



# 2022 Proposed Bethel Constitution & Bylaws Amendments

Bethel's Constitution & Bylaws may only be amended by a congregation vote of Bethel members (reference Constitution Article XIII). The last Constitution and Bylaws revisions were made on June 3, 2018. This year, several proposed changes are being presented to the congregation for a vote at the July 17, 2022, Annual Family Business Meeting. These changes are listed below, including the reason for each change, a summary of each change, and the relevant sections of the Constitution & Bylaws impacted by the change. Finally, a markup of the Constitution & Bylaws showing all changes is included.

## **Change #1: Conservative Baptist Northwest (CBNW) Name Change & Church Assets**

- Change Reason: 1) Conservative Baptist Northwest (CBNW) has changed its name to Church Venture Northwest (CVNW). 2) As currently written, all of Bethel's assets are given to CBNW in the event of Bethel's liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment. It is believed by Bethel leadership that CVNW is not in a position to best steward Bethel's assets should such a need arise.
- 2022 Change Summary: 1) Change all mention of CBNW to CVNW. 2) In the event of liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment, Bethel's assets are liquidated and distributed to our global mission partner agencies.
- Sections Impacted: Constitution Article XI

## **Change #2: "Senior Director" Staff Titles**

- Change Reason: Currently, the Bylaws mention "Senior Directors", however this title is no longer used at Bethel. The intent is "senior staff"
- 2022 Change Summary: Remove reference to "Senior Directors" and replace with "senior staff". Provide a definition of senior staff that is not tied to specific titles.
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article II Section 4.C and Article V Section 10.E

## **Change #3: IRS Clergy Requirements & Ministers Housing Allowance**

- Change Reason: There is no mention of Bethel's implementation of the IRS clergy requirements or ministers housing allowance in Bethel's Constitution & Bylaws. The best practice is for churches to codify their implementation of the various IRS requirements in their Constitution & Bylaws.
- 2022 Change Summary: Add language explaining the job roles and responsibilities that qualify as ministers for IRS purposes. Add language explaining the process of "commissioning" clergy at Bethel. Add language about Bethel's policies for ministers housing allowance and social security.
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article II Section 6

## **Change #4: Public Forum for Non-Senior Staff**

- Change Reason: The Bylaws require a public forum for Directors who are not members of the church prior to hiring. While all Directors are subject to a comprehensive interview process that includes input from the congregation stakeholders in the relevant ministry (e.g., high-school students, parents, and volunteers spending time with a prospective High School Director), it is not practical to have a truly "public" forum open to the entire congregation for every Director position.
- 2022 Change Summary: Remove the public forum requirement for all Directors. Add the same requirement for "senior staff".
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article II, Section 4.C

## **Change #5: Campus Pastor Automatic Campus Elder and Member**

- Change Reason: The Senior Pastor is automatically a Bethel Elder and member of Bethel. Bethel Campus Pastors are biblically qualified to be elders, but they are not automatically campus elders.



- 2022 Change Summary: Add the biblical qualification of a Campus Pastor. Campus Pastors are automatically campus elders for their respective campuses. Campus Pastors and their spouses are automatically Bethel members when hired.
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article I Section 1.B and Article II Section 3.B

#### **Change #6: Executive Team**

- Change Reason: Ministry needs, industry best practices, and access to qualified personnel may not lend themselves to Bethel's current constitutionally prescribed model of an Executive Pastor.
- 2022 Change Summary: Allow for an alternative model of an Executive Team that divides up the responsibilities of the Executive Pastor to multiple senior staff. The Bethel Elders determine which model (Executive Team or Executive Pastor) is used on an annual basis.
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article 2 Section 2.C and Section 3.C

#### **Change #7: Secret Ballot**

- Change Reason: As currently written, the Church Chairman (Executive Pastor) or a majority of voting members determine if a secret (anonymous) ballot is to be used for congregational votes. In practice, Bethel uses a secret ballot for all congregational voting and there is a discrepancy between what is written and historical practice.
- 2022 Change Summary: Require a secret ballot for all Bethel member voting.
- Sections Impacted: Bylaws Article VIII Section 6

#### **Change 8: Administrative Changes to Statement of Faith**

- Change Reason: Two administrative changes to the Statement of Faith are helpful.
- 2022 Change Summary: change the word "come" to "comes" and the word "pre-millennial" to "premillennial"
- Sections Impacted: Constitution Article IV Section 9 and Section 11



# BETHEL CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

Placing our faith entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing the Bible to be our sole basis of authority and practice, we adopt this Constitution and Bylaws.

### ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be known as Bethel Church and includes all campuses.

### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Our purpose is to build a community of whole people who, through devotion to Jesus Christ, are learning to live every day by the Word of God.

### ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT

Believing in the sovereignty of the local church as an autonomous body of believers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the government of this church shall be vested in its members who exercise the right of control in its affairs.

### ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1 – The Scripture – We believe the Bible and only the Bible to be God's infallible Word and the Christian's supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. We affirm our belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scripture in their original autographs. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Peter 1:25)

Section 2 – God and the Trinity – We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While its members possess individual, personal attributes, the Trinity is without division of nature, essence, or being. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 4:24; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 4:13).

Section 3 – Jesus Christ – We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, sinless in life, who atoned for the sins of the world by His substitutionary death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His High Priestly intercession for His people. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; Acts 1:9-11; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1-2)

Section 4 – The Holy Spirit – We believe the Holy Spirit to be the third person in the Trinity, whose ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. During this age, the Holy Spirit draws men unto God; convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and indwells, guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for godly service. (John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8-15; Romans 5:5; 8:9-11; I Corinthians 3:16; 12:12-14; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 28:19-20)

Section 5 – Man – We believe that Adam was created in the image of God but fell into sin and that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and, therefore, are lost. However, we believe that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We believe that those who accept Christ as Savior and Lord shall be forever in God's presence and those who reject Christ as Savior and Lord will be forever separated from God and be cast into the lake of fire for eternal punishment. (Genesis 1:26-27; Mark 9:43-44; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:15)



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Section 6 – Salvation – We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ provides the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe. Only those who receive Jesus Christ and are born of the Holy Spirit can thus become children of God. (John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 5:1; 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 1:5-8; Hebrews 9:22; I Peter 1:18-19; 2:24)

Section 7 – Satan – We believe in the reality of Satan as a personal angelic being who has fallen from his original state of perfection and is now the prince of the corrupt, anti-God world-system. We believe in Satan's final and eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:10; Ephesians 2:2; II Corinthians 4:4; Ezekiel 28:11-19; John 14:30; Job 1:12; 2:6)

Section 8 – The Church – We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They are united together in the body of members of the true Church and shall be eligible for membership in the local church. (Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 12:12-13; II Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 4:4-6, 15-16)

Section 9 – The Ordinances – We believe that baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a testimony of the person's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Christ. It is a confession that the believer is dead to sin and risen to newness of life in Christ Jesus. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death "until He ~~come~~comes." (Matthew 28:19; 26:26-30; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26),

Section 10 – The Priesthood of the Believer – We believe all who are born of God have equal, direct access to God's ear and heart, and there is no distinction between believers in their exercise of that priesthood in their personal relationships with the Lord. (I Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2:10-18; Revelation 1:6)

Section 11 – The Last Things – We believe in "that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) -- the personal, visible, ~~pre-~~millennial/premillennial return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Zechariah 14:4-11; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15)

## **ARTICLE V – CHURCH COVENANT**

We engage by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge of the Word and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love and to remember each other in prayer.

## **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the church is granted on application of those who through faith in God's Son our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope, have been baptized by immersion, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the total ministry of the church and to share its fellowship obligations.

## **ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

Section I – The officers of the church shall be the Church Chairman, Church Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Where the law requires action by "trustees" the Officers of the Church shall be known as the "Board of Trustees" and its members as "Trustees".



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Section 2 – The Trustees shall organize themselves in a manner specified by the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE VIII – ELDERS

Section 1 – For purposes of this document, whenever the term "Elder" is used, it refers to both Bethel Elders and Campus Elders. When the term "Bethel Elders" is used it is specific to Bethel Elders only. When the term "Campus Elders" is used it is specific to Campus Elders only. Elders shall be male members.

Section 2 – Bethel Elders are responsible for spiritual guidance and direction of the church and shall have such powers as are granted in the Bylaws. Bethel Elders will provide oversight and protection to the Campus Elders with ultimate authority resting with the Bethel Elders.

