

BETHANY COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

1. VISION

The Bethany Community Church (BCC) exists to honor Christ in practice and doctrine; relate compassionately to humanity in light of the fact they are God's image bearers, and invite everyone to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

2. PURPOSE

The Corporation is organized and shall be operated as set forth in its Articles of Organization and these Bylaws for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The Corporation is incorporated as a not for profit religious organization in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church's purposes also include the limited participation of the Church in any other activities, including taxable activities, but only to the extent the activities would be permitted by a tax-exempt organization. More particularly, but without limitation, the purposes of this Church are:

- 2.1. To spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the local community and the world at large. To inform everyone of the eternal hope that is in Christ, and invite them to become His followers.
- 2.2. To instruct in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and the worship of God among its members and attendants. To encourage the practice of Christian virtues as taught in the Holy Scriptures by any and all means possible, as determined by the Church's Ministry Leadership.
- 2.3. To ordain, employ, and discharge ordained ministers of the Gospel, and others, to conduct and carry on divine services at the place of worship of the Corporation, and elsewhere, and to collect and disburse any and all necessary funds for the maintenance of said Corporation and the accomplishment of its purpose within the State of Massachusetts and elsewhere.

- 2.3.1. Qualifications for ordination shall be to have completed an approved course of ministerial studies by the Board of Trustees and the Council of Elders. In addition, all ordinations shall be required to meet the approval of the Lead Pastor, the Executive Lead Team, and the Council of Elders.
- 2.4. To collect and disburse any and all necessary funds for the maintenance of said Corporation, and the accomplishment of its purpose within the State of Massachusetts and elsewhere.
- 2.5. To make distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.
- 2.6. To serve the community at large with acts of charity, and engage in activities to foster human flourishing in all ways possible. Our desire is to add dignity and hope to the lives of everyone within our sphere of influence.
- 2.7. To develop income streams that fund our charitable and community ministry.
- 2.8. This Corporation is also organized to promote, encourage, and foster any other similar religious, charitable, and educational activities; to accept, hold, invest, reinvest, and administer any gifts, legacies, bequests, devices, funds and property of any sort or nature, and to use, expend, or donate the income or principal thereof for, and to devote the same to, the foregoing purposes of the Corporation; and to do any and all lawful acts and things which may be necessary, useful, suitable, or proper for the furtherance of accomplishment of the purposes of this Corporation. Provided, however, no act may be performed which would violate Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as it now exists or as it may hereafter be amended.

3. PREROGATIVES

This Church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, until the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:3, 13 (NIV)

- 3.1. To have a membership that is determined by the Church and to discipline its members according to the Scripture and the stated standard of membership as so cited in the Bylaws.
- 3.2. To choose or call its pastor, appoint officers, and transact all other business pertaining to its life and conduct as a local church.

- 3.3. To set ethics, rules, codes of conducts, and doctrinal beliefs for membership and leadership according to the clear truths and principles set forth in the Bible.
- 3.4. To hire and/or appoint only those who demonstrate a commitment to the vision, ethics, rules, codes of conduct, and doctrinal beliefs of Bethany Community Church.
- 3.5. Bethany Community Church also retains the right to dismiss any staff or appointees that depart from said vision, ethics, rules, codes of conduct, and doctrinal beliefs.
- 3.6. To both ordain and acknowledge the ordination of its pastors.
- 3.7. To establish and maintain such ministries and institutions as may be deemed necessary for the propagation of the gospel, and for the work of the local church.
- 3.8. To purchase and acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as a trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes; all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.
- 3.9. To dispose of church property so long as the proceeds of the sale of that property remain with Bethany Community Church for the purposes of the ministry of the Church or are transferred to another like 501C3.
- 3.10. To establish and maintain means of income that solely exist to support charitable and community outreach.
- 3.11. To love, accept, and serve all persons who attend our public service or with whom we otherwise engage with as image bearers of God.

4. TENETS AND BELIEFS

The following Statement of Faith expresses the beliefs of Bethany Community Church and provides spiritual guidance for all Bethany Community Church operations. No Director, Officer, employee, member or person under direction or control of Bethany Community Church shall knowingly take or promote any action that disrupts BCC's ability to operate under these beliefs.

