

PROPOSED BY-LAWS

FOR BOARD REVIEW | First Colony Christian Church | Updated: 6/12/17 by Committee

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

The By-Laws govern, outline, and dictate First Colony Christian Church (hereafter referred to as the Church) within the framework of the Church Constitution.

ARTICLE II – ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Church shall be comprised of the following groups and positions:

- A. The General Board
- B. Staff Leadership
 - 1. Lead Pastor
 - a. Employees
- C. Lay Leadership
 - 1. The Elder Team
 - a. The Deacon Team
 - b.. Appointed Positions
 - i. Facilities Manager
 - ii. Financial Secretary
 - c. Volunteers
 - i. Ministry Volunteers
 - ii. Outreach Team
 - iii. Commissioned Committees
- D. The Church Membership

ARTICLE III – THE GENERAL BOARD

- A. The General Board shall be comprised of the following positions:
 - 1. The Board Chair
 - a. The Board Chair is elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V).
 - b. The Board Chair serves a term of one year.
 - c. Responsibilities of the Board Chair:
 - i. The execution of the approved Constitution and By-laws.
 - ii. Presiding over the General Board and its meetings.
 - iii. Calling and presiding over all business meetings of the Church Membership.
 - iv. Overseeing the duties and responsibilities of the Facilities Manager (cf. § IV).
 - v. Serving as an ex-officio member of all committees not prescribed in the By-Laws.

2. The Vice-Chair

- a. The Vice-Chair is elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V).
- b. The Vice-Chair serves a term of one year.
- c. Responsibilities of the Vice Chair:
 - i. Work in conjunction with the Board Chair.
 - ii. Function as the Board Chair in the Board Chair's absence.

3. The Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer is elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V).
- b. The Treasurer serves a term of two years.
- c. Responsibilities of the Treasurer:
 - i. Provide financial reports to the General Board as directed.
 - ii. Superintend the management and reporting of all church finances.
 - iii. Oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Financial Secretary (cf. § IV).

4. The Secretary

- a. The Secretary is elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V).
- b. The Secretary serves a term of one year.
- c. Responsibilities of the Secretary:
 - i. Take and record minutes of all meetings of the General Board and Church Membership.
 - ii. Provide a report of the minutes to the General Board as directed.
 - iii. Provide a copy of the minutes of any meeting to the Church Membership as requested.
 - iv. In absence of a Secretary the Chair shall appoint one to serve for the duration of the meeting.

5. Voting Representatives shall include:

- a. The Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary make up the Executive Members of the General Board.
- b. Each Elder of the Church

6. The Lead Pastor of the Church

- a. Will be present at each Board Meeting unless
 - i. Ill, out of town, or otherwise unable to attend
 - ii. The Chair specifically calls a meeting with the intention of the Pastor not being present
 - iii. reasons for such a meeting must be detailed in the minutes

B. No members of the General Board will hold more than one voting position.

C. Responsibilities of the General Board:

1. The Executive Members of the General Board will act as the legal representation of the Church and will hold the fiduciary responsibility for the church.
2. The General Board will superintend the real property and personal property of the Church.
3. The General Board has the authority to call a business meeting of the Church Membership and ask for approval to purchase, sell, mortgage, or transfer real property. Without such

approval, the General Board has no such authority.

4. The General Board has the authority to form committees and appoint members to positions if not prescribed in the By-Laws.
5. The General Board will call for and receive regular reports from the Treasurer, the Lead Pastor, and the Lead Elder.
6. The General Board has the authority to call for reports from any other staff or leadership members.
7. The General Board will be responsible for nominating the Lead Pastor for election by the Church Membership.
8. The General Board has the authority to employ all other staff members in conjunction with the Lead Pastor.
9. The General Board has the responsibility of approving nominations for elected leadership roles to be presented to the Church Membership for approval (cf. § V).
10. The General Board has the responsibility of approving any and all amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws to be presented to the Church Membership for approval (cf. § VI).
11. General Board has the responsibility of approving a fiscal budget to be presented to the Church Membership for approval.

