These Bylaws of Iglesia Hispana El Alfarero / Huntsville First Assembly of God, a local Christian Church, were adopted this \_\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord 2024.

**PREAMBLE**

To create a loving, growing community of Spirit-filled believers actively engaged in worship, evangelism, discipleship, and ministries of compassion at the personal, small group, and corporate levels, we, whose names appear upon the church roster under the above date, do now recognize ourselves as a local church, and adopt the following articles of church order, and submit ourselves to be governed by them. These articles shall always be subordinate to the Bible in the life and conduct of this church.

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this local church shall be Iglesia Hispana El Alfarero, Huntsville’s First Assembly of God, 3700 Bob Wallace Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama 35805.

**ARTICLE II: PREROGATIVES**

**Section A.** This church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, making "... every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace ... until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph 4:3,13)

**Section B.** In addition to that, it shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest, or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as shall be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes; all by its Bylaws or as the same shall be hereafter modified or amended.

**ARTICLE III: VOLUNTARY AFFILIATION**

**Section A.** While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the ownership of its property and the conduct of all its affairs, this church shall voluntarily enter full fellowship with churches associated in the Alabama Ministry Network and the General Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters at Montgomery, Alabama and Springfield, Missouri, respectively. It shall actively participate with the other assemblies in the mission for which God has called the fellowship. The members and ministers of this church shall recognize and respect the officers of the Section, Network, and General Council. All subsequent references to "Network" and "Section" in these Bylaws refer to the Alabama Ministry Network of The Assemblies of God within which this church is affiliated unless otherwise stated.

**Section B.** This local church voluntarily enters this affiliation, voluntarily remains in this affiliation, and may voluntarily end this affiliation. If this church is a General Council affiliated church and not a Network affiliated church, this church may terminate its affiliation with the Assemblies of God by the General Council Bylaws Article VI, Preservation of Affiliation, Section 4, Paragraph D.

**ARTICLE IV: TENETS OF FAITH**

**Section A. The Holy Scriptures**

This church shall accept the Holy Scriptures, the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testament in the Christian Bible, as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. This church shall be guided in its understanding of Scripture by the teaching ministry of its Pastors, who are adequately and properly trained to correctly interpret the Bible by Christian Teachers of historic, orthodox, and evangelical faith.

**Section B. Statement of Fundamental Truths**

To maintain general unity and fellowship, this church subscribes to the Statement of Faith in the Constitution of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Article V. Statement of Fundamental Truths. The Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all shall speak the same thing, (1 Cor 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. It covers our need for these fundamental doctrines, and no claim is made that it contains all biblical truth.

**Section C. Morality, Marriage, Family, Gender, and Human Relationships**

**1.** According to the Bible, we relate to each other as brothers and sisters committed to this family of God. We also uphold biblical families in Jesus Christ, meeting the needs of children, youth, adults, seniors, and godly families of every kind in Christ. Therefore, we value the monogamous marriage of one man to one woman, as scripture defines, as the only marriage-like relationship God values or accepts. (Acts 16:31; Matt 19:13-14; Eph 5:22-6:4)

**2.** According to the Bible, God has defined males and females by His order in creation and procreation, based on their biological and physiological gender at birth. Therefore, this church recognizes in all its relationships, ministries, use of facilities, and property only that a person's identity before God defines gender. For us, this is a matter of religious faith. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Mat 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9, 13-14; Mark 10:6-12)

**3.** According to the Bible, marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Marriage is God's unique gift used 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 only acceptable channel of sexual expression according to the Bible, and the means for procreation of humans. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Song of Songs; Matt 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9, 13-14; Mark 10:6-12; Eph 5:21-6:4; 6:1-4)

**4.** We believe all attempts to define morality, marriage, family, human identity, and human relationships in ways that include adultery, incest, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, transgender relationships, or pornography are contrary to the clear teachings of the Bible. According to the Holy Scripture, such definitions and practices are unacceptable to God. (Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 7:1-16; Eph 5:21-6:4; 6:1-4; Col 3:5-10, 18-21; 1 Tim 5:8,14; 2 Tim 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Heb 13:1-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7.)

**5.** According to the Bible and in the Spirit of Christ, we oppose all forms of human trafficking, racism, exploitation, slavery, violence, greed, selfishness, oppression, and any other attitude, activity, or relationship that degrades humans and denies them the dignity which they were created in the image of God to enjoy. We speak and work to provide for and protect the poor, the powerless, the child, the orphaned, the abused, the aged, the sick, and the unborn. We contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deut 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Sam 1:26-28; Psa 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Prov 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; Ecc 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Mat 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9, 13-14; Mark 10:6-12; Acts 16:31; Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 7:1-16; Eph 5:21-6:4; 6:1-4; Col 3:5-10, 18-21; 1 Tim 5:8,14; 2 Tim 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Heb 13:1-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7.)

**6.** We acknowledge that there is no scriptural directive that explicitly approves or disapproves of organ donation. As such, the decision to donate organs is left to individual discretion. However, we outline ethical considerations as follows:

**a.** Organ donation is considered ethical only if the donor, or their authorized representative, has provided explicit and informed consent.

**b.** The act of organ donation is morally justifiable if the risks and harm to the donor are balanced against the potential benefit to the recipient.

**c.**  It is morally wrong to cause intentional harm or mutilation that results in disability or death of a donor, even if the intention is to save or prolong another's life.

**ARTICLE V: PURPOSE**

**Section A. Mission Statement:** Our mission is to turn pre-Christian people into devoted, Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus Christ.

**1.** Our Mission is the number one task God has commanded us to accomplish, the most essential job He has given us. The Mission Statement is the simplest possible expression of our number one job.

**2.** Fulfilling our mission requires both our initiative and action and partnering with other churches, in evangelism, education, discipleship, compassion, missions, and church planting.

**Section B. Vision Statement**

**1.** We shall be a loving, growing community of Spirit-filled believers actively engaged in worship, evangelism, discipleship, and compassion ministries at the personal, small group, and corporate levels.

**2.** Our Vision is what God has shown us, and we must become it to achieve our Mission. Our Vision is the context from which we accomplish our Mission.

**ARTICLE VI: GOVERNMENT**

**Section A. In General**

The authority to govern this assembly shall be vested in those called, gifted, and equipped according to the scriptures to serve by governing: the Pastor and Eldership Team. This is an article of religious faith for us. (Eph 4; Rom 12; 1 Tim; 2 Tim; Titus; Acts 14, 15; Heb 13) The government of this assembly in matters of pastoral call and property shall be shared by the Pastor, Eldership Team, and active assembly membership as described in these Bylaws.

**Section B. Officers**

The officers of this church shall be:

**1.** The Lead Pastor/Chief Executive Officer, hereafter referred to as the Pastor.

**2.** The Eldership Team: The Eldership Team comprises the sitting lay elders and those ordained ministers on staff who have been deemed qualified and appointed as elders by the Pastor.

**3.** The Secretary (may be combined with the Treasurer at the discretion of the Pastor).

**4.** The Treasurer (may be combined with the Secretary at the Pastor's discretion).

**5.** This church recognizes that according to the Bible, either men or women shall serve in any of these offices. (Rom 16; 1 Cor 11:5; Acts 18:24-28)

**6.** As long as this is a Network Affiliated Assembly, all the rights and privileges of the pastors, leaders, and congregation enumerated in these Bylaws remain amendable to the direction and correction of the Network Executive Committee or its representatives.

