senior Pastor may be dismissed by a 2/3's majority of the votes cast by the members at a business meeting of the church at which this was one of the stated items to be acted upon.

Article 6 - Associate Pastoral Staff

A. Associate Pastoral Staff - Selection

In the event that the church is without adequate pastoral staff, the Board of Elders will determine if there are adequate financial resources to support additional pastoral staff. The Board of Elders (or an Elder designated Search Committee) will then screen prospective pastoral candidates. A candidate must be agreed upon by a consensus of the Board of Elders before being presented to the congregation for vote.

B. Associate Pastoral Staff - Responsibilities

Each Associate Pastor's function shall be determined by the Board of Elders and shall be presented to the Associate Pastor as a written position description.

C. Associate Pastoral Staff - Character

Each Associate Pastor is to be growing in the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and leading a life that is consistent with biblical standards of behavior.

B. Ministry Coordinators - Term of Service

A Ministry Coordinator serves an open ended term as agreed upon by the Ministry Coordinator and the Elders.

C. Ministry Coordinators - Responsibilities

Ministry Coordinators may be involved in such pastoral ministries as the Elders deem necessary. A Ministry Coordinator will be supported by and will receive oversight from the Elders.

D. Ministry Coordinators - Dismissal

A Ministry Coordinator may be dismissed for moral impurity, doctrinal defection, for no longer consistently attending Northwest, or for failing to perform the job for which they have been selected. A Ministry Coordinator may be dismissed by a 2/3's vote of the Board of Elders.

Article 5 - Senior Pastor

A. Senior Pastor - Selection

In the event that the church is without a Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders (or an Elder designated Search Committee) will interview prospective pastoral candidates. A candidate must be agreed upon by a consensus of the Board of Elders before he is presented to the congregation for vote.²

The congregation will vote on the Pastoral candidate at a Business Meeting of the church called for this purpose. The Pastor will be called with no less than a 2/3's majority of the votes cast by the members of the Church.

B. Senior Pastor - Responsibilities

The Senior Pastor is responsible for preaching on Sunday mornings and other duties as indicated in a written position description provided by the Board of Elders.

² Because of our understanding of the teaching of Scripture, we believe that the Senior Pastor must be male. (1 Timothy 3)

(7). Regarding a Church Chairman

A Church Chairman shall be selected from among the Board of Elders by the Elders themselves. The Church Chairman will be selected by a 2/3's majority of the Board of Elders. His duties, in addition to the regular responsibilities of an Elder, are to chair all business meetings of the church, and chair all Board of Elder meetings. He will be in place as the Church Chairman for one year, and may succeed himself in office, but may not serve more than three years in succession.

D. Elder - Dismissal

(1). Reasons

An Elder may be dismissed for moral impurity, doctrinal defection, or for failing to minister to the Body as specified in the By-Laws.

(2). Procedures

An Elder is dismissed by a 2/3's majority vote from the other Elders.

Article 3 - Deacons

A. Deacon - Selection

(1). Becoming a Deacon Candidate

A person who is to be considered for the office of Deacon must be an active member who has demonstrated an effectiveness in serving in the church with spiritual maturity, and whose life is consistent with biblical standards of behavior.

This person will be approached by a member of the Board of Elders, and asked if they would consider serving as a Deacon in the church. Alternatively, a member who aspires to the office of Deacon may ask the Board of Elders to be considered for candidacy. Additionally, a member of the church may recommend a member to be a candidate to serve as a Deacon.

(2). The Evaluation Process

The candidate who is interested in becoming a Deacon will go through the following selection process:

(a). Leadership Review

There will be a review of the candidate relative to the biblical requirements (cf. 1 Timothy 3) by the present Elder board, without the candidate being present.

(b). Interviews

There will be an interview of every Deacon candidate by at least one Elder plus a second Elder or a Deacon.

If the candidate is married, there will be an interview of his spouse by at least one Elder plus a second Elder or a Deacon. The candidate may be present or not as determined by the candidate and his spouse.

(c). Congregational review

The list of Deacon candidates will be published for review by the church congregation with a date given for the final vote. This date will be at least one month after the initial list is published. If someone in the church feels that a candidate is not qualified (cf. Constitution Art. VI, Sec. 4, and any other pertinent Scripture passages), such must be stated in writing, signed, and submitted to the Board of Elders before the final vote is taken. This action may or may not disqualify a candidate. The Board of Elders shall make the final decision.

(d). Prayer

The entire process will be accompanied by prayer by the Board of Elders, the candidate, and the church body. All candidates must be agreed upon by a consensus of the Board of Elders.

(3). The Final Selection of a Deacon

The candidate will then be voted on by the congregation at a business meeting. A 2/3's majority of the votes cast by the members of the church present (or voting absentee) at the meeting is necessary for selection.

B. Deacon - Term of Service

A Deacon shall be elected to a two year term of office, and may serve additional terms. If a Deacon wishes to serve a second consecutive term, the Elders may elect to waive the interview, but all other aspects of the selection process will be followed. If a Deacon wishes to serve a third consecutive term, all aspects of the selection process will be followed. For each subsequent term, the entire selection process will be repeated every other term.

C. Deacon - Responsibilities

(1). Ministry Areas

The Deacon Board will be responsible for many of the ongoing administrative responsibilities of the church, including the day to day financial operation of the church, facilities and grounds upkeep, and Sunday morning administration.

(2). Ministry Procedures

(a). The Board of Deacons (comprised of all the Deacons elected by the congregation) is responsible for carrying out the ministries under its stewardship.

(b). The Deacon board will meet on a regular basis at a self-determined frequency. They will elect their own Chairman (affirmed by the Elders), and assign responsibilities among themselves for primary and backup oversight of the areas within their area of responsibility. They are encouraged to recruit widely to assist in carrying out their responsibilities.

D. Deacon - Dismissal

(1). Reasons

A Deacon may be dismissed for moral impurity, doctrinal defection, or for failing to perform the job for which they have been elected.

(2). Procedures

A deacon may be dismissed by a 2/3's majority vote of the Board of Elders.

Article 4 - Ministry Coordinators

A. Ministry Coordinators - Selection

A person who is to be considered to be a Ministry Coordinator must be an active member who has demonstrated effectiveness in serving in the church and whose life is consistent with biblical standards of behavior. Ministry Coordinators shall be appointed by the Board of Elders to serve as leaders of the various pastoral ministries of the church.



northwest
COMMUNITY CHURCH

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Congregational Mission Statement

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8

Having tasted God's amazing grace through faith in Jesus, we passionately pursue life-changing relationships with God, with each other, and with our world.

BY-LAWS

". . . Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
Hebrews 10:24



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An Evangelical Free Congregation

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