D. Meetings of the General Board:

1. The General Board will meet no less than once a quarter as called for by the Board Chair.
2. Board Meetings will be open to Members of the Church and all relevant meeting information (date, time, and location) should be made available for anyone who would like to attend.
3. All in attendance are welcome to speak and/or bring new business before the Board of Directors. Discussion of new business may be deferred to the next meeting of the Board of Directors at the discretion of the Chair, provided that it is addressed in no more than one month's time.
4. A closed session may be held as part of a meeting of the General Board when:
 - a. A topic sensitive to a specific individual is discussed (salary, dismissal, etc.).
 - b. Only those directly affected by the topic (including spouses) are asked to leave.
 - c. The topic is announced before anyone is asked to remove him or herself.
 - d. Only the announced topic is discussed in the closed session.
 - e. The results of the closed session must be immediately disclosed to excused individuals.
5. All Board Meetings will follow an agenda set by the Board Chair and any necessary decisions will be made by vote:
 - a. A quorum of the General Board must be present for a vote to be called.
 - b. A quorum will be met with a simple majority of more than 50% of the Members of the General Board defined herein.
 - c. Any vote to amend the constitution, bylaws, budget, or employment status of an employee, or to dismiss a volunteer or elected position holder can only be called with a quorum of 75% of the Members of the General Board present.
 - d. Proxy votes are not allowed; each Board Member must cast their own vote.
 - e. The Chair will only cast a vote in order to break a tie.

6. The Chair of the General Board may call for an electronic vote outside of a regular scheduled meeting of the General Board. In such instances all Members of the Board of Directors must be notified of the vote and have reasonable time to consider and participate in the vote. More than 50% of the entire General Board is needed to carry a motion outside of a scheduled meeting.
 - a. Should anyone challenge the purpose of holding the vote outside of a meeting before the vote is resolved, the Board Chair will make the challenge known in the same manner that the vote was communicated. If the challenge is seconded the vote will be considered invalid, and must be addressed in a scheduled meeting only.
 - b. The details of such a vote will be submitted to the Board Secretary for inclusion in the minutes to be approved by the General Board.
7. The minutes, financial documents, and handouts presented by and/or to the board will be made accessible to the Membership by request, and in an uncensored and unaltered form. Requests for information and records by non-member entities shall be handled in accordance with the Church's legal obligation.

ARTICLE IV – STAFF LEADERSHIP

A. Lead Pastor

1. The responsibilities of the Lead Pastor are included but not limited to:
 - a. To execute the mission of the Church by providing spiritual guidance and executive leadership to the Church, Elders, staff, and volunteers.
 - b. To create, cast, and execute a vision for accomplishing the mission of the Church in conjunction with the General Board.
 - c. To develop and meet strategic goals and planning in order to execute the vision.
 - d. To plan and execute weekly worship services alongside staff and volunteers.
 - e. To plan and execute ministry, outreach, and mission programs and events alongside staff and volunteers.
 - f. To oversee the recruitment, selection, development, and organization of volunteers alongside the Elder Team.
 - g. To oversee and execute strategies to retain visitors and assimilate members alongside the Elder Team, staff, and volunteers.
 - h. To oversee pastoral care duties such as hospital visitations and counseling alongside the Elder Team.
 - i. To fulfill or delegate all duties by any leadership or volunteer position vacant until it is filled by a nomination from the Elder Team.
 - j. To hire, manage, and dismiss staff members within the fiscal budget approved by the General Board.
 - k. To conduct business affairs of the Church where not described or assigned elsewhere herein, including making financial decisions in accordance with the fiscal budget approved by the General Board.
 - l. To assume any other authority or responsibility described directly or implied herein.

2. To select a new Lead Pastor, a “search and call” committee will be formed by the Board of Directors to seek out and interview candidates. The committee will select a candidate to nominate to the General Board for approval and then an official meeting of the Church Membership will be called for the candidate to be presented and voted on. Upon the Church Membership’s rejection of a candidate, the process will begin again until the Church Membership votes to affirm the Board of Director’s approved nomination.
3. The Lead Pastor shall be evaluated annually by the Chair of the General Board and the Lead Elder. This evaluation will be made based upon written and approved goals and expectations given by the General Board. The Board Chair will then give a written report of the evaluation to the General Board, including any suggested actions of pay raise, bonus, suggestions, warnings, or dismal.