**Section C. The Lead Pastor**

**1.** Qualifications

**a.** The Pastor of this church shall be a credentialed minister of The Assemblies of God with an up-to-date fellowship certificate. Any exception to this shall be approved in advance by the appropriate Network official as described in the Network Bylaws or protocols. The Eldership Team shall be notified of approval or disapproval in writing by the Network.

**b.** The Pastor is to be the shepherd of the flock, a servant of God and God's people, a student of the Word, a spiritual person of prayer, a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led leader who meets all biblical requirements as the Teaching Shepherd, and one of the ruling elders of this community of faith. (Acts 2:4, 6:3; Rom 12:8; Eph 4:11f; 1 Thes 5:12; 1 Tim 3:1-7, 5:17, 22; 2 Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4)

**2.** Duties

a. The Pastor is the spiritual overseer of the church and shall direct and oversee all its activities, personally or through his designated representatives.

**b.** The primary duty of the Pastor shall be prayer and the ministry of the Word. To that end, every other worker in this church serves as an extension of the Pastor's ministry, lightening his load, and preserving his time of prayer and study of the Word. The Pastor seeks God for the direction of the church and all its ministries to fulfill its mission and vision. He communicates his vision to the Eldership Team and the rest of the body, which includes creating, approving, modifying, or terminating ministries as necessary. (Acts 10, 13:1-14, 16:6-10; 1 Pet 5:1-4)

**c.** Leadership development of those he sees God gifting and raising for ministry in the body shall be one of the primary functions of the Pastor. The Pastor shall mentor, disciple, and test those persons, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, equipping them to serve the body as servant-leaders who will disciple others and lead ministries. No other person shall serve in any office or ministry of this church without the Pastor's approval. (Mark 3:13-15; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Tim 3:10; 2 Tim 2:2)

**d.** The Pastor shall be the President of the corporation and shall act as chairman of all business meetings of the Eldership Team, and with the Secretary, sign all official papers for the corporation.

**e.** The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all departments and ministry teams.

**f.** The Pastor shall provide for all regular and special services of the church. No person shall be invited to minister in any way in any service, department, class, ministry, or extension of the church without his prior approval.

**g.** All paid employees of any kind (ministerial, clerical, maintenance, etc.) shall be under the general supervision of the Pastor. The Pastor or his representative(s) shall have all hiring, disciplining, promoting, demoting, employee salary setting, and termination authority without appeal beyond the Pastor.

**h.** The Pastor shall develop or approve all policies and procedures of the church.

**3. Selection**

**a.** If the Pastorate is vacant for any reason, the Eldership Team shall serve as a Pastoral Search Team. At his discretion, the Pastor departing in good standing shall appoint, or the Eldership Team shall elect from among the Eldership Team members, one interim chairperson to serve the Eldership Team. If this church is a Network Affiliated Assembly the Network Executive Committee must approve all potential pastoral candidates before they are approached, discussed, presented, appointed, or elected.

**b.** If the departing Pastor had a significant ministry and tenure in this community of faith and departed in good standing, the new Pastor will be chosen in one of three ways:

i. After consulting the Network Executive Committee, the departing Pastor may appoint a new Pastor subject to ratification by two-thirds of the Eldership Team. If the appointee is not a credentialed Assemblies of God minister, he must be approved in advance by the Network Executive Committee and by 100% of the Eldership Team.

**ii.** After consulting the Network Executive Committee, the departing Pastor shall recommend a series of candidates to the Eldership Team. His recommendation(s) shall be made known to the entire congregation. His recommendation(s) for potential Pastors shall be contacted by the Eldership Team, which shall select one at a time to propose to the congregation before other applicants are considered.

**iii.** The proposed candidate and family shall spend at least one weekend with the church, having the opportunity to fellowship with the people, receive questions from the congregation, teach at least once, and preach at least twice to the church.

**iv.** If the departing Pastor recommends no candidates or none of the recommended candidates achieve a 2/3 vote of the congregation, the search shall proceed as follows.

**v.**  The Eldership Team shall contact the Network Office for recommendations of Pastoral candidates, shall receive suggestions from the congregation, and shall conduct such investigation, visits, and interviews as necessary.

**vi.**  The Eldership Team shall satisfy itself via investigation, visits, and interviews that potential Pastors share the mission, vision, core values, and philosophy of ministry of this church, in word and previous ministry.

**vii.**  At least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Eldership Team shall choose one minister as a candidate for Pastor, call that person and their family in for ministry, questions from, and fellowship with the church. Given the seriousness of this decision, Eldership Team members dissenting in the call of a candidate should feel free to share their perspectives at the congregational vote.

**viii.** The candidate and family shall spend at least one weekend with the church, having the opportunity to fellowship with the people, receive questions from the congregation, teach at least once, and preach at least twice to the church.

**ix.**  After prior consultation with the Network Executive Committee, the active members of the church shall vote on the candidate in a special business meeting presided over by the interim chairperson of the Eldership Team. Only one candidate at a time shall be considered by the church. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast shall constitute an election.

**x.**  The Pastor departing in good standing may ask any or all the staff to resign on or before his departure date. All staff and employees asked by the Pastor to remain shall continue to fulfill their portfolios until a new Pastor is installed, who will then decide upon their retention or release, without appeal.

**xi.**  While the pastorate is vacant, the Leadership Team shall see that the pulpit is filled for every service by qualified persons other than potential Pastors. No person asked to serve as interim minister or pulpit supply shall become a candidate for permanent Pastor without the prior approval of the Network Executive Committee.

**(d) Term** The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period and shall not be voted on again unless otherwise specified and agreed upon by the candidate before his election.

**(e) Dismissal**

**i.**  The Pastor shall be dismissed for violating doctrine or lifestyle as set forth by The Assemblies of God, and the qualifications for active membership in this church.

ii. . To begin the dismissal process, charges must be brought by two or more witnesses to each offense, first to the Pastor, then to the Eldership Team, and then to Network Officials (1 Tim 5:19-20).

**iii.** Network officials shall conduct an appropriate investigation according to their protocols and shall render a final judgment. Removal of the Pastor's ministerial credentials shall constitute dismissal from the Pastorate of this church. Exoneration by Network officials means retention of the Pastorate of this church. The discipline of the credentialed minister is in the hands of the appropriate Sectional, Network, and General Council ministers, not the local church. Any subsequent disciplinary or rehabilitation program will be the decision of the appropriate Network and General Council body. The ultimate result of any denominational appeals process pursued by the disciplined minister will be accepted by the church and will be final. Restoration to ministry in this local church will be by provisions elsewhere in these Bylaws.

**iv.**  If the Pastor is not dismissed, but a majority of a secret ballot vote of the combined Network Executive Committee, Sectional Committee, and local Eldership Team feels it is in the best interest of the church to conduct a vote of confidence, this shall be done after appropriate notice to the active members. In a special business meeting chaired by the Network Superintendent or his representative, a majority of the active members present must vote "no confidence" to dismiss the Pastor. Otherwise, the Pastor is retained (if he wishes to continue as Pastor).

**V.**  If the Pastor is retained and he wishes to continue as Pastor, he shall at his discretion through the ministry of church discipline seek repentance and restoration for those members and adherents of this community of faith who brought the charges, by these Bylaws.