4.1. The one true God

- 4.1.1. The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (*Deut. 6:4 NIV; Isa. 43:10, 11 NIV; Matt. 28:19 NIV; Luke 3:22 NIV*)

4.2. **The Bible**

4.2.1. The Bible is the authoritative Word of God, the ultimate source of church doctrine. Holy Scripture is the final authority in determining faith and morals. It is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. It is our guide for life and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV; 2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV; Proverbs 30:5 NIV; Romans 16:25-26 NIV)

4.3. **The Trinity**

4.3.1. There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and co-eternal. (1 John 5:7 NIV; Genesis 1:26 NIV; Matthew 3:16-17 NIV; Matthew 28:19 NIV; Luke 1:35 NIV; Isaiah 9:6 NIV; Hebrews 3:7-11 NIV)

4.4. **Jesus Christ**

4.4.1. Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. Jesus' love for humanity caused Him to willingly lay aside His heavenly glory for a season, humble Himself and come to earth, where He accepted the limitation of humanity. On earth, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died on the cross for mankind and thus, atoned for our sins through the shedding of His blood. He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return again in power to restore the earth and reign forever. (John 1:1 NIV; John 1:14 NLT; John 20:28 NIV; 1 Timothy 3:16 NIV; Isaiah 9:6 NIV; Philippians 2:5-6 NIV; 1 Timothy 2:5 NIV)

4.5. **The fall of man**

4.5.1. We were created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Humans were given dominion over the earth, however, mankind, by voluntary transgression, fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but spiritual death, which is separation from God. (Gen. 1:26,27; 2:17; 3:6 NIV; Rom. 5:12 NIV)

4.6. **Salvation**

4.6.1. We believe sin entered the human race through the fall of man. The antidote for our sin is the substitutionary atonement provided when Christ died on the

cross. Salvation is God's past, present, and continuous action to rescue humankind from the negative effects of "The Fall" and bring us into all that it means to be a child of God, including finding God's unique personal purpose and eternal life.

- 4.6.2. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; His death, burial, and resurrection. Salvation is a gift from God, not merely the result of our good works or human efforts. Humans gain access to Christ's redemptive work through the surrender of their will and their personal confession that He is Lord. (*Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV; Galatians 2:16, 3:8 NIV; Titus 3:5 NIV; Romans 10:9-10 NIV; Acts 16:31 NIV; Hebrews 9:22 NIV*)

4.7. **Sanctification & personal growth**

- 4.7.1. It is the goal of Bethany Community Church to assist and encourage every believer to become more and more like Jesus Christ. The Scripture calls this process sanctification.
- 4.7.2. Sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit in order to complete the development of Christ's character in us. It is through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the encouragement of the faith community that the Christian is enabled to increasingly live a Godly life. (*1 Thessalonians 4:3 NIV; 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NIV; 2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 NIV; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 NLT; Romans 8:29 NIV; Romans 12:1-2 NIV; Hebrews 2:11 NIV*)

4.8. **The Holy Spirit**

- 4.8.1. The Holy Spirit is the third being of the Trinity and is the action of God on earth.
- 4.8.2. The complete manifestation of the Holy Spirit was released into the earthly realm after Christ ascended into heaven.
- 4.8.3. The Holy Spirit is moving throughout the world to bring the conviction of sin and to draw attention to the redeeming power of Jesus Christ.
- 4.8.4. The Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every Christian to lead, guide, and constantly remind them of the words of Christ.
- 4.8.5. The Holy Spirit instills in Christ followers supernatural love and acceptance of all humanity.

- 4.8.6. Christians are people who have invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come and live inside them by His Holy Spirit. “If God gave them the same gift as he gave us... who was I to think that I could oppose God?” (*Acts 11:17 NIV*)

4.9. **The baptism in the Holy Spirit**

- 4.9.1. Given at Pentecost, it is the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His ascension, to empower the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the whole earth (*Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5, 2:1-4, 17, 38-39, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 11:15-17, 19:1-6*)
- 4.9.2. All believers should fervently seek baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation and yield to the manifestations of the Spirit.
- 4.9.3. Believers in the early church spoke in unknown tongues, prophesied, praised exuberantly, witnessed Christ reality openly, and exhibited ecstatic joy. We believe these manifestations are signs of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. We affirm all Biblical outward signs of the Holy Spirit’s baptism. We also believe these manifestations are all still available and beneficial to God’s people.

4.10. **The church**

- 4.10.1. The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of Jesus’ great commission. Every person who is born of the Spirit is an integral part of the Church as a member of the body of believers. The universal Church of Jesus Christ is composed of those who have put their trust in Christ for eternal salvation and have chosen to make Him their standard of life and conduct. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23; John 17:11; John 17:20-23*)
- 4.10.2. It is clear in Scripture that believers are to be joined to a local church and it is there that the individual Christian finds connection to the global Body of Christ. It is also in the local church where believers are equipped to serve one another, the community, and the world.

