“But all things should be done decently and in order.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

**CONSTITUTION**

**AND BYLAWS**

Revised and Adopted

October 20, 2019

**FIRST EVANGELICAL**

**FREE CHURCH**

900 13th Street South

Benson, MN 56215

“Oh, magnify the Lord with me,

and let us exalt his name together!”

Psalm 34:3

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

Document #70629

State of Minnesota

County of Swift

We, the undersigned, chairman and secretary of, and to the First Evangelical Free Church of Benson, Minnesota hereby certify that pursuant to a meeting at which there were more than five of the worshippers of said Church and Congregation held at the city of Benson, County and state of aforesaid on the 14th day of March 1921, that there was then and there organized the above named organization for the purpose of religious exercises purposes which was then and there named by the voters present at said meeting to due notice made, given and posted, a copy of which notice is hereto annexed and hereby make a part of this certificate of incorporation that said meeting there was elected for such society corporation three trustees, whose names are as follows: Oscar Carlson, Charles Lund, C.A. Link

That the name of said society and corporation is, “The First Evangelical Free Church of Benson, Minnesota.”

In presence of:

Ozro Yakey                          H.J. Granquist, Chairman

L.R. Johnson                        H.O. Nelson, Secretary

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22nd day of December 1921.

Notarial seal             Ozro Yakey, Notary Public, Swift County, MN

                                My commission expires May 8, 1922

Filed December 22, A.D. 1921 at 2 P.M.

Book K, Misc., page 520.

**CONSTITUTION**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the First Evangelical Free Church, in order to carry out more effectively the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church do ordain and establish the following constitution and bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I-NAME

The name of the organization shall be “The First Evangelical Free Church of Benson, Minnesota.”

ARTICLE II – ARTICLES OF FAITH

This organization recognizes the Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament, as the inspired Word of God and as such, the only infallible rule and guide for a Christian’s faith, teaching, life, and work.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to propagate the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to the end that souls may be saved, the Christians strengthened and that we all grow in grace.

ARTICLE IV-AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION

Authority: The congregation at its annual and/or special business meetings is the legislative and governing body of First Evangelical Free Church.

Affiliation: This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with its North Central District Association and shall, whenever possible, send delegates to their conferences, support their home and foreign missions, and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the congregation itself may decide. Such affiliation shall in no way abrogate the autonomy of the local congregation, nor its right to hold title to its own property except for a temporary time when seeking and receiving financial aid from the NCDA, or when agreed upon by both the congregation and the NCDA under certain circumstances. The terms whereby the District would hold title to a church’s property shall be stipulated in writing, authorized by a duly called meeting of the congregation, and signed by the

officers of the congregation.

ARTICLE V-STATEMENT OF FAITH

The confession of faith of this organization shall be the same as that of the North Central District Association and the Evangelical Free Church of America as of the 2019 revision. The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions (listed below for reference):

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel’s promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ’s commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ’s Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

ARTICLE VI-MEMBERSHIP

Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the assurance of salvation, whose conduct is in accord with their confession, who subscribes to the aforementioned Statement of Faith, and who is willing to support the Church with faithful attendance, prayer and material means may become a member of this organization, hereafter referred to as the Church.

There are two classes of members. Regular members participate in the services and activities of the church regularly. Associate members have a relationship with the church but are not able to regularly participate. Only regular members are counted for purposes of quorum and allowed to vote in business meetings.

ARTICLE VII-OFFICERS

A leadership team made up of Elders shall manage the corporate affairs of the Church. The membership of the Elders, their election, and their terms are defined in the Bylaws of the Church.

ARTICLE VIII-PROPERTY

The members of this church who are loyal to and abide by this Constitution and Bylaws of First Evangelical Free Church have the right to ownership and control of the property of this Church. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the North Central District Board of the Evangelical Free Church of America, and the decision of the Board shall be final. In the case of dissolution, the property of the Church shall be assigned to the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America, to enable said district to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The Church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the congregation, or when the Church has not held an annual meeting for three (3) years, or when less than six (6) regular members remain.

Any member who has withdrawn or who has been excluded from the Church loses all rights of the Church.