**vi.**  Network Affiliated Assemblies shall not dismiss the Pastor. The church shall request the Network Executive Committee make a pastoral change and that committee shall follow its own procedures in making its decision.

**Section D: Ministerial Staff**

The Ministerial Staff is composed of those credentialed ministers assisting the Pastor. They represent the Pastor in overseeing all lay workers and answer directly and only to the Pastor.

**1..** Qualifications

**a.**  The Ministerial Staff is chosen by the Pastor and shall be qualified as he requires.

**b.** They are to be the under-shepherds of the flock, servants of God and God's people, students of the Word, spiritual persons of prayer, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led leaders who could meet all biblical requirements as the Elders of this community of faith should they be so appointed. (Acts 2:4, 6:3; Rom 12:8, Eph 4:11f; 1 Thes 5:12; 1 Tim 3:1-7, 5:17, 22; 2 Tim 4:1-2, Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4)

**2.**  Duties

**a.**  The Ministerial Staff shall fulfill whatever duties are assigned by the Pastor.

**b.**  Under the Pastor's direction, they shall direct the ministries of the church, answering directly and only to the Pastor.

**c.** When the Pastor judges that an ordained staff member is sufficiently mature, seasoned, loyal, and otherwise qualified, after consulting with the Eldership Team, he shall appoint that staff member to the Eldership Team as an ordained Elder, subject to ratification by a majority of the Eldership Team.

**d.** When the Pastor is to be away for a season, he may designate a staff member to serve as his temporary representative to make decisions in his stead should he be unable to be reached.

**3. Selection, Term, and Dismissal**

**a.** The Ministerial Staff is chosen by the Pastor, serves at the discretion of the Pastor, and is dismissed by the Pastor without appeal.

 4. **Non-Assembly of God Ministers**

Any minister on the staff of this church, whether paid or unpaid, holding ministerial credentials (with any organization) or not, shall be held to the same standards of conduct in life and ministry that are defined for General Council ministers in the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. For us, this is a matter of religious faith. (Psa 133; 2 Cor 12:18; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

**Section E. The Eldership Team**

The Eldership Team is composed of the credentialed ministerial staff and laymen who have been deemed qualified and appointed as Elders by the Pastor. The Pastor and Elders appointed by the Pastor are full members of the Eldership Team with all privileges associated therewith.

**1.**  Qualifications

**a.** The Eldership Team shall be made up of people of spiritual depth and sensitivity, mature Christian experience, stability, faithfulness, sound judgment, loyalty, and humility. (1 Timothy 3:1-3)

**b.** They should be baptized in the Holy Spirit and currently living a Spirit-filled life, spiritually gifted to serve as leaders. (Acts 2:4, 6:3; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 5:22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 John 4:7-8)

**c.** We understand the phrase "one woman man" in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 to mean "faithful to his wife," a description of one's current lifestyle, not of his past, and having no reference to a previous divorce or remarriage. The Pastor shall satisfy himself that all potential lay elders are now living above reproach and able to serve.

**d.** We affirm that women shall serve in all levels of leadership. (Rom 16; 1 Cor 11:5; Acts 18:24-28)

**e.** They shall have been active members for at least 12 months, fulfilling all the membership requirements in an exemplary fashion, not under 25 years of age.

**f.** They shall publicly and privately be in full agreement with, and actively support, the mission, vision, and ministry philosophy of the Pastor and church. They must follow the Pastor and staff in a loyal and loving relationship. They must be faithful to all regular and special services of the church. Any attitude, speech, or behavior that creates strife, contention, or dissension to any degree disqualifies one from service on the Eldership Team. (2 Cor 2:9, 7:12, 8:8, 12:18)

**g.** They shall have been proven and prepared by completing whatever spiritual formation, training, education, and ministry experience the Pastor deems necessary.

**h.** They must be actively serving in the church in some capacity before and during their service on the Eldership Team.

**i.** The Pastor shall decide when these qualifications have or have not been met and kept as he is led by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 12, 14; Rom 12)

 **2.**  Duties

The Eldership Team shall serve with the Pastor in the leadership, oversight, and spiritual shepherding of the church.

**a. T**hey shall meet at least quarterly or as requested by the Pastor, and never without his presence, except with his permission or when the Pastorate is vacant.

**b.** They shall serve as needed by the Pastor to extend his ministry and fulfill the mission, vision, and ministry philosophy of the Pastor and the church, actively promoting love, unity, sound doctrine, and holy living.

**c.**  They shall serve as advisors to the Pastor in matters of ministry initiation, evaluation, development, termination, leadership training, special projects and planning, and the redefining of the mission, vision, and ministry philosophy, etc.

**d.**  They shall act as trustees for the church in all business and legal matters, handling such matters at the direction of the Pastor or church membership as specified in these Bylaws.

**e.**  They shall serve as the finance team for the church, reviewing financial reports every month, advising the Pastor, when necessary, in the receiving and disbursing of funds, reviewing and raising the Pastor's salary at least annually after receiving his salary proposal and request, consulting with outside advisors to ensure the raises and remuneration package are sufficient. The salaries of all paid staff are determined by the Pastor, in consultation with the Eldership Team.

**f.**  They shall assist the Pastor as needed in providing leadership to all ministry departments, programs, projects, etc., leading by involvement and example as role models for the church.

**g.**  They shall continue to receive whatever discipleship, equipping, and training that the Pastor deems necessary throughout their tenure as Elders.

**h.** They shall serve, in addition to the ministerial staff, as advisors to, and accountability partners for the Pastor. If, in their opinion, the Pastor has acted questionably in some way less than that requiring formal charges or dismissal, but serious enough to merit counsel, having first spoken with the Pastor without an appropriate response, the Eldership Team shall then contact Sectional or Network officials or other appropriate professionals to request counsel for themselves and the Pastor.

 **3.** Selection

**a.** When the Pastor judges that a member is sufficiently mature, loyal, and otherwise qualified to serve as an Elder, he shall appoint that member to the Eldership Team.

**b.**  Lay members of the Eldership Team shall normally be chosen from the pool of people having previously served and those apprenticed and prepared for potential service as an Elder as described above in paragraph (a) of this section. (1 Tim 3:6, 10)

**c.** They shall be nominated by the Pastor. Their names shall be made known to the church for one month. If a written, signed objection to their service from an active member of the church is given to the Pastor, the Pastor shall investigate the matter in consultation with the Eldership Team and render a judgment. If there is no such objection, they shall be appointed by the Pastor, and the action made known to the church.

**d.** There shall be at least three or more lay members, in addition to the credentialed ministerial staff, on the Eldership Team, depending on the need and availability of qualified people.

**e.** The normal selection process shall be conducted annually, with terms running approximately concurrent to the calendar year.

**f.** If an emergency need for additional lay elders arises, the Pastor, in consultation with the Eldership Team, shall waive the one-month nomination period and appoint lay elders as needed.

**4. Terms**

**a.** Ministerial staff appointed to the Eldership Team serve for one year and may be reappointed at the Pastor's discretion.

**b.** At the initial selection of lay members for the Eldership Team, one shall be selected to serve for three (3) years, one for two (2) years, and one for one (1) year. Thereafter, one or more shall be selected to serve for three (3) years. This shall be a revolving team.