4.11. **Marriage**

- 4.11.1. Bethany Community Church holds marriage as a sacred covenant since it is the picture of Christ and the Church. We believe marriage is a human object

lesson of a Divine relationship. Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV) says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the Church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

4.11.2. The Biblical view of marriage between a man and a woman as established in Genesis 2:22-24 (NIV) is the pattern we are compelled to follow. “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.’”

4.11.3. It is our conviction that Scripture affirms either marriage between a man and woman or celibacy as the two given norms for sexual expression (*Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:25-33, Matthew 19:9-12*). Put simply, we believe our first allegiance must be to the Word of God. We are grateful for our nation’s protection of the free exercise of religion, which allows us to sincerely heed our conscience while we strive to humbly and faithfully live out the Bible’s instruction. Therefore, no minister shall perform any type of marriage, cohabitation, or covenant ceremony for persons who are of the same biological sex. It is the belief of this church that wedding ceremonies performed in the place of worship must comply with scriptural teachings and the aforementioned definition of marriage.

4.12. **The resurrection of believers**

4.12.1. We believe according to the Scriptures those who have fallen asleep in Christ will be resurrected to be into the presence of Christ along with those who are alive and remain unto the coming to the Lord. This is the imminent and blessed hope of the believer. (*I Thes. 4:16,17; Rom. 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Cor. 15:51,52*)

4.13. **The final judgment**

4.13.1. There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works.

4.13.2. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast, and the false prophet described in Revelation 19:20 and 21:8, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns

with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (*Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 21:8, Rev. 22:12*)

4.14. **The second coming of Christ**

4.14.1. We believe the ultimate and final plan of God is for Christ to return to earth and establish His righteous reign. The Scripture is clear that we “do not know the day nor the hour, the son of man cometh,” but this is the ultimate hope of humanity. (*Matt. 24:36, Heb. 9:28, Rev. 19:11-21, Mark 9:1, Matthew 24:29,30, Matthew 24:30, 26:63-64; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Revelation 1:7*)

4.15. **The new heavens and the new earth**

4.15.1. We believe God’s original plan for a flourishing earth was lost when humanity fell into sin, but His second coming will restore the world to its intended glory. (*Hab 2:14*) For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (*2 Peter 3:13*) But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. (*Rev. 21:22*)

4.16. **The ministry**

4.16.1. A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for purpose of leading the Church in:

4.16.2. The Worship of God. (*John 4:23,24*)

4.16.3. Engaging in compassion and showing mercy to the world. (*Luke 10:36,37*)

4.16.4. Evangelization of the world. (*Mark 16:15-20*)

4.16.5. Creating fully formed disciples of Jesus Christ. (*Eph. 4:11-16*)

4.16.6. Instructing and teaching one another with wisdom from God’s word.

4.16.7. Strengthening marriages and families to be healthy and to share the faith with the next generation. (*Psalms 78:1-4, Deut. 6:1-10*)

4.16.8. Caring for one another, befriending one another, and bearing one another’s burdens. (*Phil. 2:1, Gal 6:2*)

4.16.9. Scripture has clearly designated those called of God to the office of ministry to guard, guide, and govern the local church.

5. AFFILIATION

The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs. Bethany Community Church maintains a voluntary cooperative relationship with the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri; recognizing however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, local mission, ministry collaboration, and accountability. The Church reserves the right to network with other organizations of like faith as it is deemed beneficial to its purpose and the building up of Christ Kingdom.

6. THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

6.1. **Baptism in water**

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. (*Matt. 28:19 NIV; Mark 16:16 NIV; Acts 10:47, 48 NIV; Rom. 6:4 NIV*)

6.2. **Holy communion**

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements - bread and the fruit of the vine - is the symbol expressing our sharing of the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*II Peter 1:4 NIV*); a memorial of His suffering death (*I Cor. 11:26 NIV*); and is enjoined on all believers "till He comes!" We believe it shall be observed regularly.

6.3. **Marriage**

The joining together of a man and a woman in holy matrimony is the first sacred act overseen by God himself. (*Genesis 2:20-24, Matthew 19:4-6*) Marriage, being a picture of Christ and the Church, shall be considered a sacred ceremony and a sacrament of the Church.

7. MEMBERSHIP

7.1 **BCC Partners description and qualifications**

7.1.1 Bethany Community Church Partners are those individuals who agree to support the BCC vision and who attend regularly. Partners may volunteer to serve under a member leader in non-teaching and non-director roles. Partners

who serve are expected to be harmonious and are subject to the lifestyle standards of the Church as delineated in the Constitution and policy agreements. Formal committal and renewal of BCC Partner status will occur annually for all BCC Partners as well as members. BCC Partners will be listed as active congregants of Bethany Community Church.