This Church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Minnesota and as is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of each property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the Church. The Facilities Ministry Team shall have the power to receive, purchase, acquire, sell, lease, convey, mortgage, deed or otherwise transfer property of the Church, but only after having been duly authorized by the Church at a business meeting. All contracts, notes, mortgages, conveyances, assignments, leases, releases and other documents and papers in behalf of the Church shall be executed by the Facilities Ministry Team.

The private property of the individual members of this Church shall be exempt from corporate debt.

ARTICLE IX-PROVISION FOR BYLAWS

This Church shall provide Bylaws for its government and administration. They shall not conflict with the Word of God or with this constitution

ARTICLE X-AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws may be introduced in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a regular business meeting of the Church. Such amendments will be considered so adopted when approved by a three-fourths vote by the members present and voting. However, such amendments will not become effective unless and until a subsequent business meeting passes the amendments with an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the members present and voting. A minimum of ten weeks must elapse from the time the amendments are first adopted to the time they are finally approved and become effective. During the second approval process, the amendments must be considered as previously adopted and without further revision.

**BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I-MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A-ADMISSION

Admission to membership of this church shall be as follows:

1. Application for membership shall be made to the pastor or to any of the Elders. The Elders shall examine all applicants for membership.
2. All satisfactory candidates shall be recommended by the Elders to any business meeting of the church for approval and admission. They shall be elected to membership by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present. No one may be admitted to this organization against whom a member objects, providing the objecting member has reasons in harmony with the Word of God. This objection must be presented to the Elders in writing for verification. If the Elders determine the candidate is still eligible, a vote on the aforementioned candidate shall be called. The candidate shall not be present in any meeting when their application is being considered by the Church.
3. The accepted candidate shall be publicly welcomed into membership at some subsequent worship service of the church.

SECTION B-NON-ADMISSIONS

No one may be admitted into this organization who belongs to a secret society.

SECTION C–ABSENCE

1. It is expected that members who are absent twelve months, or longer, will communicate with the church annually concerning their spiritual lives and interest in the Lord’s work.
2. Members absent more than two years, from whom no communication has been received, may be dropped from regular membership to associate membership.  They may be dropped from the roll entirely by a vote of the church after having been contacted and upon recommendation from the Elders.

SECTION D–WITHDRAWAL

Any member who wishes to withdraw or to be transferred from the church shall receive a letter of dismissal from the pastor or chairman of the church, with the approval of the Elders, providing such request for withdrawal or transfer is presented in writing. All letters of withdrawal or transfer shall be reported to the church at the next regular business meeting.

SECTION E–CONDUCT

1. Regular attendance at the services of the church (12+ times/yr.), daily reading of the Bible, private and family devotions, personal and public testimony and the winning of others to Christ are urged upon each member. It shall be the sacred duty of the parents to provide Christian instruction for their children. Members shall consider it their sacred duty and privilege to make full use of their talents for the Lord’s service whenever the opportunity arises.
2. All members are encouraged to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress, and to be courteous in speech and slow to anger.
3. Each member is urged to pledge to a systematic contribution of a portion of his or her income for the support of the church according to the principles laid down in 1 Corinthians 16:2a (“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper,”) and 2 Corinthians 9:7 (“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”).
4. Each member is called upon to heed the admonition of the Lord; “Do not love the world or the things of the world” (1 John 2:15), “but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2). He or she should be “an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12). He or she is expected to abstain from any act or practice which may be harmful in its influence or a stumbling block to the weak (Romans 14:13, 21).

SECTION F–DISCIPLINE

1. If the conduct of a member is not in harmony with the above Scriptural principles and the member shows no desire to repent and correct that conduct, the member shall be interviewed and counseled by the Pastor and Elders after the manner clearly indicated in the Word of God (Matthew 18:5-17; Galatians 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-13). The restoration of the erring member shall be the single purpose and love the sole motivating force in these interviews.
2. If, however, the member should choose to continue in his or her unrepentant condition, that person shall be deprived of membership. This can be done only by the church upon a recommendation from the Elders and by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church.