**c.** No lay member(s) should normally succeed themselves in office until at least one (1) year has elapsed since their previous term of service if other properly qualified replacements are available.

**d.** Exceptions: when deemed necessary by the Pastor, after consultation with the other elders, the Pastor may ask any lay elder to extend their term on an annual basis.

 **5. Dismissal**

**a.** When in the Pastor's judgment any elder on the Eldership Team has failed to maintain the qualifications, fulfill the duties, or respond to restoration as described above, the Pastor shall either suspend or remove said Elder from the Eldership Team.

**b.** The suspension of an elder suspends all his/her rights, privileges, and authority as an elder.

**c.** The removal of a lay elder must be ratified by a majority of the Eldership Team at a properly called meeting. The suspension or removal of a credentialed ministerial member appointed by the Pastor does not require Leadership Team consultation or ratification.

**d.** The Eldership Team will work with the Pastor in any restoration ministry deemed appropriate by the Pastor to spiritually restore a suspended or removed elder.

**e.** The suspended or removed elder will be notified of his/her suspension personally.

**f.** Suspended elders shall be returned to the Eldership Team to finish their term only at the initiative of the Pastor, after consultation with the Eldership Team.

**Section F. Leadership Development**

**1.** Leadership development shall be one of the primary functions of the Pastor.

**2.** The leadership development track advances through stages including conversion/transfer, various service roles, discipleship modules, training in servanthood and service, becoming a teacher/small group leader, leadership training and service, lay elder, and ordained elder (credentialed minister).

**Section G. Secretary**

**1. Qualifications**

The Secretary shall normally be an existing member of the Eldership Team, but if not, shall be similarly qualified. The same person may or may not serve as both Secretary and Treasurer. If not a member of the Eldership Team, the Secretary shall attend the Eldership Team meetings by invitation of the Pastor and shall have neither voice nor vote.

**2. Selection**

 The Pastor shall appoint the Secretary after consulting the Eldership Team, with the final decision resting with the pastor.

**3. Duties**

The Secretary shall record and keep the minutes from the meetings of the Eldership Team and business meetings of the church, sign all business and legal documents of the church as necessary and directed, and perform any other work necessary to discharge his/her duties.

**4. Term**

The term shall be one (1) year, with succession in office permitted.

**5. Dismissal**

After consulting the Eldership Team, the Pastor may dismiss the Secretary for failure to maintain qualifications, fulfill the duties, or respond to restoration as described above. The Pastor will notify the dismissed officer of his/her termination personally, and officially in writing.

**Section H. Treasurer**

**1. Qualifications**

 The Treasurer may or may not be chosen from among members of the Eldership Team but shall be similarly qualified. The same person may or may not serve as both Secretary and Treasurer. If not a member of the Eldership Team, he/she shall attend Eldership Team meetings by invitation of the Pastor and shall have neither voice nor vote.

**2. Selection**

The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Pastor, after consultation with the Eldership Team, with the final decision resting with the pastor.

**3. Duties**

**a.** The Treasurer shall see that all funds received by the church are deposited in the name of the church in federally insured accounts, or accounts available with the Alabama Ministry Network or General Council of The Assemblies of God, or accounts approved by the Eldership Team.

**b.**  The Treasurer shall see to the disbursement of the same by check as authorized by the Pastor, or by the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**c.** The Treasurer shall prepare a detailed itemized monthly financial report of all receipts, deposits, and disbursements for the members of the Eldership Team, and a summarized annual financial report for distribution to the members of the church.

**d.**  All church financial books and accounts shall be audited annually at the discretion of the Pastor and Eldership Team.

 **2. Term**

The Treasurer shall serve for one (1) year, with succession in office permitted.

 **3. Dismissal**

After consulting the Eldership Team, the Pastor may dismiss the Treasurer for failure to maintain the qualifications, fulfill the duties, or respond to restoration as described above. The Pastor will notify the dismissed treasurer of his/her termination personally, and officially in writing.

**Section I. The Ministry Leadership Team**

The Ministry Leadership Team is composed of people who have proven themselves gifted by the Holy Spirit as servants to the body and who have been equipped and appointed by the Pastor and Eldership Team. (Rom 12; 1 Tim 3) The Ministry Leadership Team serves as a proving place for those of its members recognized as potentially gifted for ministry as elders on the Eldership Team. This season of serving tests and forms the character of those who may someday govern as elders. (1 Tim 3)

**1. Qualifications**

**a.** Ministry leaders function as the Holy Spirit enables them, for this is a ministry and not an office one holds.

**b.** The Ministry Leadership Team consists of people specially gifted by the Holy Spirit to minister as church servants, growing in their walk with Christ, exhibiting a servant's heart and lifestyle, actively serving in a spirit of harmony, humility, and love flowing from a proven Christian character. (1 Tim 3:1-13)

**c.** Such leaders shall serve in any area of ministry as discerned by the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**d. T**hose recognized as Ministry Team Leaders should be baptized in the Holy Spirit and currently living a Spirit-filled life, or earnestly seeking this experience. (Acts 2:4, 6:3; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 5:22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 John 4:7-8)

**e.** They shall have been active members for at least 1 year, fulfilling all the membership requirements in an exemplary fashion, not under 21 years of age.

**f.** They shall be in full agreement with, and actively support, the mission, vision, and ministry philosophy of the Pastor and church, following the Pastor and staff in a loyal and loving relationship, faithful to all regular and special services of the church. (2 Cor 2:9, 7:12, 8:8, 12:18)

**g.** They shall have been proven and prepared by completing whatever discipline, equipping, and ministry experience the Pastor deems necessary. (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)

**h.** The Pastor shall decide when these qualifications have been met and kept. (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)

 **2. Duties**

a. They shall serve however needed by the Pastor to fulfill the mission, vision, and ministry philosophy of the Pastor and church.

b. They shall continue whatever discipleship, equipping, and training the Pastor deems necessary.

c. The Ministry Leadership Team shall meet as requested by the Pastor or his representative, and never without his presence, except with his permission or when the Pastorate is vacant.

d. They shall be under the supervision of the Eldership Team during a vacancy in the Pastorate.

e. The Ministry Leadership Team is a ministry of service, not authority or governance. In Scripture, the words for authority, governance, and rule are used for apostles and pastors/elders, but never in connection with ministry leaders, prophets, or evangelists.

**3. Selection**

**a.** As led by the Holy Spirit, the Pastor and Eldership Team shall recognize as leaders those individuals in whom the Spirit's gifting is evident, people who are already effectively serving the church in a meaningful way. (Rom 12:6-7; 1 Tim 3:10)

**b.** After consulting the Eldership Team, the Pastor shall appoint qualified individuals as Ministry Leaders.

**c.** From among those leaders who serve especially well, who continue to grow and show potential gifting for additional servant-leadership responsibility spiritually, members shall be selected for mentoring as potential lay elders, for possible service on the Eldership Team.

 **4. Terms and Dismissal**

**a.** Ministry Team Leaders shall serve for one year and may or may not be re-appointed by the Pastor.

**b.** As led by the Holy Spirit, the Pastor may dismiss any leader who fails to meet the qualifications and fulfill the duties described above. No ratification of the dismissal by the Eldership Team is required.