7.1.2 Qualifications for BCC Partner Status:

- Must enroll on an annual basis
- Attends worship gatherings faithfully
- Participates in regular generosity
 - Celebrates the vision and success of BCC wholeheartedly
 - Welcomes pastoral care and spiritual growth eagerly
 - Loves one another sincerely

7.2 **BCC members descriptions and qualifications**

7.2.1 Membership at Bethany Community Church is a commitment to a high level of moral, spiritual, and relational accountability. Membership shall be made available to those who desire deep and long-term commitment to the mission, vision, and ongoing growth of the Church. Membership is for those who are committed to be actively involved in the ministries of the Church and are available to serve the purpose and vision of the BCC ministry wholeheartedly.

7.2.2 New candidates for membership shall be presented to the Executive Lead Team and Board of Trustees for approval. After approval by the Executive Lead Team and the Board of Trustees, the new members, as well as those already on the membership roll, shall have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a member of the Church so long as they remain on the membership roll and abide by the guidelines as set forth in the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

7.2.3 The qualifications for membership are as follows:

- A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. (*Acts 4:12*)
- Follow Christ in volitional Baptism as a testimony of salvation. (*Mark 16:16*)
- Demonstrates a desire to be a fully formed disciple who is growing into the image of Christ. (*Ephesians 4:7-13*)
- Makes a commitment to financially support the Church with a tithe. (*Mal. 3:10, Heb.7:1-3*)

- Seeks a deep and growing relationship with other members of the Church. (*Hebrews 10:24,25 Romans 12:10*)
- Abides by the Church's membership covenant as is and as may be amended in the future. (*Ecc. 5:5*)
- Resolves to adhere to the ethics, rules, codes of conducts, and doctrinal beliefs of the Bethany Community Church. (*Acts 2:42*)
- Always seek unity among the members with words, speech, and actions. (*John 17:22,23*)
- Demonstrates an eagerness to serve the Church with one's gifts, talents, and resources. (*Romans 12:3-13*)
- Faithfully refuses to give a bad report of anyone, but will communicate concerns and differences of opinion directly with others. (*Proverbs 16:28, Prov. 11:9, Prov. 26:20, James 1:26, James 4:11*)
- Shows equal enthusiasm and willingness to both serve under leadership as well as lead others; to serve in menial tasks or major projects, as the need dictates. (*John 13:5, Matthew 10:42*)

7.3 **Additional rights and responsibilities of members**

7.3.1 The leaders of Bethany Community Church exist to serve the members and to lead the members in serving the congregation, the community, and the world. The members exist to do the work of the ministry as they are equipped to do so by the leadership. Membership is a prerequisite for ministry leadership at Bethany Community Church.

7.3.2 There will be an annual members meeting to allow for accountability, review the previous year's finances, and communicate updates in the ministry's vision. The annual members meeting will be planned by the Lead Pastor, the Executive Lead Team, and the Board of Trustees.

- At the annual Member Meeting:
 - Newly appointed leadership will be presented
 - There will be a full financial report issued by the Church Treasurer
 - There will be a full projected budget report given.
 - There will be an annual State of the Church Address given by the Lead Pastor.
 - There will be a detailed vision report regarding future initiatives and projects.

7.4 **Membership removal or status change**

- 7.4.1 Members may be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons: (a) the request of the member, (b) the transfer of membership to another church, (c) failure to maintain the standards of membership as established by these bylaws, (d) being absent or not contributing financially for six months barring extenuating circumstances. Any member who feels they are unjustly removed from active membership may request a hearing with the Lead Pastor and the Board of Trustees.
- 7.4.2 Abiding by the BCC Constitution, membership covenant, and policies is an ongoing and perpetual requirement for maintaining membership. One may revert to partner status, which allows for full participation in worship, the expectation to be served, and the ability to volunteer under a member leader; provided such status is approved by the Senior Lead Team and the Board of Trustees.

8. OFFICES AND DIRECTORS

A Lead Pastor, An Executive Lead Team, Board of Trustees, and a Council of Elders shall be selected and in place for the coordination of ministry, the management of the Church, and its business.

The Lead Pastor is the primary overseer of Bethany Community Church. The Lead Pastor shall guide and shepherd the congregation in the company of mature leaders appointed to give wise counsel.