ARTICLE II-GOVERNMENT

SECTION A–STAFF

1. Senior Pastor
   1. Qualifications: The Senior Pastor shall be a man of true and established Christian character and qualified to preach and teach the Word of God as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Timothy 2:15 and Titus 1:5-9 (see references in the “Elders” section). He must be in full accord with the Church's Statement of Faith and must be willing to perform his duties in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.
   2. Duties: The Senior Pastor shall provide spiritual vision and challenge to the congregation and the Elder Team. He shall preach and teach the Word of God in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, lead the church in accomplishing its objectives, and work in conjunction with the Elders in support of these objectives. He shall be a member of the Elder Team and should attend meetings of the other Church boards and committees determined by the Elder Team.
   3. Accountability: The Senior Pastor shall report to the Elder Team at their meetings and submit a report to the Church at the annual meeting. He is accountable to the Elder Team and to the Church. His performance shall be evaluated annually by the Elder Team.
   4. Selection:  Whenever a Senior Pastor vacancy occurs, a Pastor Search Committee shall be established in accordance with the By-Laws. Any pastor shall be chosen by a three-fourths vote at any regular or special business meeting of the church. He shall be called for an indefinite period of time. Upon selection, the Pastor and his wife will automatically become members of the church unless otherwise directed by the Elder Team. Three months’ notice must be given by the pastor or by the church for the termination of his ministry unless an alternate timeline is mutually agreed upon by both parties. The membership of the Pastor and his wife will terminate automatically upon the cessation of the ministry. The Pastor and his wife may reapply for membership one year after a new Pastor has been called.
2. Other Pastors
   1. Other Pastors may be called according to the procedure above for a Senior Pastor.
3. Other Staff
   1. Other staff positions may be created by recommendation of the Elders and a vote of the Church. The Senior Pastor is responsible for hiring people to fill these positions and annually evaluating their performance.

SECTION B - MINISTRY TEAMS

1. Organization
   1. The Church shall be led by the Ministry Teams described below. Additional teams or committees deemed helpful to leading the Church and carrying out the mission, vision, and values of the Church may be created by the Elders.
   2. Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses shall be elected for two-year terms, with elections staggered so that approximately half of the Elders and half of the Deacons/ Deaconesses are elected each year. The Elders may change the number of members of each of these teams as they deem appropriate.
   3. An Elder representative will be assigned to each Ministry Team for the purpose of promoting communication, collaboration, and cooperation between the Elders and the Ministry Teams. The Elders will decide amongst themselves which Ministry Team(s) they will serve as a liaison.
   4. A chairperson shall be elected for each ministry team. The chairperson should be of a mature character, judgment, and spiritual reputation and must be an active Church member for at least one year. A chairperson will be elected by the Church to a two-year term and may serve two consecutive terms. Upon completion of two consecutive terms, the chairperson may not be elected to the same position until one or more terms have expired. No person shall be the chairperson of two Ministry Teams simultaneously. An Elder or Deacon/ Deaconess should not be nominated to be the chairperson of another Ministry Team.
   5. A ministry team (other than the Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses) will consist of as many members as the chairperson deems necessary to faithfully and effectively carry out the ministry of the team. At a minimum, the team shall consist of the chairperson, one church member, and the Elder representative. The ministry team may consist of both members and regularly-attending non-members of the Church, though only members may vote. All ministry team members will be recommended by the chairperson for Elder approval.
   6. A quorum of the Ministry Team is 60% of the total voting membership, including the Elder and other ex-officio members.
   7. All Ministry Teams shall keep minutes describing attendance at and official decisions of Team meetings.
   8. All Ministry Teams shall propose a budget two months in advance of the Annual Meeting. This budget shall be provided to the Finance Ministry Team and the Elders for review prior to a vote of approval at the Annual Meeting.
2. Elders

The Elder Ministry Team exists for the purpose of shepherding and tending to the spiritual needs of the church body.  It is their duty to oversee the total church life. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Elders, with the Holy Spirit's leading, have authority to plan the overall direction of the church and to establish, modify, and terminate specific programs.