Section 3 – Campus Elders receive authority from the Bethel Elders and shall have such powers as are granted in the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE IX – DEACONS AND COMMISSIONS FOR MINISTRY

Section 1 – For purposes of this document, whenever the term "Deacon" is used, it refers to both Bethel Deacons and Campus Deacons. When the term "Bethel Deacon" is used it is specific to Bethel Deacons only. When the term "Campus Deacons" is used it is specific to Campus Deacons only.

Section 2 – Commissions for ministry shall be entrusted with the programs and ministries of the church in accordance with the duties established in the Bylaws, or by the congregation. They shall be composed of a Deacon elected by the congregation and an unspecified number of appointed members.

Section 3 – Bethel Deacons serve the church with authority over multiple campuses. Campus Deacons serve with authority over a single, specific campus. Deacons shall have such power as are granted in the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE X – BUSINESS MEETINGS

Regular business meetings of the congregation shall be held at stated intervals as provided in the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE XI – PROPERTY

Section 1 – All property, real or personal, while owned by the Corporation shall be, and hereby is, irrevocably dedicated to Christian purposes and use. ~~Historically (as the Church is currently at the time of writing this revision), the Corporation has been affiliated with CB Northwest. Regardless if the affiliation is active or not, In the event of liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the Corporation, such property shall be distributed to global mission partner agencies. For the purposes of this document, a "global mission partner agency" is defined as "an organization who has received financial donations from Bethel for two out of the last three years, employs three or more full-time equivalent employees, and has a Christian purpose and missional focus outside of the United States." The percentage of the liquidated assets that is distributed to each global mission partner agency is equal to "the combined five-year total financial donations from Bethel to the specified global mission partner agency (including both monthly and one-time donations) divided by the combined five-year total value of financial donations to all qualifying global mission partner agencies."~~  
~~to CB Northwest, unless it is not then recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In the event that CB Northwest is unable or unwilling to accept these assets, the assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person, but instead will be passed on to a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated for evangelical, religious purposes within the limits of those specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.~~



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Section 2 – In the event of schism within ~~the church~~ Bethel, the title of all ~~the~~ church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group ~~which that~~ abides by this Constitution & Bylaws as determined by ~~the~~ an arbitration board appointed by ~~Executive Board of CB Northwest~~ Church Venture Northwest (CVNW). As of January 2021, CVNW is the new name for Conservative Baptist Northwest (CBNW), a group of churches that Bethel has been associated with since Bethel's inception.

## ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting, the notice of which includes a statement of the time and place of the meeting at which the amendments will be considered; provided such proposed amendment has been presented at an informational meeting held at least two (2) weeks prior, and providing a copy of the proposed amendment has been made available to the membership. The vote required to amend the Constitution or Bylaws is a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of members present and voting.



# BETHEL CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1 – Admission into Membership

- A. Application for Membership – A request for membership shall be submitted to an Elder. The individual shall complete the prescribed membership preparation process, after which they shall appear before an Elder to give a confession of their Christian faith, according to Article VII of the Constitution. When an Elder has reviewed their application and received their testimony favorably, the applicant will be approved for membership.
- B. Staff Membership – Any nonmember who accepts a job ~~to become a member of the ministry staff at Bethel~~ shall complete the membership process within six (6) months of joining staff. ~~The membership values, requirements, and expectations shall be clearly communicated to all employees prior to hiring.~~ The Senior Pastor and his spouse, ~~and~~ the Executive Pastor and his spouse, ~~and Campus Pastors and their spouses-~~ will automatically become members on their upon acceptance of the job employment start date. This requirement does not apply to Kids Express Preschool staff, on-call employees, or childcare workers.

Section 2 – Responsibility of Membership – Every member shall assume the responsibilities and obligations placed on them by the Word of God and the Bethel Membership Covenant.

#### Section 3 – Discipline

- A. Negligent Members – A member who has willfully neglected their duties or who has not participated in the ministry and the services of the church for one year may be admonished by the Elders for their apparent lack of interest. If this admonition is not heeded, their membership shall be subject to termination. The Elders have the authority to dismiss a negligent member.
- B. Erring Members – A member known to err in doctrine (according to the Statement of Faith of Constitution Article IV) or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and I Corinthians 5. If they do not heed the reproof and counsel of those who appealed to them, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Elders, who shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore them. If they fail to heed the counsel of the Elders, the error shall be communicated to the church body with the announcement that the erring member will be removed from membership in two (2) weeks if they do not express sincere repentance by testimony to the Elders. Forgiveness and restoration of fellowship and membership will be offered to any dismissed member who expresses and demonstrates sincere repentance.