8.1 **The Lead Pastor**

8.1.1 **Purpose**

- The Lead Pastor is the primary guardian and communicator of the Church's vision and is answerable to God for the direction, spiritual condition, and health of the Church body. (*Revelation 2:1, Hebrews 13:17*)

8.1.2. **Qualifications**

- The Lead Pastor shall be an ordained minister, in good standing with his or her organization of ordination, and shall fulfill the scriptural requirements set forth in I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1: 5-9.

8.1.3. **Responsibilities**

- The Lead Pastor is the presiding elder of the Church and is responsible to lead the body into the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.
- The Lead Pastor shall serve as the chairperson of the Staff Lead Team and the Trustee Board in all meetings except when that responsibility may be delegated.
- The Lead Pastor shall be the primary communicator of the vision of the Church and to guide the Church in the carrying out of that vision.
- The Lead Pastor shall have the sole authority to determine those who will preach and teach God's Word to the congregation.
- The Lead Pastor shall have executive responsibility over all ministries and departments.
- Leaders, Associate, assistant pastors, and support staff shall be called and appointed at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and shall support the vision and mission of the church. Associate and assistant pastors shall be ordained or seeking ordination. Numbers 11:16-30, Acts 14:23, Titu 1:5, Acts 6:1-6
- The Lead Pastor shall have the executive responsibilities over all ministries and departments and authority over all hiring and firing decisions within the organization. (See article 10 for protocol regarding removing a staff pastor under morals or ethics charges.)
- The Lead Pastor shall have the executive responsibilities over all new ministry initiatives, building projects, and program changes.

8.1.4. **Terms**

- The Lead Pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time. (See Article 10:1 and 11:1 regarding removal of the Lead Pastor)

8.1.5. **Indemnification**

- To the full extent permitted by the Law, as amended from time to time, the Church shall indemnify any Pastor, who was, is, or may be named a

defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omission within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. The Church in defending such actions may advance reasonable expenses.

8.2. The Executive Lead Team

The Executive Lead Team of Bethany Community Church shall comprise all full-time department heads, unless schedule or other circumstances would prevent them from serving in this capacity.

8.2.1. Purpose

- The Executive Lead Team (ELT) exists to assist the Lead Pastor in leading the Church in regards to spiritual matters, practical matters, and the daily operation of the Church, its facilities, ministries, and membership. The ELT will also be responsible for the implementation of new initiatives, projects, and programs.

8.2.2. Qualifications

- The ELT shall meet the same basic qualifications of all staff members and officers of the corporation. In addition, they shall lead a ministry department within the Bethany Community Church. The Lead Pastor may, at their discretion, appoint up to two members who are not ministry department leaders but demonstrate spiritual maturity. Those additional appointments require the majority approval of the ELT and the Board of Trustees.

8.2.3. Responsibilities

- The ELT shall be responsible for carrying out the vision of the Church, manage the day-to-day operation of the ministry of the Church, carry out new project initiatives, program administration, weekend services, pastoral care of the congregation, community outreach, management of the facilities, and may jointly make financial decisions within the boundaries of the approved budget and other responsibilities as assigned by the Lead Pastor.

- The ELT shall have full authority to represent and conduct the affairs of the corporation except where the authority of the Board of Trustees is required by the BCC Constitution and Bylaws.
- The ELT will be equipped and empowered to do the work of the ministry. The ELT is chaired by the Lead Pastor.

8.2.4. **Terms**

- The ELT's terms are indefinite, but each ELT member's role will be reviewed annually by the Lead Pastor.

8.2.5. **Indemnification**

- To the full extent permitted by the Law, as amended from time to time, the Church shall indemnify any member of the Executive Lead Team, who was, is, or may be named a defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omission within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. The Church in defending such actions may advance reasonable expenses.

8.3. **The Board of Trustees**

8.3.1. **Purpose**

- There shall be a Board of Trustees of not more than 7 or fewer than 3 members of Bethany Community Church, who shall qualify for the office according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Board of Trustees exists to serve in an advisory capacity to the Lead Pastor and the Executive Lead Team, monitor all aspects of the health of the Church, fulfill specific responsibilities, as delineated in these Bylaws, and meet all legal requirements of a legal board of director for 501C3 in the State of Massachusetts.

8.3.2. **Qualifications**

- The Board of Trustees must be persons of mature Christian experience and knowledge; men and women who have exhibited an example of Christ likeness, honesty, and a desire for spiritual growth. Persons who subscribe to our vision, tenets of faith, and statement of beliefs. The members of the Board of Trustees shall be persons who are faithful attendees and tithers at Bethany Community Church. The Board of

Trustees must be persons who are not divisive and who do not allow themselves to be a sounding board for those behaving divisively.