* 1. Qualifications: In accordance with the scriptural guidelines set forth in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, an Elder must:
     1. Be a male (1 Timothy 3:1-7)
     2. Be an active church member for at least 1 year
     3. Be in full accord and agreement with the church’s By-Laws and Statement of Faith
     4. Have a living testimony that models the qualifications set forth for an overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Timothy 2:15 and Titus 1:5-9, Elders must be:
        1. Above reproach – 1 Timothy 3.2; Titus 1:6-7
        2. A “one-woman man” – 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6 (i.e. not have eyes for other women)
        3. Temperate, self-controlled – 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6
        4. Prudent, sensible, and just – 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
        5. Respectable – 1 Timothy 3:2
        6. Hospitable – 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
        7. Gifted to teach – 1 Timothy 3:2
        8. Not addicted to wine – 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
        9. Non-contentious – 1 Timothy 3:3
        10. Free from the love of money – 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
        11. Not a novice – 1 Timothy 3:6
        12. Has a good reputation with unbelievers – 1 Timothy 3:7
        13. Not self-willed – Titus 1:7
        14. Not quick-tempered – Titus 1:7
        15. Loves what is good – Titus 1:8
        16. Devout – Titus 1:8
        17. Holds fast to sound thinking – Titus 1:9
        18. Exhorts others to sound thinking – Titus 1:9
        19. Refutes those not holding to sound doctrine – Titus 1:9
        20. A husband, or a man who manages his household well – 1 Timothy 3:4
        21. One who manages his children well – 1 Timothy 3:4
  2. Duties: As specified in the Church Policy Manual with the following minimum requirements:
     1. Oversee the spiritual welfare and ministries of the Church. Their primary areas of responsibility are to minister and teach the Word of God and devote themselves to an active prayer ministry.
     2. Supervise the Senior Pastor and have authority for conducting performance reviews, granting vacations and leaves of absence, and other related matters (elected Elders only).
     3. Handle all matters of discipline, investigating and resolving issues according to Matthew 18:15-17.
     4. Give spiritual counsel to Church members in keeping with their responsibility to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28).
     5. Provide pastoral services as needed during illness, vacation, or other absence of the pastor(s).
     6. Work with the pastor(s) in planning for worship services, evangelistic ministries, guest speakers, and other aids in the nurture and admonition of the church.
     7. Oversee adult education (persons older than 18 years of age) and small group ministries.
     8. Encourage leaders in all parts of the Church to mentor and prepare others for future leadership roles in the Church.
     9. Decide routine business matters which may arise between regular Church business meetings. Such decisions of the Elders shall be reported to the next following regular business meeting of the Church.
  3. The Elder Ministry Team shall consist of its elected members and any full-time Pastor(s) called by the Church.
  4. The Elders may vote to overrule any action of another Ministry Team or committee if the Elders believe it is important to do so for the spiritual health of the Church. The Elders must provide a rationale for their decision to the overruled Team or committee, as well as to any other affected members of the Church.
  5. If the Elders believe they should terminate a program that affects ten or more people, they must bring the matter to the Church for a vote. They may suspend the program immediately until such a vote can be held.

1. Deacons

The Deacon Board exists for the purpose of tending to the physical needs of the church body, with emphasis on ministering to the poor, the sick and the needy (Acts 6:1-7) and to bereaved families.  As such, it will be comprised of both men (Deacons) and women (Deaconesses).

* 1. Qualifications: Both Deacons and Deaconesses must have living testimonies that model the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 2:3-5.   They must be active church members for at least 1 year and they must be in full accord and agreement with the church’s By-Laws and Statement of Faith.
     1. Deacons must be
        1. Men of dignity – 1 Timothy 3:8
        2. Not double-tongued – 1 Timothy 3:8
        3. Not addicted to much wine – 1 Timothy 3:8
        4. Not fond of sordid gain – 1 Timothy 3:8
        5. Holds to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience – 1 Timothy 3:9; Acts 6:3
        6. Exemplifies a consistent spiritual life-style – 1 Timothy 3:10
        7. A “one-woman man” – 1 Timothy 3:12 (i.e. not have eyes for other women)
        8. A husband, or man, who manages his household well – 1 Timothy 3:12
        9. One who manages his children well – 1 Timothy 3:12
     2. Deaconesses must be:
        1. Worthy of respect – 1 Timothy 3:11
        2. Not a malicious talker – 1 Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:3
        3. Temperate in all things – 1 Timothy 3:11
        4. Trustworthy in all things – 1 Timothy 3:11
        5. Reverent in the way she lives – Titus 2:3
        6. Not addicted to too much wine – Titus 2:3
        7. Sensible – Titus 2:5
        8. Self-controlled and pure – Titus 2:5
        9. Kind – Titus 2:5
        10. Able to teach and train other women – Titus 2:3-5
        11. Knowledgeable about what is good – Titus 2:3
        12. Concern for the entire family’s well being
        13. Submissive to husbands
        14. Love their husbands
        15. Love their children
  2. Duties: As directed by the Elders with the following minimum requirements:
     1. Assist the Elders in preparing and serving the Lord’s Supper.
     2. Minister to the physical needs of members of the Church.
     3. Organize meals and other assistance as appropriate for the sick, bereaved, and homebound.
     4. Administer the benevolence fund
     5. Visit the homebound who are part of the Church. The Elders and Pastor may be asked to assist as needed.