#### Section 4 – Termination of Membership

- A. Membership will be terminated when the member moves from the area and/or joins another church.
- B. The membership of one who has willfully neglected their duties towards the church shall be subject to termination (see Article I Section 3).
- C. Membership may be terminated as part of discipline for unrepentant sin (see Article I Section 3).



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- D. Membership will be terminated upon death of the member.
- E. Membership will be terminated at the member's request.

## ARTICLE II – CHURCH STAFF

Section 1 – General – The church staff shall consist of a Senior Pastor, Campus Pastors, Executive Pastor, and ministry staff. In addition to qualification for their specific assignment, they shall have demonstrated appropriate Christian character and values.

### Section 2 – Qualifications

- A. Senior Pastor – The Senior Pastor of the church shall be a man who has been called by God and is equipped by natural and spiritual gifts, to preach the Gospel and teach the Word of God. He shall meet the New Testament requirements of his office (I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4).
- B. Campus Pastor – A Campus Pastor shall be a man who has been called by God and is equipped by natural and spiritual gifts, to preach the Gospel and teach the Word of God. He shall meet the New Testament requirements of his office (I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4).
- C. Executive Pastor – The Executive Pastor shall be a man who has been called by God and is equipped by natural and spiritual gifts, to oversee the general administration of the church. At the discretion of the Bethel Elders, an “Executive Team” may be utilized in lieu of an Executive Pastor based on the needs of the organization. Executive Team members are senior staff, who fill a portion of the Executive Pastor role they are collectively fulfilling. For the purposes of this document, the terms “Executive Pastor” and “Executive Team” are interchangeable.
- D. Ministry Staff – The ministry staff shall be those who have been called by God and equipped by natural and spiritual gifts according to requirements of the church and their position. The ministry staff shall possess the professional and spiritual qualifications and personal motivation and skills to accomplish their assigned responsibilities.

### Section 3 – Duties

- A. Senior Pastor – The Senior Pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the ordinances, and faithfully giving himself to ~~Pastoral~~pastoral work. All staff and deacons shall be subject to his supervision. He shall have the discretion to delegate his supervisory duties, as is necessary to allow him to perform his other duties. He shall be a member of the Bethel Elders, but may not serve as its Chairman, nor serve as any other church officer. He shall be a member of any commission for ministry or special committee(s) of his choosing.
- B. Campus Pastor – A Campus Pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the ordinances, and faithfully giving himself to pastoral work. All campus staff and campus deacons shall be subject to his supervision. He shall be a member of the Campus Elders for his campus but may not serve as Campus Elder Chairman.





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C. Executive Pastor or Executive Team – The Executive Pastor (or Executive Team) is responsible for the daily administration of the church. ~~He shall be a member of any commission for ministry or special committee(s) of his choosing. He (they) shall be responsible for motivation, supervision and direction of the ministry staff and shall annually report on staff performance to the Bethel Elders. He shall serve as Church Chairman and report to the Senior Pastor and/or Bethel Elders at the discretion of the Bethel Elders. During times when there is an Executive Pastor (and no Executive Team):~~

1. He shall serve as Church Chairman and report to the Senior Pastor and/or Bethel Elders at the discretion of the Bethel Elders.
2. He shall be a member of any commission for ministry or special committee(s) of his choosing.

During times when an Executive Team is fulfilling the responsibilities of the Executive Pastor:

3. The Executive Team member who oversees the administrative operations of the church shall function as the Church Chairman.
4. The Bethel Elders are responsible for ensuring that all Executive Pastor responsibilities are divided amongst Executive Team members.
5. The Bethel Elders determine what, if any, commission for ministry or special committee(s) Executive Team members participate in.
6. The Bethel Elders determine for each Executive Team member if they report to the Senior Pastor and/or the Bethel Elders.
7. The non-staff Bethel Elders will review the effectiveness of the Executive Team on an annual basis one month prior to the annual business meeting and present their findings to the Bethel Elders. For the Executive Team to continue into the next fiscal year, a Bethel Elder vote of approval must occur. If the vote is not approved, then a search for an Executive Pastor must occur forthwith.