8.3.3. Responsibilities

- The Board of Trustees shall be responsible to act in an advisory capacity to the Lead Pastor, review and approve the annual budget, participate in the interview and hiring process of new associate and assistant pastors, approve the purchase and sale of church property, review and approve any building or capital improvement projects of more than seventy-five thousand dollars, unless previously approved within the annual budget. All loans, as well as refinancing, require Board of Trustee approval. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the approval of the Lead Pastor's compensation and benefits, as well as other decisions that might relate to the care of the Lead Pastor and spouse.

8.3.4. Terms

- Terms of service on the BCC Board of Trustees is three years with one year off required before serving again.

8.3.5. No Compensation for being directors/officers

- A member of the Board of Trustees, whether or not employed by the Church for other purposes, shall be regarded as volunteers and serve without compensation for their duties on the Board.

8.3.6. Indemnification

- To the full extent permitted by the Law, as amended from time to time, the Church shall indemnify any member of the Board of Trustees, who was, is, or may be named a defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omission within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. The Church in defending such actions may advance reasonable expenses.

8.4. **Secretary of the Board of Trustees**

8.4.1. **Appointment**

A member of the Board of Trustees will be selected at a duly called meeting to serve as the official secretary for the corporation. The corporate secretary must be nominated by the Lead Pastor in consultation with the Senior Lead Team and affirmed by a simple majority of the Trustee Board.

8.4.2. **Responsibilities**

The secretary will be responsible for recording the minutes of all official meetings of the Board of Trustees and official congregational business meetings. The Board of Trustees secretary is also responsible to see that all minutes and important documents are filed in the Church office and are easily retrievable when needed.

8.5. **BCC Elder Council**

8.5.1. **Purpose**

The Elder Council shall serve as an outside source of counsel and oversight for the Lead Pastor, the ELT, and the Board of Trustees and shall consist of three-to-seven members. The Elder Council shall also be available to give guidance and wisdom to the congregation during crisis.

8.5.2. **Qualifications**

Members of the Elder Council must be ordained ministers with at least 10 years of proven ministry experience and have a reputation as people of character and proven leadership ability. They must also be: In theological agreement with the core beliefs of Bethany Community Church and supportive of the vision and mission of Bethany Community Church. They must be invited to serve by the Lead Pastor and with the majority approval of the ELT and the Board of Trustees.

8.5.3. **Responsibilities**

Provide personal mentoring, encouragement, and accountability to the Lead Pastor; speak into the life of the Church through visits, consultations, and prayerful input; provide a place of appeal and mediation regarding conflicts that are unresolved by the ELT and the Board of Trustees, specifically where the Lead Pastor is concerned; consult with the ELT and Board of Trustees to

identify a candidate to recommend as Lead Pastor during a time of vacancy and transition; provide an initial recommendation for the Lead Pastor's compensation annually to be approved by the Board of Trustees by a majority vote; review and provide counsel for the annual budget. The Elder Council will be a place of appeal for leaders and members to resolve issues that cannot otherwise be resolved.

8.5.4. Terms

The Elder Council shall serve indefinitely and without term limitations. Each council member shall serve one year at a time and the relationship shall be renewed annually. At any time, a member of the Elder Council can be removed by the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and the affirmation of a majority of the ELT and Board of Trustees.

8.5.5. No Compensation for being directors/officers

A member of the Elder Council, whether or not employed by the Church for other purposes, shall be regarded as volunteers and serve without compensation for their duties on the Council.

8.5.6. Indemnification

To the full extent permitted by the Law, as amended from time to time, the Church shall indemnify any member of the Elder Council, who was, is, or may be named a defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omission within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. The Church in defending such actions may advance reasonable expenses.

8.5.7. Amendments

Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new Bylaws may be voted on at any regular meeting of the ELT. Changes in the Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws also require a of the Board of Trustees and the BCC Elder Council. At least fourteen days written advance notice of any meeting shall be mandatory for the alterations, amendment, or repeal of Bylaws. $\frac{2}{3}$ vote

9. OFFICERS AND LEADERSHIP CHANGES & VACANCIES

9.1. Leadership Change or Vacancy of the Lead Pastor

- 9.1.1. In the event of the resignation, retirement, or death of the Lead Pastor, the BCC Elder Council, The ELT, and The Board of Trustees shall act as a pastoral search team.
- 9.1.2. If for any reason the ELT or the Board of Trustees is unable to function in a decision-making capacity during a Lead Pastoral vacancy, the Elder Council shall function as the pastoral search committee.
- 9.1.3. Should a member of the Pastoral Search Team present themselves as a candidate for the Lead Pastor position, they must recuse themselves from any voting on the matter and from any conversations deemed necessary by the Pastoral Search Team.
- 9.1.4. Final selection of the Lead Pastor requires agreement by the ELT and a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

9.2. Vacancies and Changes in the Executive Lead Team

- 9.2.1. BCC staff is required to serve on the ELT if appointed by the Lead Pastor.
- 9.2.2. BCC staff may be moved off the ELT at the prerogative of the Lead Pastor.
- 9.2.3. All personnel changes on the ELT shall be communicated and explained to the Board of Trustees.