(See policy book for specific details)

* 1. Some of the tasks above have been ably performed in the past by groups other than the Deacons. The Deacons may delegate some of these responsibilities to other groups within the Church, as long as those groups coordinate their work with the Deacons.

4. Christian Education

* 1. The Christian Education Ministry Team shall develop, promote and supervise a coordinated program of Christian Education for those in the church who have not yet reached adulthood (under eighteen years).
  2. Members of the Christian Education Ministry should be drawn from Sunday School teachers, Youth leaders, after school and Wednesday night children's programs (AWANA).

1. Facilities
   1. The Facilities Ministry Team shall maintain the property of the Church, whether by directly organizing members of the Church to do the work or negotiating with contractors to perform the work for the Church.
   2. The Team shall annually prepare or update a long-term plan of facility maintenance needs, to be presented at a business meeting of the Elders’ choice. Each need shall include an estimated budget.
2. Missions
   1. The Missions Ministry Team shall correspond with Christians whose work for God outside of the Church is being financially supported by the Church (“Missionaries”).
   2. The Team shall educate Church members about the work of these missionaries, encourage Church members to support the missionaries through prayer, donations, and short-term missions trips or other personal assistance.
   3. The Team shall evaluate whether to add, remove or change the financial support provided to each missionary and shall bring these changes to the Church for approval.
3. Worship
   1. The Worship Ministry Team shall assist the pastor in organizing the worship services of the Church. This includes music selection, musical leadership, and technical support (sound, slide projection, audio recording, etc.).
   2. Members of the Team should be drawn from who assist with worship, particularly those who lead music.
   3. The Team may delegate any of its responsibilities to an individual or group outside of the Team itself.
4. Finance
   1. The Finance Ministry Team shall, at a minimum consist of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary. The Chair may be either of these or another person entirely. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be elected annually.
   2. The Financial Secretary shall receive and account for all the monies of the Church, and shall transfer these funds to the Treasurer as directed by the Elders. He or she shall make a financial report to the church at all quarterly business meetings and at such other times as may be requested by the Church or the Elders.
   3. The Treasurer shall receive from the Financial Secretary the funds of the church and shall disburse them according to the direction of Elders and the Church (either through direct decisions or the approval of the annual budget). He or she shall make a financial report to the church at all quarterly business meetings and at such other times as may be requested by the Church or the Elders.
   4. The Financial Secretary must keep a record of all church income to which the Treasurer has no access.
   5. The Finance Ministry Team shall collect proposed budgets from all ministry teams or groups requesting funds for the coming fiscal year, compile them and forward to the Elder board for ratification. The Elder board will present the budget at the annual meeting for approval.
5. Connections
   1. The Connections Team is tasked with creating a welcoming environment and connecting people with one another and the ministries of the church.
   2. Connection Team members should have a friendly and approachable demeanor with a desire to create a welcoming atmosphere through interpersonal interactions. Team members must work well with various kinds of people and be willing to talk with people they do not know. Some of the duties include greeting people before the services, handing out bulletins, helping people find seats, collecting the offering, and serving in the nursery.
   3. The Connections Team shall create a welcoming atmosphere with aesthetically pleasing and appropriate decorations. Additionally, the literature table and bulletin board will be maintained and organized in order to connect people with the ministries of the church. Care will be taken to ensure that the nursery is clean, orderly, and staffed and that the quiet bags are available for families to use.
   4. The Connections Team shall be responsible for maintaining a directory of church members and regular attendees.
   5. The Connections Team shall determine with the Pastor/ Elders what forms of digital communication are appropriate and shall manage those communications. Some of these functions may be delegated to others as appropriate.