Additional Executive Pastor (or Executive Team) duties include:

8. Ensure normal church operation in the absence of the Senior Pastor.
9. Submit unforeseen expenditures not provided for in the budget to the Bethel Elders for approval, provided such approval will not cause the church to incur any additional indebtedness.
10. Approve non-elected members of church wide (multi-campus) commissions and committees. Non-elected members of campus specific commissions and committees are approved by the respective Campus Pastor.
11. Provide oversight of ongoing programs of the commissions for ministry.
12. Submit proposed changes in church policy within the limits of the Constitution and Bylaws for Bethel Elder approval. At their discretion, the Bethel Elders may delegate policy approval on a policy-by-policy basis to the Executive Pastor or a ministry commission.



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13. Appoint a nominating committee for ministry staff excluding the Senior Pastor position.

14. Supervise the performance of the ministry staff or designated ministry staff member to carry out such duties.

D. Ministry Staff – The ministry staff shall consist of Pastors (other than the Senior Pastor, Campus Pastors, and Executive Pastor), Directors, and others that the church employs to carry out the ministries of the church. The Executive Pastor, or his designated ministry staff ~~member~~ shall supervise the performance of the ministry staff. Ministry staff shall be members of any commissions functioning in their areas of ministry.

## Section 4 – Hiring

- A. The Senior Pastor shall be recommended by the Bethel Elders to the members at a regular or special church business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance. As a requirement for hiring, he shall be chosen by ballot with three fourths (3/4) majority vote of members present.
- B. The Executive Pastor shall be hired upon the recommendation of the Bethel Elders. A public forum shall be held for an Executive Pastor candidate who is not a member of the church prior to hiring. If an Executive Team is in place, members of the Executive Team shall be approved by the Bethel Elders.
- C. Campus Pastors and ~~Senior Directors~~senior staff shall be hired by the Bethel Elders. For the purposes of this document, the term “senior staff” is defined by the Bethel Elders and may change over time based on Bethel’s organizational structure. All other ministry staff shall be hired by the Executive Pastor. A public forum shall be held for Campus Pastors, ~~Senior Directors, and Directors~~ and senior staff who are not a member of the church prior to hiring.

## Section 5 – Terminations

- A. Senior Pastor – Should a situation occur in which accusations arise against the Senior Pastor, such accusations must be supported by two or three witnesses and be presented in writing to the Bethel Elders. Should it be proved that he has erred in doctrine or conduct, he shall be lovingly admonished by the Bethel Elders. If this does not resolve the matter, the matter shall be presented to the church by the Bethel Elders at the annual or a special business meeting called for that purpose. Notice of such meeting shall be given from the pulpit on at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately prior to said meeting. The vote required to dismiss a Senior Pastor is a three fourth (3/4) majority of members present and voting.
- B. Executive Pastor – The Executive Pastor may be terminated by the Bethel Elders.
- C. Ministry Staff – Ministry staff may be terminated by the staff person assigned administrative authority over them with the approval of the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor, or by the Bethel Elders. The termination of Campus Pastors and ~~Senior Directors~~senior staff shall be approved by the Bethel Elders. The termination of other Pastors or Directors shall be reported to the Elders.

## Section 6 – Minister’s Housing Allowance and Social Security



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- A. Minister's Housing Allowance – Bethel employees who meet the definition of "minister" for IRS tax purposes are eligible to receive a minister's housing allowance. A "minister" is defined as "being commissioned by the Bethel Elders as having the authority to conduct religious worship, perform sacerdotal functions, and administer ordinances or sacraments according to the prescribed tenets and practices of Bethel." A "minister" for IRS tax purposes is defined exclusively based on their job function and has no direct relationship to their job title at Bethel. Job descriptions shall be clearly labeled when they meet the qualifications for a "minister."
- B. Commissioning – Bethel does not ordain or license employees. For IRS tax purposes, Bethel does "commission" employees. All Bethel employees who have been "commissioned" for "minister services" shall have a "Commissioning Letter" from the Bethel Elders documenting their commissioning in their employment file.
- C. Social Security – "Ministers" have the option of opting out of SECA self-employment taxes by completing IRS form 4361. They must agree with the following statement from the IRS: "I certify that I am conscientiously opposed to, or because of my religious principles I am opposed to, the acceptance (for services I perform as a minister, member of a religious order not under a vow of poverty, or Christian Science practitioner) of any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, or retirement; or that makes payments toward the cost of, or provides services for, medical care. (Public insurance includes insurance systems established by the Social Security Act.)" It is the expectation that Bethel employees who make this decision do so with integrity based on their personal convictions.