9.3. Vacancy and Changes of Members of the Board of Trustees.

- 9.3.1. Should a member of the Board of Trustees vacate their office for any reason, the Lead Pastor and the Board of Trustees have the prerogative of leaving the position vacant, unless minimum required members are not met. The Lead Pastor and Board of Trustees shall also have the prerogative to add members to complete the term of that seat.
- 9.3.2. The Board of Trustees must at all times meet the required members count. Additional members may be added or removed, at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and the other members of the Board of Trustees.
- 9.3.3. New Board of Trustees members will be added by the Pastor and the ELT but must be ratified by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote of the Elder Council.
- 9.3.4. New Board of Trustees members must be presented to the congregation at the next annual congregational meeting.

10. ACCUSATION AND CHARGES AGAINST LEADERS AND OFFICERS

- 10.1. In the event that serious moral charges are brought against any staff pastor, the individual bringing the charges is obligated to meet with the accused pastor in the presence of at least one other member of the ELT. If the matter cannot be resolved at this meeting, a follow-up meeting with at least one member of the Board of Trustees present is to follow. If the serious accusations are assessed as having merit, there shall be a meeting of the ELT, The Board of Trustees, and at least two representatives from the Elder Council to determine disciplinary action or dismissal. Dismissal over serious moral charges can only occur with the majority vote of the ELT, the Board of Trustees, and the Elder Council.
- 10.2. In the event a Pastoral Staff member is removed from office due to moral charges or serious misconduct, a meeting of the members shall be held to give a full accounting of the proceedings.
- 10.3. A member of the Church who knowingly brings false accusations against a pastor from membership or who does not follow the guidelines for such action will be removed from membership.
- 10.4. Accusations of impropriety, moral failure, abuse, and misconduct against any pastor shall involve the full participation of the ELT, the Board of Trustees, and the Elder Council.

11. Article 11: MEETINGS

11.1. The Meetings of the Executive Lead Team

- 11.1.1. The ELT shall meet no less than once per month or as needed.
- 11.1.2. Notice of such meetings will give the date, time, and place of the meeting. Such notices may be given via email, voice call, text message, or U.S. Mail.
- 11.1.3. Meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor, Executive Pastor, or another member of the team as delegated by the Lead Pastor.

11.2. The Meetings of the Board of Trustees

- 11.2.1. The Board of Trustees shall meet no less than six times per year or as much as needed to conduct church business.
- 11.2.2. Official meetings of the Board of Trustees may be in person, video conference, or audio conference call.

- 11.2.3. A notice for such meetings will give the date, time, and place of the meeting describing the purposes of the meeting.
- 11.2.4. Two-thirds of the Board of Trustees are required to be present for any official action.
- 11.2.5. The official secretary shall record and file the minutes of all meetings.

11.3. Official Congregational Meetings

- 11.3.1. The members shall meet as required by necessity, at the discretion of the Lead Pastor or as defined in the BCC Constitution and By Laws.
- 11.3.2. Meeting notice may be given via U.S. Mail, email, or other electronic means. BCC members' meetings require a minimum fourteen day notice in advance except in case of an emergency.
- 11.3.3. Approval of the ELT and the Board of Trustees are required for an emergency or expedited meeting.
- 11.3.4. Minutes shall be recorded and they shall be filed in all membership meetings.
- 11.3.5. There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation for a full financial report from the previous year, presentation of the annual budget, discussion of new ministry initiatives, and the presentation of new Board of Trustee members.
- 11.3.6. Congregational meetings can be virtual through electronic means and will be considered official. In virtual meetings, each account or username in the meeting is considered one vote.

12. TRANSACTIONS AND FINANCES OF THE CORPORATION

12.1. Tithing

We adhere to the Scriptural method of finance as a pattern for each member, which is a regular systematic way of giving, and embrace the principle of regular percentage giving by the membership as the primary method for the Church's financial support.