SECTION C - COMMITTEES

1. Nominating Committee: This committee shall consist of all members of the Elder and Deacon Ministry Teams who are not eligible for election at the next annual meeting. This committee shall prepare ballots with the name of one candidate for each office to be filled. These ballots shall be presented to the Church at the annual meeting for their approval.
   1. The committee should start meeting six months in advance of the annual meeting.
   2. The committee shall present a complete ballot to Church members at least six weeks in advance.
   3. If any member of the Church believes that any of the candidates lacks the character or experience necessary to fulfill that candidate’s office, the member should submit to the nominating committee a written objection. This objection must be signed by the objecting member and submitted no less than three weeks before the election.
   4. If there are any written objections, the committee shall investigate them and arrange for alternate candidates if necessary. No candidate shall be rejected without being given the opportunity to defend him or herself. Details of the objection and investigation shall not be presented to the Church without permission of the candidate who was the focus of the objection.
   5. The committee shall present the final ballot at the annual meeting.
   6. If a candidate is rejected at the annual meeting, the incumbent for the position shall remain in office until a suitable replacement is elected. The committee shall continue to meet and call for one or more special business meetings as soon as another candidate can be put forth.
2. Auditing Committee: The Auditing Committee shall consist of at least two people or an outside auditing firm appointed by the Elders. They shall examine the accounts of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer and submit a report to the annual meeting of the Church.
3. Pastoral Search Committee: When the need arises, the Elders shall create a Pastoral Search Committee. This Committee shall have as many members as the Elders deem appropriate, subject to the following constraints:
   1. At least one-third of the Committee shall be members of the Elder or Deacon boards.
   2. Committee members shall be chosen primarily based on their faith, character, and ability to peaceably seek consensus on God’s will.
   3. To the extent reasonable, the Committee should contain an even split of men and women, and a diverse mix of ages.
   4. Up to one-third of the Committee may consist of individuals who are not members of the Church. If such individuals are appointed, they have full voting rights on the Committee.
   5. If an interim pastor has been called by the Church, he shall be a non-voting member of the Committee.

SECTION D – ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

1. No organizations shall be formed within or considered to be a part of the Church before sponsors have submitted their plans to the Elders for their approval and sanction.
2. The Elders may review the activities of any Church organization at any time and may disassociate the church from such activities, if appropriate.
3. Methods of raising funds shall be subject to the approval of the Elders.
4. Standing organizations include:
   1. Free Church Women’s Ministries (FCWM)

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

1. Worship Services, Sunday School and other Gospel Services shall be conducted at such times as is decided by the Elders.
2. The Church shall hold quarterly business meetings, one of which shall be designated as the annual meeting of the Church. The Church may set or modify the timing of these meetings at any business meeting, and likewise may change when the fiscal year of the church ends. Unless the Church directs otherwise, the Elders shall set each quarterly or annual meeting to be within three weeks of the corresponding meeting in the last calendar year.
3. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairperson of the Elders, two or more Elders, or by a vote of the Church or by any of the Ministry Teams. Notice of such special meetings shall be given at least three days prior to the date of the meeting by the use of all means used to communicate prayer needs and other announcements to Church members. It is preferred to schedule such a meeting at least two Sundays in advance, and to announce it at each of the Sunday Services of the Church prior to the meeting.
4. The Chairman of Elders (or other Elder he designates) shall conduct the annual meeting and other business meetings of the Church. All such meetings shall be opened with prayer and a devotional message. Meetings shall be governed by the rules of order contained in Robert’s Rules of Order (revised), as long as such rules are consistent with the Constitution and ByLaws and with any active policies approved by the Church.
5. Quorum. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the total number of regular members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. No votes may be held, or official decisions made without a quorum being present.
6. Voting. All regular members have the right of vote in all matters coming before the business meetings. All matters shall be determined by a majority vote (one more than half of all votes cast) except when otherwise specified in these bylaws, or by the decision of the session.
   1. Votes for the calling of a pastor or discipline of any kind shall be taken by paper ballot.
   2. The manner of voting on other matters may be determined by the chairperson.