## ARTICLE III – AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

Section 1 – Ultimate authority and responsibility for church decisions reside in the congregation, acting in a lawful business meeting as described in Article VIII of the Bylaws. The congregation may review, reverse, or modify any action or decision of the Elders, the Senior Pastor, the Executive Pastor, or any commission, committee, or officer of the church. The congregation shall have sole authority to:

- A. Adopt and amend the church budget.
- B. Authorize the incurring of indebtedness on the part of the church.
- C. Elect Bethel Deacons and Bethel Elders (Campus Deacons are elected by the members of the respective campus).
- D. Hire or terminate the Senior Pastor.
- E. Establish or discontinue permanent commissions for ministry.
- F. Acquire or dispose of church real property or interest therein.
- G. Amend the Constitution and Bylaws.
- H. Resolve issues referred by the Bethel Elders.

## ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS



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Officers of the church shall consist of a Church Chairman, a Church Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. The Executive Pastor shall be the Church Chairman. The Chairman of the Bethel Elder Board shall be Church Vice Chairman. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be appointed by the Bethel Elders.

Section 1 – Church Chairman Duties – The Church Chairman’s duties shall include:

- A. Preside at all church business meetings.
- B. Preserve all official correspondence and legal documents of the church.

Section 2 – Church Vice-Chairman Duties – The Church Vice-Chairman’s duties shall include:

- A. Assist the Church Chairman in his duties.
- B. Assume the duties of the Church Chairman in his absence.

Section 3 – Treasurer Duties – The Treasurer’s duties shall include:

- A. Work with the appropriate staff to oversee the receiving, recording, and depositing of all funds contributed to the church.
- B. Work with the appropriate staff to prepare and distribute statements of contributions to the contributors at least annually.
- C. Work with the appropriate staff to oversee all disbursements as authorized by the church.
- D. Be a member of any ministry commission or directorship pertaining to church finances.
- E. Provide financial reports to the Elders as directed.
- F. Work with the Executive Pastor to submit an annual budget for approval.
- G. Submit a summary written financial report at each regular church business meeting.

Section 4 – Secretary Duties – The Secretary’s duties shall include:

- A. Be responsible for maintaining and preserving the minutes of all business meetings of the church.
- B. Conduct and preserve all official correspondence as is delegated to them.
- C. Assist the Church Chairman to preserve all official correspondence and legal documents of the church.
- D. Maintain permanent church records, such as membership, terms and status of elected officers, baptisms, weddings, etc.
- E. Carry out duties as assigned by the Church Chairman or Church Vice-Chairman.



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## ARTICLE V – ELDERS

Section 1 – Bethel Elder Election – Bethel Elders are elected by church members. Names of prospective Bethel Elder candidates shall be submitted by any member of the church to a Bethel Elder at least two (2) months prior to a business meeting. The Bethel Elders will consider all names, and interview selected candidates. The Bethel Elders will then present selected candidates to the body two (2) weeks prior to said business meeting. The candidates must be approved at the business meeting by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of members present and voting.

Section 2 – Bethel Elder Number and Term – Bethel Elders shall serve a three (3) year term in such a manner that the terms of approximately one-third (1/3) of the Bethel Elders expire each year. There shall be a minimum of four (4) elected Bethel Elders, not more than one-half (1/2) of which are paid staff. The number of Bethel Elders shall be determined by the Bethel Elders. The Senior Pastor remains a Bethel Elder and is not subject to the three (3) year term.

Section 3 – Campus Elders Election – Campus Elders are appointed by the Bethel Elders. Names of prospective Campus Elder candidates shall be submitted by any member of the church to a Campus Elder on the candidate's respective campus. The Campus Elders will consider all names and submit selected candidates to the Bethel Elders. The Bethel Elders will consider all names, and interview selected candidates. Approved candidates will then be presented by the Bethel Elders to the local campus for an affirmation vote by that campus' members. This affirmation vote may take place at an all-church business meeting. The results of the affirmation vote will be considered by the Bethel Elders prior to appointment.