B. Employees

1. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all staff members will be defined at the beginning of each year in a job description given to the General Board by the Pastor
2. The staff will report directly to the Lead Pastor and will be evaluated no less than one time per year by the Lead Pastor. This evaluation will be documented.
3. The church reserves employment for men and women who affirm the theological and strategic vision of the Church.

ARTICLE V – LAY LEADERSHIP

A. The Elder Team

1. The Elder Team will be nominated by the Nomination Committee, approved by the Board of Directors, and elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V).
2. Elders will serve 3 year terms on a staggered cycle, as possible.
3. If an Elder is removed from the Elder Team, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and/or is unable to fulfill their 3 year term, a replacement Elder will be selected by the Lead Pastor to finish out the current year, at the end of which the position will become vacant again and will be filled by the work of the Nominating Committee (cf. § V).
4. Elders may be removed from their position for a valid cause including but not limited to: lack of participation, lack of availability, or disqualifying behaviors (acting without the church’s best interest at heart or in a manner inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle). A written notice of the proposal for the Elder’s removal must be given to the Elder in question, the Lead Pastor and the Chair of the General Board at least ten days prior to the meeting at which an to effect such removal is to be taken in order to give the Elder time for a reasonable defense. The Elder will have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accuser(s), but will not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. The removal of an Elder from the Elder Team requires a vote from the General Board.
5. The Elder Team will be led by the Lead Elder – selected by a vote from the Lead Pastor and Elder Team.
 - a. The Lead Elder will be first among equals on the Elder Team and is responsible for executing, overseeing, and/or delegating the scheduling of Elder, Deacon and

Volunteer Duties.

- b. Each member of the Elder Team will represent the Lay Leadership Team as voting members of the General Board (cf. § III).
6. The Church Elders serve as extensions of the Lead Pastor and are the spiritual and pastoral leaders of the Church. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- a. Assisting in the execution of the church mission and vision.
 - b. Providing support and counsel to the Lead Pastor and his or her family.
 - c. Assisting the Lead Pastor with duties as requested by the Lead Pastor or General Board.

B. The Deacon Team

1. The Deacon Team will be overseen by the Lead Elder and the Elder Team.
2. They will act as the servants of the Church Membership and perform the duties laid out in the Deacon Responsibility Document.
3. The number of deacons will be decided upon by the Lead Pastor and Lead Elder.
4. The Lead Elder is responsible for the assigning and scheduling of duties for the Deacon Team, in coordination with the Lead Pastor.
5. Deacons are elected by a vote of the Church Membership (cf. § V) to serve a two-year term.
6. If a Deacon is removed from service, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and/or is unable to fulfill their two-year term, a replacement Deacon will be selected by the Lead Pastor and Lead Elder to finish out the current year, at the end of which the position will become vacant again and will be filled by the work of the Nominating Committee (cf. § V).
7. Deacons may be removed from their position for a valid cause including but not limited to: lack of participation, lack of availability, or disqualifying behaviors (acting without the church's best interest at heart or in a manner inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle). A written notice of the proposal for the Deacon's removal must be given to the Deacon in question, the Lead Pastor, the Lead Elder, and the Chair of the General Board at least ten days prior to the meeting at which an to effect such removal is to be taken in order to give the Deacon time for a reasonable defense. The Deacon will have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accuser(s), but will not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. The removal of an Deacon from the Deacon Team requires a vote from the General Board.

C. Appointed Positions

1. Facilities Manager

- a. The Facilities Manager, like all volunteers, is an individual who performs hours of service without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation. As a volunteer, they will be governed and overseen by the Elder Team in coordination with the Lead Pastor.
- b. The Facilities Manager, like all volunteers, will adhere to the guidelines and expectations listed in the Volunteer Handbook (Appendix X).
- c. The Facilities Manager will be appointed in January by the new General Board and will work with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the General Board in order to maintain and execute improvements to the properties of the Church Membership.

