

## **BYLAWS FOR ELDER LED CHURCH**

The head of \_\_\_\_\_ Church is Jesus Christ. As an organization, we seek to reflect His priorities in all we do and how we do it. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict any of Jesus' teachings.

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be: \_\_\_\_\_ Church. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the church shall be to cultivate an environment where people encounter and follow Jesus.

### **ARTICLE III. ASSOCIATIONS**

This church shall be a self-governing church, subject only to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other biblical groups on a voluntary basis and as such has chosen to cooperate with Eastern Nebraska Baptist Association, the Kansas/Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, and the Southern Baptist Convention

### **ARTICLE IV. ARTICLES OF FAITH**

We believe that the Scriptures, as originally written, were verbally inspired and are the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore are truth without any impurity or error. We believe the Bible to be the standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

### **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION I: General**

Membership in \_\_\_\_\_ Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership roll. The membership of \_\_\_\_\_ Church reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church.

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

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation.

3. Completion of the Church membership class.
4. A commitment to abide by the membership covenant.

The church administrative staff shall maintain all membership records.

### SECTION III: Responsibilities of the Membership

The responsibilities of the membership are described in the membership covenant.

### SECTION IV: Voting Rights of Membership

Every member shall have the right to vote on the following matters:

1. Merger or dissolution of the Church.
2. Acquisition of land or buildings and related indebtedness.
3. Changes to the Constitution or Bylaws of the Church.
4. Calling of the Lead Pastor.
5. Affirmation and removal of elders and deacons.

Each member 12 years and older is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

### SECTION V: Termination of Membership

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

1. Upon the death of the member.
2. Upon request for transfer of membership to another Church.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. Dismissal by the Church according to the following conditions:
  - a. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the membership covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community.
  - b. Procedures for the dismissal of a member shall be in accordance to Matthew 18:15-17.

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for reconciliation rather than punishment or dismissal.

## SECTION VI: The Restoration of Members

The Church, acting according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, shall restore members dismissed by the Church upon evidence of repentance, reformation, and when their lifestyles are in accordance with the membership covenant. The Church may restore to membership any person previously dismissed, upon request of the excluded person, and by affirmation at any regular Worship Service.

## SECTION VII: Congregational Meetings

Congregational meetings will be held in the times, in the manner, and the purposes set forth below:

1. An annual meeting will be held in October of each year. The purpose of the meeting is to review the budget and conduct any other business listed in Article V, Section IV.
2. The elders may change the dates of the annual or other scheduled congregational meeting as provided below.
3. A special congregational meeting may be called at any time by the elders.
4. Members shall be notified no less than one (1) week prior to a meeting which considers any matter set forth in Article V, Section IV.
5. Members shall be notified by any one of the following methods:
  - a. Distribution of written materials to the congregation in attendance at a weekend service.
  - b. Announcement of the meeting in the church newsletter.
  - c. Oral announcement to the congregation at a weekend service.
  - d. By email to members.
  - e. By first class mail to members.
6. A quorum shall consist of those members present and voting.
7. Motions to be presented at any congregational meeting must be submitted to the elders for consideration one week prior to the meeting.

## ARTICLE VI: ELDERS

### SECTION I: General

The church is led by elders. An elder is a man of exemplary, Christ-like character who is able to lead God's people by teaching them God's Word in a way that profits them spiritually. God calls elders and grants them authority to lead the affairs of the church under His direction. They primarily provide spiritual leadership through prayer and teaching the Bible. When necessary, they may delegate certain organizational and administrative responsibilities to other individuals and teams as they see fit.

No elder shall have any right, title, or interest in or to any property of the corporation. No elder shall be personally liable for the debts or obligations of the corporation of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the elders be subject to the payment of the debts or obligations of the corporation.

### SECTION II: Qualifications

Elders are male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for eldership set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and personify the mission, vision, and values of the church.

### SECTION III: Selection and Dismissal

We do not choose elders, rather, we discover those whom God has gifted and called to serve in that capacity. The current elders will lead in the process of identifying, evaluating, and training potential elders. The final determination of selection or dismissal of an elder rests with the membership.

Elders are selected through the following process:

1. Potential elders are recognized as they serve, meet the biblical qualifications and evidence Spirit-led ability to care for the spiritual growth of others and teach the Bible.
2. Candidates are invited to participate in the elder training process.
3. During this process, their character and abilities are examined.
4. Unanimity among the current elders is achieved regarding whether or not to nominate the candidate.
5. The elders recommend candidates to the membership as a nominee for eldership. This nomination rests with the membership for three months. Any objecting to the nomination can address their concerns to the elders. If necessary, the elders may withdraw the nomination.
6. If no concerns are raised, a 75% majority affirmation of the membership is necessary.

Elders may be dismissed according to the following and guided by 1 Timothy 5:19-22:

1. Elders may be removed if it is clear that they are acting in contradiction to Scripture.
2. The accusation must be brought to the current elders by two or three witnesses.
3. They will investigate the matter, seeking repentance and restoration. Any necessary discipline may also be imposed.
4. If necessary, the matter will be brought to the congregation and the elder can be removed by a 75% vote.

In addition, the elders continued service will be evaluated annually in light of the biblical qualifications and personal factors. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision, or the unanimous decision of the other elders. Those elders completing the review process will be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

## ARTICLE VII: LEAD PASTOR

### SECTION 1: General

Although elders act jointly and share responsibility and authority for leadership of the church, not all are equal in their giftedness, biblical knowledge, leadership ability, experience or dedication. There will be a "first among equals" who will be primary leader and teacher of the church.

### SECTION 2: Lead Pastor Search Team

When the church is without a Lead Pastor, a Pastor Search Team will be appointed by the elders. A balanced team of seven, Spirit-led individuals who are members in good standing will be responsible for the process of prayerfully searching prospective pastors. When the committee is in agreement, they will bring one candidate to the membership.

### SECTION 3: Election

The membership will elect the Lead Pastor by paper ballot at a special meeting of the church. A favorable vote of 75% is required.

## ARTICLE VIII: DEACONS

### SECTION 1: General

In addition to elders, the body is served by deacons. Deacons serve under the authority of the elders and provide physical leadership of the church, enabling elders to focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word.

## SECTION 2: Selection

1. Deacons are selected by the elders in accordance with the qualification in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. They are presented to the membership for examination for three months.
3. They are appointed by a 75% affirmation among the membership.

Deacons will be evaluated annually in light of biblical qualifications and personal factors. An individual's service may be discontinued by his own decision or the unanimous decision of the elders. Those deacons completing the review process will be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

## ARTICLE IX: GENERAL

### SECTION I: Legal Provisions

1. The church shall have the right to own, buy or sell tangible property, both real and personal, in its own name through designated individuals, when authorized by the membership.
2. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individual from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which the church may become involved.
3. In the event of the dissolution of the church, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holding shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall irrevocably be designated prior to dissolution to the Eastern Nebraska Baptist Association, its successor, or if it ceases to exist to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Articles adopted by the church.

### SECTION 2: Amendments

This document was drafted by faithful but fallible people. Should it become necessary to revise this document in any way, any proposed amendment shall be presented to the elders. In the event that the elders vote to adopt such an amendment by majority vote, the amendment will be presented to the membership for approval. A two-thirds majority vote is required to approve the amendment.

Adopted at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.