**Section J. Background Checks**

**1.**  Everyone who serves in any office of ministry in the church, whether paid or unpaid, especially those in contact with minors under the age of 18, shall first have a nationwide criminal background check done by a vendor recommended by the Network or General Council. This is a mandatory condition for service in any office or ministry.

**2.**  The church shall provide an appropriate permission form to be completed by the prospective employee or volunteer and returned to the church before the background check is complete. This includes all individuals holding ministerial credentials of any kind and their spouses. The church shall pay the cost of the background check.

**3.**  In deciding whether a prospective employee or volunteer shall serve in or beyond the local church, given the results of their background check, the Pastor and Eldership Team shall follow the guidelines recommended by the Network and General Council.

**4.**  The results of the background check shall be held in confidence by the Pastor and Eldership Team. They must be shared with the Network Office should they be requested when an employee, volunteer, or adherent of the church seeks to serve in any Network event or ministry.

**5.**  This practice is for us a matter of obedience to scripture and protection of the adults, youth, and children of our church, and avoiding reproach on the Church, Gospel, and Name of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 8:22-24; 1 Tim 3:10)

**ARTICLE VIII: PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPIRITUAL CARE**

As the church is financially able, as one of its budgetary priorities, the church shall provide the following pastoral development and spiritual care for the Pastor, pastoral staff, and Elders.

**Section A. Continuing Education**

**1.** Continuing education, spiritual formation, and equipping for ministry is something taught and practiced as a principle of Scripture, and therefore incumbent upon all ministers of Christ who long to grow deeper in the Word and more effective in ministry. The Pastor and staff of this church are expected to regularly be engaged in some form of continuing education, spiritual formation, and equipping as a ministry priority.

**2.** The church will help meet this need by paying for not less than half (50%), and if possible, all (100%), of the cost of all such continuing education, formation, and equipping which the Pastor (and if possible, the staff) choose to pursue, from informal seminary to formal, properly accredited education.

**3.** In accessing continuing education through reputable institutions, this church and its pastors shall abide by the directions provided for ministers and local assemblies in the Alabama Ministry Network Bylaws, Article VII, Section 8, and the General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 15, Integrity in Educational Credentials, and Article IX, Section 13, Accountability in Educational Attribution.

**Section B. Retreats**

**1.** This church shall pay for the Pastor to take such retreats as he deems beneficial, for the rest and renewal of the Pastor and spouse.

**2.** The benefit shall also be provided to the pastoral staff and their spouses.

**3.** As feasible, the Pastor and Elders shall retreat together for refreshing and renewal.

**Section C. Sabbaticals**

**1.**  Basis

 The concept of a sabbatical leave for Pastors is biblical. (Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Mat 11:28-30; Mark 6:31-32; Luke 5:15-16; John).

**2.** Purpose

 The sabbatical is for spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical rest, renewal, and growth. It will normally be focused on study, spiritual formation, receiving spiritual direction and counseling, spiritual travel, or occasionally simply doing something uniquely different and refreshing, all as chosen by the Pastor. The sabbatical is therefore normally not to be an extended vacation.

**3.**  Frequency and Duration

**a.** The Lead Pastor will be granted a one (1) month sabbatical for every 3 years that he/she serves. That is, after 3 years the Pastor receives 1 month. After 3 more years the Pastor receives another month for a total of 2 months, and so forth until 3 months is accumulated after 9 years. Thereafter, those 3 months shall be taken as one sabbatical every 3 years or maybe taken annually or biannually in increments no less than 1 month.

**b.** Vacation or personal time shall be added to the beginning or the end at the Pastor’s discretion.

 **4.**  Finance

a. The sabbatical will be in addition to any regular vacation, sick leave, or personal time off that the Pastor would normally receive according to the church's Paid Time Off policy.

**b.** ThePastor will receive his/her full remuneration package of salary, allowances, and benefits during the sabbatical.

**c.** As it is able, the church will pay the cost of study, spiritual formation, counseling, associated travel, and so forth associated with the sabbatical.

**d.** Credentialed Ministers

Other full-time credentialed pastors and/or staff shall be granted a similar sabbatical at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and Eldership Team.

**Section 4. Intellectual Property Rights**

All rights to and ownership of all creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, books, music, sermons, and so forth, using whatever medium, all designs, symbols, names, and images used in ministry or commerce, and the like, shall belong completely and unreservedly to the creating Pastor(s), with this church having no interest in or claim on said creations. This is the case whether the creating Pastor(s) is employed full-time, part-time, or volunteer, whether creation occurred during work or personal hours, on or off church property, using church-owned or personally owned equipment or material. All such creations shall be the personal private property of the creating Pastor(s), and the church shall never have any claim on these creations, or any revenue generated from them from their creation in perpetuity. Any contributions to the church by the creating Pastor(s) shall be solely at the discretion of the creating Pastor(s). The one exception shall be the names, logos, and branding used as the identity/official name of this local church, which the church shall use in perpetuity if it so desires, without restricting the creating Pastor(s) right to use in future ministry.

**Section D. Integrity of Use**

If the Eldership Team of this church sees that the Lead or Staff Pastors of this church are engaging the Pastoral Development and Spiritual Care benefits mentioned in this article either too little or in excess, after first addressing the issue with the Pastor(s) in question without success, they shall contact the Network Executive Committee for counsel in caring for our Pastor(s) and this church.

**ARTICLE IX: MEMBERSHIP**

The members of this church will be those who have met the requirements for membership as stated in the Bylaws, have been received into membership, and have not been removed from the membership roll.

**Section A. Qualifications**

The standard of membership for the church shall be:

**1.**  Testimony and evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration and a consistent Christian life marked by the fruit of the Spirit, not the sins of the flesh. (John 1:1-13, 3:3-8; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Peter 1:18-25; Matt 27:34; Rom 6:4, 8:12-13, 13:13-14; Eph 4:17-32, 5:1-2,15; 2 Tim 1:7; 1 John 1:6-7; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:19-25; Prov 20:1, 23:29-32; 1 Sam 15:22-23).

**2.**  Baptism in water by immersion unless prevented by age or physical infirmity. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47; Romans 6:4).

**3.**  To fully subscribe to the Tenets of Faith as outlined in these Bylaws, and to fully submit to be governed by these Bylaws, as they now exist or are later amended. (Amos 3:3; 1 Cor 6:1-8; Phlp 1:27, 2:2).

**4.**  To agree with, and actively support the mission, vision, core values, philosophy of ministry, and Pastoral leadership of this church. (Phlp 2:12-14; Heb 13:17).

**5.**  To faithfully participate in the life and ministry of the church by regular attendance in all services of every kind, by tithing and giving, and by involvement in a ministry. (Heb 10:25; Mal 3:8-10, 2; Cor 16:1-2; Eph 4:12, 16; James 2:17-18, 26).

**6.**  Successful completion of whatever membership course(s), teaching, study, or interviews the Pastor deems necessary.

**Section B. Reception of Members**

**1.**  All applicants for membership shall complete the application prepared by the Eldership Team and submit it to the Pastor or his representative(s).

**2.**  Applicants for membership shall be interviewed by the Pastor or his representative(s) to determine readiness for membership.