We believe that, according to Malachi, a tithe (a 10th) of all income should be returned to God (*Malachi 3:7-11NIV*). The principle of tithing was taught under the Law of Moses, was practiced before the Law of Moses, and was commended by Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 5:20 NIV; Genesis 14:20; 28:22 NIV; I Corinthians 16:2; NIV; II Corinthians 9:7 NIV*)

- 12.1.1. The disbursement of finances shall be made by the BCC Financial Administrator or the Secretary/Treasurer under the direction of the Lead Pastor, the Staff Lead Team, and the Executive Pastor. The Board of Trustees will have access to information regarding all financial transactions. (*Malachi 3:10 NIV; Luke 6:38 NIV; I Corinthians 16:1-2 NIV; II Corinthians 9:6-8 NIV*)
- 12.1.2. All funds and property received shall be held, maintained, and administered by the Financial Administrator under the direction of the Lead Pastor and the Staff Lead Team with the full knowledge of the Board of Trustees, consistent with the purposes of the Corporation and consistent with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code.

12.2. **The Annual Budget**

- 12.2.1. The Annual Budget shall be ratified by the Board of Trustees and affirmed by the congregation at the annual congregational meeting and entered into the minutes of said meeting.

12.3. **Contracts**

- 12.3.1. Any contracts related to the daily operation of the Church or within the scope of the Board-approved budget may be entered into by the approval of the Lead Pastor and the Senior Lead Team and executed by the Financial Administrator or other delegated staff. Mortgages, property leases, or contracts that exceed the annual budget require Board of Trustee approval.

12.4. **Deposits**

- 12.4.1. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited to the Corporation in banks, trust companies, or other depositories in the corporate name with the approval of the Corporate Secretary and the full knowledge of the Board of Trustees.

12.5. **Gifts and Special Offerings**

- 12.5.1. The Lead Pastor and the Corporate Secretary of the Board of Trustees may accept or decline on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the

Corporation. Bethany Community Church may make gifts and give charitable contributions that are not prohibited by the Bylaws, the articles of incorporation, state law, and any requirements for maintaining the Corporation's federal and state tax exemptions.

- 12.5.2. All special offerings and funds-based giving will be used for their stated purpose or a similar purpose within the Church.

12.6. **Expenditures**

- 12.6.1. The Financial Administrator and other administrative staff will be authorized to make payments for salaries and other operational expenses that are contained in the annual budget. The Lead and Executive Pastors shall have the authority to set staff salaries and benefits in consultation with the Corporate Secretary. The Lead Pastor and the Executive Pastor salary and benefits are set by the Board of Trustees. All salaries and benefits are subject to review by the Board of Trustees.
- 12.6.2. Major capital improvements requiring a financial loan will require the approval of the Board of Trustees. Any capital improvements that exceed the annual budget will require the approval of the Board of Trustees.

12.7. **Property**

- 12.7.1. All property of the Church shall be deeded to the Bethany Community Church and held in its name. No property of the Bethany Community Church shall be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of without a vote of at least two-thirds of the membership who are in attendance at a regular or special business meeting of the Church which has been called for the consideration of the proposal. The Lead Pastor and the Secretary of the Assembly shall certify in such conveyance by a vote of the Church. Such certificate shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.
- 12.7.2. In the event this Church shall cease to function for the purposes as declared heretofore in its Articles of Agreement and/or the Articles of its Constitution, after providing for the payments of its debts, the remaining assets will not insure to the benefit of any private person or persons but all such remaining assets shall be transferred to a like charitable non-profit organization that exists for the purpose or propagating of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and which are

organized and operated for religious purposes, and which have established tax-exempt status under Section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

12.8. Amendments

12.8.1. Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new Bylaws may be voted on at any regular meeting of the ELT. Changes in the Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws also require a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Board of Trustees. At least fourteen days written advance notice of any meeting shall be mandatory for the alterations, amendment, or repeal of Bylaws.

12.9. Dissolution of the corporation.

In the unlikely event the Bethany Community Church should be dissolved, available members of the ELTm and the Board of Trustees shall ensure that all property and assets of Bethany Community Church or the proceeds of the sale of said property and assets shall be bequeathed to a like Christian 501C(3) and no individual will profit or gain control of property or other material assets. In the event the ELT and Board of Trustees has dissolved, the Elder Councils shall determine, by a unanimous vote, the Christian 501C(3) that the property or proceeds from the sale of the property will be bequeathed to.

13. INDEMNIFICATION

13.1. To the full extent permitted by the Law, as amended from time to time, the Church shall indemnify any pastor, director, officer, overseer, Lead Pastor, Trustee Board Member, Executive Lead Team Member, committee member, employee, or agent of

the Church who was, is, or may be named a defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omission within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. The Church in defending such actions may advance reasonable expenses.