2. Financial Secretary

- a. The Financial Secretary will be appointed in January by the new General Board and will work with the Treasurer of the General Board to organize and maintain the finances of the church. Responsibilities will consist of executing, tracking, and reporting financial activities as delegated by the Treasurer of the General Board and as indicated in Financial Procedures Document (Appendix X).

D. Volunteers

1. Ministry Volunteers

- a. All Ministry Volunteers, including but not limited to those volunteers named herein, are individuals who perform services to and with the church without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation.
- b. Volunteers will adhere to the guidelines and expectations listed in the Volunteer Handbook. (Appendix X).
- c. Volunteers will be governed and overseen by the Elder Team in coordination with the Lead Pastor.
- d. All Volunteers must undergo a yearly background check for safety and legal purposes.

2. Outreach Team

- a. The Outreach Team will be responsible for finding, organizing, and executing outreach and mission opportunities in accordance with the Church's Mission and the Lead Pastor's Vision.
- b. The Outreach Team will consist of the Lead Pastor, the Lead Elder, and up to three members from the congregation.
- c. The Outreach Team will be led by a member of the congregation.

3. Commissioned Committees

- a. A committee may be commissioned by either the General Board or the Lead Pastor.
- b. The committee shall report to the body or person who commissioned it.
- c. At the time the committee is commissioned, the following shall be defined:
 - i. The purpose of the committee.
 - ii. Expectations of the committee.
 - iii. Timeframe of the committee's task.

ARTICLE VI – THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. Church Membership

1. Official Membership in Sweetwater Christian Church is specific to those who have taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements to become a "covenant member." Regular attendees and participants may casually be referred to as "members" but only "covenant members" hold the rights and responsibilities afforded by the Church constitution and by-laws.
2. Members active prior to 2017 shall be grandfathered into "covenant member" status per review and approval of the Elders.
3. The process to become a "covenant member" is as follows:
 - a. Read through "The Vision, Mission, and Beliefs" document. The purpose of this

document is not to dictate belief (i.e. one does not have to agree with everything contained within) but to identify Sweetwater Church's position so as to avoid surprise and/or disappointment in the future.

- b. Fill out a "covenant membership" form and meet with the Lead Pastor or Lead Elder – this form expresses our vision of church and general vision for what it means to be a member of our community and asks for contact and other important information, and functions as a formal statement of intent to join. The form may be signed by those becoming members or by the Lead Pastor or Lead Elder as a witness to a verbal declaration of desire to join.
 - c. A public introduction to the congregation as new members is at that point desired, but not required pending the comfort and wishes of the new members in question.
4. Periodically but no less than every two years the roster of "covenant members" will be reviewed by the Elders and the Lead Pastor, and updated as needed.
- a. At that time "covenant members" who are largely non active, have moved, etc... will be removed from the roster. Members removed in such a way shall be documented and these documents shall be presented to the General Board.
5. Members who have been removed from the roster of "covenant members" can have their membership re-instituted either by review and approval from the Elders and Lead Pastor or by going through the original process.
6. As a congregationally led Church, Members will vote on the following decisions as presented by the General Board:
- a. Annual Leadership Nominations
 - b. Annual Operating Budget
 - c. Any loan that results in cumulative debt exceeding twenty percent of the current annual operating budget.
 - d. Any sale of church property or building.
 - e. The merger or dissolution of the church.
 - f. Proposed changes to the Church Constitution or By-Laws.
 - g. Any actions deemed major or extraordinary by the General Board.
7. Business Meetings of the Church Membership where voting will be taking place
- a. Must be:
 - i. Held on Church property, or in another location easily accessible to the Church Membership,
 - ii. Scheduled at a time and day that is considerate to the Church Membership
 - iii. Announced at least two weeks in advance
 - iv. Announced in at least two mediums (example: announcement in worship services on Sunday and via email).
 - v. The announcement must include the business of the meeting.
 - b. No business may be handled (voted on) in the meeting that is not identified in advance.
 - c. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the General Board will lead Business Meetings of the Church Membership.