**3.**  Those transferring from an Assemblies of God church must have a recommendation from that assembly, and we will seek to follow the same process with other fellowships as well. The appropriate leadership personnel from both churches shall communicate to verify the circumstances of the applicant's departure from the previous church and readiness for membership in this church. No one will be received into membership who has left another church under questionable circumstances or discipline until the matter is biblically resolved to the satisfaction of their previous Pastor and our Pastor. The Pastor, in consultation with the Eldership Team, shall render the final decision. This standard and process is a fundamental aspect of kingdom relationships and ministerial ethics.

**4.**  The Pastor and Eldership Team shall require any or all applicants, including transfers, to complete such courses as they deem necessary before approving them for membership.

**5.**  When this process has been completed to the satisfaction of the Pastor and Eldership Team, applicants will have their names added to the active membership roll. They shall be recognized in public services at the discretion of the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**Section C. Associate Membership**

**1.**  Associate membership shall be granted by the Pastor and the Eldership Team to formerly active members who still meet all membership requirements for this local church, and who wish to maintain a direct relationship with this church although presently prevented by legitimate cause from active attendance and participation.

**2.**  Associate membership shall be granted by the Pastor and Eldership Team to persons who are members of Assemblies of God churches in other communities, who are temporarily living in this community, and who meet all membership requirementsfor this local church.

**3.**  Associate membership does not entail the privileges of voice or vote in church business meetings or eligibility for service on the Eldership Team.

**Section D. Inactive Membership**

**1.**  Formerly active members who:

**a.**  No longer meet some qualifications in Section 1.

**b.**  Have without good cause for 30 days or more:

**c.**  Not attended the services of this church and sat under the ministry of the Pastor and Elders.

**d.**  Not supporting the church with their whole tithe and offerings.

**2.**  Inactive members lose all the privileges of active membership.

**3.** The Pastor in consultation with the Eldership Team shall for these reasons move active members to inactive status or restore inactive members to active status at any time.

**Section E. Junior Membership**

Those young people from the ages of 12 through 17, provided they meet the standards of membership other than age, shall be enrolled as junior members upon their application and approval. They shall have none of the privileges of active membership and shall automatically move off the Junior role at age 18, at which point they must apply and be approved as would anyone else for active adult membership.

**Section F. Revision of Membership Roll**

The Pastor in consultation with the Eldership Team, shall at least annually, and may at any time, revise the membership roll by moving from active to inactive, or by removing entirely, the names of those who have died, transferred, moved, voluntarily ceased attendance for at least 30 days from all services at which the Pastor and Elders are ministering, or are under discipline as described elsewhere in these Bylaws. Those moved or removed for cause shall be notified by the Secretary as directed by the Pastor.

**Section G. Transferal of Membership**

A letter of transfer, signed by the Pastor and Secretary, shall be granted upon request, at the approval of the Pastor. The letter shall be addressed to the Pastor or Secretary of the receiving church and shall state whether the member is classified as active, inactive, associate, or junior, and the overall status of the departing member.

**Section H. Waiver**

Membership in this church shall be granted upon the condition that suspension or discipline of a member shall not give the suspended or disciplined member cause for legal action against the church, Pastor, staff, or any member taking part in the suspension or disciplinary process. The acceptance and continuance of membership in the church shall be evidence of a waiver by the member of all rights of action, any cause of action, and all claims and demands against the church, or any member or officer of this church or the Assemblies of God, related to suspension, disciplinary proceedings, or removal from membership as described in these Bylaws. This is an article of religious faith and practice for this church as a whole and every member. (1 Cor 6:1-8)

**ARTICLE X: DISCIPLINE**

**Section A. Discipline of Members**

**1.**  To preserve the peace and purity of this community of faith, this church recognizes its accountability to the Pastor and Eldership Team in matters of scriptural conduct and discipline. All decisions regarding discipline as described in this section shall be prayerfully made and administered by the Pastor and Eldership Team, according to the Scriptures, with a goal of repentance and restoration (Matt 18:15-20; Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor 5:9-13, 2; Thes 3:11-15; Gal 1:8-9, Titus 3:1-15, etc.).

**2.**  Violation of the scriptural standards of doctrine and lifestyle described in "Article VIII. Membership," Section 1 "Qualifications" shall be the reason for disciplinary ministry. All members of this community of faith, whether they have officially joined as active members of the church or not, shall by their participation among us be subject to the disciplinary ministry of the Pastor and Eldership Team. (Heb 13:17)

**3.**  Rebellion, division, dissension, slander, gossip, faction, and strife are recognized as especially heinous sins regarding the body as a whole, and will not be tolerated in this church, whether these are evidenced in person, or by a surrogate, publicly or privately, or via any venue, communication, or media whatsoever, including all electronic or social media (1 Sam 15:22-23; Prov 6:16-19; Rom 13:13, 16:17-18; 1 Cor 3:16-17, 5:11, 6:9-11; Gal 5:19f; Eph 4:29-32; Phlp 2:1-4,14; James 3:6-18; 2 Thess 3:6,14, etc.).

**4.**  Discipline shall include such scriptural actions as deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, removing from all ministry, moving from active to inactive membership, or removing from all membership, and requesting departure from this community of faith (Matt 16:19; John 20:23; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:4,7; 2 Cor 2:9; 1 Tim 1:20; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess 3:6,14; 1 Tim 1:19-20).

**5.**  Restoration shall be prayerfully administered, including such return to a particular ministry or membership as the Pastor deems appropriate, following evidence of genuine repentance and a time of proving. During any disciplinary process, the member shall lose the privilege of voice and vote in all business meetings until explicitly restored by the Pastor and Eldership Team. (Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20; Gal 6:1, 2 Cor 2:9-10, 7:8-12).

**6.**  While scripture provides opportunity for individuals, small groups, and the church as a whole to participate in correction and discipline when appropriate, the final authority for deciding and directing discipline rests with the Pastor in consultation with the Elders, and the community of faith is expected to carry out its leaders' instructions (Matt 16:19, 18:15-20, John 20:23, Acts 5:1-11, 1 Cor 5:3-5, 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:8-16, Heb 13:17, 2 Tim 3:2).

**7.**  Any appeals from the disciplinary ministry must come from the disciplined individual(s) and must be directed first to the Pastor and Eldership Team, then to the Sectional Committee, and then to the combined Sectional Committee and Network Executive Committee, the latter two committees having the power to review and recommend, but not require, changes in the disciplinary ministry of the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**8.**  This church hereby fully empowers the Pastor or Eldership Team to use any legal means necessary to prevent disciplined or otherwise troublesome or disruptive persons from entering church property at any time under any circumstances.

 **a.**  All matters in this section, Discipline of Members, are articles of religious faith for us (Matt 16:19, 18:15-20; John 20:23; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:8-16; Heb 13:17; 2 Tim 3:2).

**Section B. Discipline of Ministers**

**1.** The discipline of ministers credentialed with the Assemblies of God is in the hands of the appropriate Sectional, Network, and General Council officials, not the local church. Members shall bring such doctrinal or lifestyle failures of their ministers as require disciplinary action to the attention of the Sectional and Network Council officials.

**2.** The discipline of any ministers credentialed other than with the Assemblies of God shall be in the hands of the Pastor and Eldership Team. They shall use the guidelines of this local church and Assemblies of God ministerial disciplinary and rehabilitation protocols, adjusting them as is necessary.

**3.** The restoration of any disciplined and rehabilitated minister to ministry in this local church shall be at the Pastor's discretion, following the appropriate guidelines of this local church and the Assemblies of God. If the Pastor was the disciplined minister, his return to ministry in this local church shall require the approval of two-thirds of the Eldership Team.

**ARTICLE XI. VACANCIES**

**Section A. Pastorate**

 **1.**  Vacancy in the Pastorate for any reason shall be filled as described elsewhere in these Bylaws.

 **2.**  Should the Pastor resign, he shall give the Eldership Team a minimum of thirty days' notice before his resignation is effective. The pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the effective date of the Pastor's resignation (i.e., the end of the notice period).

 **3.**  Should the Pastor fail to sustain a vote of confidence as described above, or should he resign, he may, upon his last day of service, receive severance pay of one week of his current gross pay for each year of service or one month's current gross pay, whichever is greater.

**4.**  Should the Pastor be dismissed for moral failure, the church is not required to pay any severance.

**Section B. Eldership Team**

Vacancies shall be created or filled at any time as described elsewhere in these Bylaws under "Eldership Team."

**Section C. Others**

All other offices, ministries, and positions must be approved or appointed by the Pastor or his representative, some in consultation with the Eldership Team, and shall be declared vacant by the Pastor in consultation with the Eldership Team as described in these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE XII. MEETINGS**

**Section A. Worship Services**

**1.**  Corporate services for worship, evangelism, and discipleship shall be held each Lord's Day and during the week as deemed best by the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**2.**  All other meetings of any kind, including those for ministries of compassion, shall be held as deemed best by the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**Section B. Special Business Meetings**

**1.** Special Business Meetings of the church shall be called as deemed necessary by the Pastor or by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Eldership Team. (Acts 15)

**2.** Such meetings shall be announced at the service(s) on 2 Sundays before the meeting, or with the approval of two-thirds of the Eldership Team, at one corporate worship service before the meeting.

**3.**  The Pastor and Eldership Team shall verify the accuracy of the active membership list before any church business meeting.

**4.**  Unless the pastorate is vacant, the Pastor shall chair all business meetings of the church, and none shall be held without his presence.

**Section C. Leadership Meetings**

The Eldership Team shall meet at least quarterly per year, or as often as deemed necessary by the Pastor. Unless the pastorate is vacant, no meeting of the Eldership Team or the Ministry Leadership Team, shall be held without the Pastor's permission, or the presence of the Pastor or his representative.

**Section C. Other Ministry Teams**

All ministry teams shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the Pastor or team leader. All ministry teams shall be subordinate to, and receive direction from, the Pastor, Eldership Team, and Ministry Leadership Team, or their approved representatives.

**ARTICLE XIII. QUORUMS**

**Section A. Eldership Team**

**1.**  The majority of Eldership Team members present at any properly called Eldership Team meeting shall constitute a quorum for that meeting.

**Section B. Church Business Meetings**

 **1.** Given proper notification, at least one-fifth (1/5) of the active adult members of the church must be present to constitute a quorum and conduct an official business meeting.

 **2.** Failure to achieve or maintain a quorum for a church business meeting shall empower the Pastor and Eldership Team to properly call a Eldership Team meeting and conduct whatever business was on the agenda for that church business meeting.

**Section B. Absentee Ballots**

No absentee ballots or proxy votes shall be accepted in the Eldership Team or church business meetings.

**ARTICLE XIV. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Any business meeting of the church where parliamentary order is important for legal or other reasons shall be conducted according to the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, as modified by the Spirit of Christian love, the leading of the Holy Spirit, under the supreme authority of the Bible. A possible order of business is:

* Devotional and Prayer
* Reading of Previous Minutes by the Secretary
* Financial Report of the Treasurer
* Report of Teams or Committees
* Unfinished Business
* New Business
* Adjournment

**ARTICLE XV: DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES**

**Section A.** The Pastor, or the Pastor and his Eldership Team, shall approve, create, staff, evaluate, modify, and terminate such departments and ministries as they deem necessary to enable this church to fulfill its mission and vision of worship, evangelism, discipleship, and ministries of compassion in the most effective manner possible.

**Section B.** All departments, ministries, and workers shall be under the direction of the Pastor and his representatives. All departments, ministries, and workers shall agree with and fully supportive of the core mission, vision, philosophy of ministry, and biblical standards of this church and its Pastoral leadership. They shall serve together in an integrated manner, in unity and harmony.

**Section C.** The departments and ministries of this church shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following: Christian education, small groups, children's, youth, women's, men's, singles, seniors, compassion, missions, outreach, and media.

**Section D.** Service of any kind, in any degree, in any department or ministry, is a privilege, not a right. All workers shall be disciplined and trained to the satisfaction of the Pastor, Eldership Team, and their representatives, and shall be appointed or removed as the Pastor, Eldership Team, and their representatives see fit.

**ARTICLE XVI: FINANCES**

**Section A. Contributions**

All funds for the operation and ministries of the church shall be provided by the tithes, offerings, and contributions of members and friends. All funds shall be received at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the Pastor and Eldership Team. All funds shall be deposited and disbursed by the Treasurer as directed by the Pastor, or by the Eldership Team in consultation with the Pastor, as described elsewhere in these Bylaws. This is a matter of religious faith for us. (Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 9:6-8)

**Section B. Reports**

**1.**  A Monthly Financial Report will be provided to the Eldership Team. Should any active adult member wish to review this report or have questions about the church's finances, they shall do so by scheduling an appointment with the Pastor.

**2.**  An Annual Financial Report shall be prepared by the Treasurer for the Eldership Team no later than two months after fiscal year-end. After the Eldership Team has accepted the report, it shall be released to the active adult members of this church for review. Active adult members shall address any questions arising from the report to the Pastor and Eldership Team.

**3.**  If this is a Network Affiliated church, all reports shall be made available to the Network Executive Committee upon request.

**Section B. Finance Team**

The Eldership Team shall serve as the Finance Team with duties as outlined in these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE XVI: PROPERTY**

**Section A.** This church shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama. All property of this church shall be deeded to this church and held in its corporate name.

**Section B. Disaffiliation**

**1.**  Should this local church's affiliation with the Assemblies of God ever be terminated either through its voluntary action according to these Bylaws or by the action of the Assemblies of God, the majority of the active adult membership of this local church shall retain ownership of the church's property, real and chattel.

**2.**  If this church has been given assets, real, chattel, or financial, by the General Council or Alabama Ministry Network, it shall not have the right of disaffiliation until it has reimbursed the GCAG or AMNAG in full for the value of the assets it received.

**3.**  If this church is a Network Affiliated church, it does not have the right to disaffiliate itself.

**Section C.** In the event this church ceases to function as a Christian church, then its property, real or chattel, shall be voluntarily given to the Alabama Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, Inc., whose headquarters are in Montgomery, Alabama. The Alabama Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God shall immediately have full authority to use or dispose of the property according to their policies and at their discretion. In the event of the sale of the property by the Alabama Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, the proceeds derived shall be used by the Alabama Ministry Network in furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ according to their policies and at their discretion.

**Section D.** Real or chattel property of the church valued up to thirty percent of the church's previous year's income may be bought, sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated by a two-thirds vote of the Eldership Team at a special Eldership Team meeting called by these Bylaws. Transactions valued above thirty percent of the church's previous year's income must be authorized by a majority vote of the church membership present at a special business meeting.