- i. In the case of a conflict of interest, the Lead Elder or Lead Pastor may intercede and hold the meeting.
 - d. No quorum is necessary for a vote to be made as long as the above considerations are met.
 - i. A simple majority is required for any vote to carry.
 - e. Each Member of the Church Membership over the age of 13 gets one vote.
 - d. Voting by proxy or with an absentee vote is not allowed.
 - f. The Chair of the General Board, or whomever else is leading the meeting in their place, is responsible for tallying the votes and making the results known publicly to the Church Membership.
- 8. An annual Business Meeting of the Church Membership must be held each year on the second Sunday of December. The specific business of the Annual Meeting includes but is not limited to:
 - a. A report given by the Chair of the General Board including:
 - i. The general health and mission of the church, especially as it regards the past year of ministry and business.
 - ii. A presentation of the Board of Director's approved Leadership nominations for the next year.
 - iii. The Leadership nominations shall be voted on separately and may be voted on per each nomination upon request from the Church Membership.
 - b. A report given by the Treasurer of the General Board including:
 - i. The general health of the church's financial state
 - ii. A presentation of the church's future financial goals, plans, and strategies along with a presentation of the Board of Director's approved operating budget proposal for the next year.
 - iii. The operating budget proposal must be approved or rejected as a whole.
 - 1. If rejected by a simple majority of the Church Membership, the Board of Directors must revise the proposed budget and present it for another vote to the Church Membership within one month.
 - A. This process must continue until the Church Membership approves an annual operating budget.
- 9. The Leadership Nominations for the next year will be determined by a Nomination Committee, formed by the General Board no later than September.
 - a. The Nomination Committee will consist of the Lead Pastor, the Lead Elder, and a minimum of three volunteers (with at least two people that are not currently on the General Board.)
 - b. The Nomination Committee will secure consent from potential nominees for positions currently or about to be vacant.
 - c. The Nominating Committee will present their nominations to the General Board for approval.
 - i. This presentation must take place no later than October.
 - ii. If the General Board rejects the nominations presented, they must

provide guidance to the Nominating Committee for revision of the nominations.

1. Revised Nominations must be approved prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Membership.

10. The annual operating budget for each year will be determined by the Budget Committee, formed by the General Board no later than September.

- a. The Budget Committee will consist of the Treasurer of the General Board who shall chair the committee, the Vice-Chair of the General Board, the Lead Pastor, the Lead Elder, and at least one person not currently on the General Board (not to exceed three).

- i. The Lead Pastor, though present, shall not have a vote on the committee.

- b. The Budget Committee will present the proposed Operating Budget to the General Board for review and approval no later than the November Board Meeting.

- i. Minor alterations can be made during the course of the Board's review.

- ii. If the General Board rejects the Budget presented, they must provide guidance to the Budget Committee for revision.

1. The revised Operating Budget must be approved prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Membership.

ARTICLE VI – REVISIONS

A. Revising the By-Laws

1. The current By-Laws must be provided to each member of the General Board at the beginning of each year and to any member of the Church upon request.

2. During any meeting of the General Board, a member of the General Board or the Church Membership may request a review of the By-Laws.

- a. The request must include a specific area or areas of concern to be reviewed by the General Board.

- b. An evaluation will be conducted and any necessary revisions, actions, or updates will be made.

3. Any revision of the By-Laws will be initiated solely by a vote of the General Board.

- a. Once a revision is approved, a committee of no less than three members of the Board of Directors will be commissioned to draft a revision.

- b. The revised draft will be presented to the General Board for approval or, upon rejection, guidance for a further revision.

- c. Upon approval by the General Board, the revised By-Laws will be presented to the Church Membership for adoption at either the Annual Meeting or a special meeting of the Church Membership.

- i. The revised By-Laws must be made available two weeks in advance of the meeting to all members, as well as a copy of the current By-Laws and a summary of the proposed changes.

- d. No draft or revision of the By-Laws will be in effect until approved by a vote of the

Church Membership.