**Section E.** Proper Use of Church Finances, Assets, Facilities, and Property

**1. General Use.** No finances, assets, facilities, or property of this church shall be used to promote, host, assist, or support events, organizations, or persons that support philosophies, causes, lifestyles, or behaviors that violate the core doctrinal, or lifestyle commitments of this church as defined in these Bylaws. When any question arises regarding the application of this standard, the final interpretive authority shall be the Lead Pastor, a minister credentialed by the GCAG. Appeal from the Lead Pastor's decision shall only be made to the appropriate Sectional Committee and the Alabama Ministry Network Executive Committee. For us, this is a matter of religious faith.

**2. Marriages, Renewal of Vows, and Similar Marriage-Like Ceremonies.**

Marriages, renewal of vows, and similar marriage-like ceremonies shall only be performed, promoted, hosted, assisted, or supported when the bride, the groom, or both are adult active members in good standing of this church, according to the membership standards of these Bylaws.

**3.**  Even within these requirements, the pastors of this church shall be free to follow their consciences and the leading of the Holy Spirit in declining to perform marriage ceremonies for any couple.

**4.**  For us, all of this is a matter of religious faith. (Psa 1; 2 Cor 6:14-17; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Thess 5:22; 2 John 1:9-11)

**ARTICLE XVII: ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES**

Since the Scriptures require Christians to take their disputes to the saints and not to the civil courts (1 Cor 6:1-8), all disputes that shall arise (1) between any member of this church and the church itself, or (2) between any member of this church and any pastor, officer, director, employee, volunteer, or other worker of this church, shall be resolved by binding arbitration if efforts to mediate or conciliate the dispute have failed. Either party to the dispute shall initiate the arbitration process by filing with the other party a written request for arbitration within a reasonable time after the dispute has arisen and efforts to mediate or conciliate have failed. In such a case, the member and the church shall each name an arbitrator, and the two so selected shall name a third. All arbitrators must be born-again, Spirit-filled believers who are members of an Assemblies of God church. The third arbitrator chosen by the other two shall disclose, before accepting the appointment, any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the arbitration, and any existing or past financial, professional, family, or social relationships which are likely to affect impartiality, or which might reasonably create an appearance of partiality or bias. Either of the parties to the arbitration, based on such disclosures, shall disqualify such a candidate from serving as the third arbitrator. A third arbitrator who serves without objection from either party has a continuing duty to disclose relationships or interests that shall impair his impartiality. Either party, regardless of the stage of the arbitration process, shall on such disclosures, disqualify such a person from further participation. The arbitration process shall not proceed until the third arbitrator is selected. The arbitrators shall appoint the time and place for the hearing and cause notification to the parties to be served personally or by registered mail not less than 30 days before the hearing. Appearance at the hearing waives such notice. The arbitrators shall adjourn the hearing from time to time as necessary and, on request of a party and for good cause or upon their motion, shall postpone the hearing to a later date. The arbitrators shall hear and determine the controversy upon the evidence produced notwithstanding the failure of a party duly notified to appear. The parties are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by all the arbitrators, but most of them shall determine any question and render a final award. If during the hearing an arbitrator for any reason ceases to act, he shall be replaced in the same way he was originally selected. The arbitrators shall in their absolute discretion admit as evidence any affidavit or declaration concerning the matters in dispute, a copy thereof having been given at least 5 days previously to the party against whom the same is offered, but the person whose evidence is so taken shall be subject to cross-examination by such party. The arbitrators shall have the power to order and direct what they shall deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. The cost of the arbitration shall be determined and assessed by the arbitrators. Any submission of a dispute to arbitration shall not be revoked by the death of any party to the dispute, and any award will be binding on the person's heirs and successors. The decision of the arbitrators shall be binding on both parties, and both parties submit themselves to the personal jurisdiction of the civil courts in this state (including federal courts), as well as the courts of any other state which shall have jurisdiction over any dispute contemplated by this Article, for the entry of a judgment confirming the arbitrator's award. The arbitration process is not a substitute for any disciplinary process outlined in the constitution or bylaws of the church and shall in no way affect the authority of the church to investigate reports of misconduct, conduct hearings, or administer discipline. Any matter not provided for herein shall be governed by the provisions of the Uniform Arbitration Act. If a dispute shall result in an award of monetary damages, then the use of this arbitration procedure is conditioned on acceptance of the procedure by the liability insurer of the church and the insurer's agreement to honor any arbitration award up to any applicable policy limits.

**ARTICLE XVIII: INDEMNIFICATION**

**Section A. Indemnification**

To the full extent permitted by Law, as amended from time to time, the church shall indemnify any Pastor, Staff Member, Officer, Leadership Team Member, committee member, employee, or agent of the church who was, is, or shall be named a defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omissions within the scope of his or her official capacity in the church.

**Section B. Indemnification Insurance.**

The church will purchase and maintain liability insurance on behalf of every Pastor, Staff Member, Officer, Leadership Team Member, committee member, employee, or agent of the church. Such insurance will be purchased to protect such persons from covered loss resulting from liability asserted against the above individuals in connection with their activities on behalf of the church.

**Section C. Indemnification Requests**

Should any Pastor, Staff Member, Officer, Eldership Team Member, Ministry Leadership Team Member, committee member, employee, or agent of the church incur any liability because of their affiliation with or service to the church that is not covered by the church's insurance policy and should such liability result in any out-of-pocket cost to such individual, then such individual shall request indemnification from the church. The granting of full or partial indemnification shall be at the discretion of the Eldership Team as outlined in Section 4 herein.

**Section D. Determination of Right**

Legal counsel selected by the majority vote of the Leadership Team shall decide of the right to indemnification under the Law. If no right is discovered, the Leadership Team shall still grant full or partial indemnification at their discretion.

**ARTICLE XIX: AMENDMENTS**

**Section A.** Substantive changes to these Bylaws must be made in the form of amendments. Amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted by any member of the Eldership Team at any called meeting of the Team. If the Pastor is in favor of the amendment, a simple majority of the Eldership Team is required to adopt it. If the Pastor is opposed to the amendment, the amendment will be tabled for prayer until a subsequent meeting. If the Pastor remains opposed, a unanimous vote of the Eldership Team is required to adopt the amendment.

**Section B.** The Pastor and Eldership Team shall inform the Network Superintendent or Network Secretary-Treasurer before making any changes to these Bylaws affecting the articles on "Voluntary Affiliation" or "Property." Network Affiliated assemblies shall not amend those articles without prior approval of the Network office.

**Section C.** Network Affiliated assemblies shall not amend these Bylaws without prior approval of the Network office. If this assembly is Network Affiliated, the Network Executive Committee shall amend these Bylaws at any time and in any way, it deems in the best interest of this local assembly.

**Section D**. When the need arises for non-substantive Bylaws changes without a formal amendment, a Bylaws Editorial Team shall be appointed by the Pastor from the membership of the Eldership and Ministry Leadership Team. Members should be selected based on their familiarity with the Bylaws and their editorial skills. The editorial team shall have the power to recommend such revisions to these Bylaws as are, in its judgment, non-substantive modifications or clarifications, reorganization or renumbering, or revisions made necessary because of punctuation, spelling, or other errors of grammar or expression. The recommended revisions must be approved by the Eldership Team by a majority vote, after which they become effective immediately and shall be permanent subject to revocation by the membership of the Eldership Team at any duly called meeting.