Section 4 – Campus Elder Number and Term – Campus Elders shall serve for terms of three years in such a manner that the terms of approximately one-third (1/3) of each campus' Elders shall expire each year. The number of Campus Elders will be determined by the Bethel Elders based on the needs of the specific campus, not more than one-half (1/2) of which are paid staff.

Section 5 – Elder Board Chairman – Each Elder board shall select from among their members the Chairman of the Elder Board. The Chairman of the Bethel Elder Board will also serve as the Church Vice-Chairman. The Chairmen shall prepare the meeting agendas, direct the meeting discussion, and appoint sub-committees as needed. The Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, and ministry staff cannot serve as Chairman of any Elder board.

Section 6 – Qualifications – Elders must meet the spiritual qualifications for their office contained in the Word of God (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17). Elders shall be male members.

Section 7 – Meetings – In addition to frequent informal meetings for prayer and evaluation of the life of the congregation, the Elders shall conduct official meetings with minutes not less than once a month.

Section 8 – Quorum – If an Elder board consists of two (2) people, both must be present for a quorum. If an Elder board consists of three (3) or four (4) people, a minimum of three (3) must be present for a quorum. If an elder board consists of five (5) or more people, two-thirds (2/3) of the board must be present for a quorum.

Section 9 – Decisions and Voting – All Elder board decisions or actions must be by unanimous vote. Campus Elders may vote to refer a matter to the Bethel Elders. Bethel Elders may vote to refer a matter to the church members. An absent Elder may vote by proxy.

Section 10 – Bethel Elder Duties – The Bethel Elder Board shall fulfill the duties conferred on it by the Constitution and Bylaws including the following:



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- A. Oversee the spiritual life of the congregation and provide pastoral care when needed.
- B. Develop and share with the congregation goals and plans relating to the ongoing life and ministry of the church.
- C. Supervise the church membership process and inform the congregation concerning discipline or removal of existing members.
- D. Review, evaluate, and encourage the ministry of the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor.
- E. Make the final decision for hiring and termination of the Executive Pastor, Campus Pastors, and ~~Senior Directors~~ senior staff. Provide input for the hiring and termination of ministry staff.
- F. Monitor all commissions for ministry in areas where spiritual matters are concerned.
- G. Keep the staff and congregation informed of actions and decisions of the Elders.
- H. Approve policies as submitted by the Executive Pastor.
- I. Appoint Campus Elders.
- J. Delegate duties as required to the Campus Elders in order to maximize the spiritual health of the church.

## ARTICLE VI – ELDER EMERITUS

The title of Elder Emeritus may be conferred upon a former Bethel Elder who is sixty-five (65) years of age or more, has served a minimum of ten (10) years as a Bethel Elder, left the Bethel Elder Board in good standing, and has a desire to continue to serve the body in the role and with the authority of Elder Emeritus. Selection is by unanimous vote of the Bethel Elder Board to a three (3) year term. The term starts when the vote is affirmed by the Bethel Elders. Elder Emeritus status may be renewed at the end of each term following another vote by the Bethel Elders. Elder Emeritus status may be removed at any time by unanimous vote by the Bethel Elders. The requirements of the position include continuing the lifestyle of an elder as specified biblically and fulfilling the responsibilities of the Bethel Membership Covenant. Duties and privileges include receiving on-going confidential communication, praying with Elder authority corporately or privately, representing the church as an Elder in regard to spiritual matters, and other functions agreed on by both the Elder Emeritus and Bethel Elders. An Elder Emeritus does not have Bethel Elder decision-making authority.

## ARTICLE VII – DEACONS AND COMMISSIONS FOR MINISTRY

Section 1 – Deacon Requirements – Every commission for ministry established by the congregation shall have a Deacon serving as Chair. There may be additional Deacons who do not serve as the Chair of a commission. Deacons shall be men and women (Deaconess) of evident Christian commitment in both their personal and public lives, and must meet the qualifications for the office set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:2-6, as well as meet the requirements of the Bethel Membership Covenant.

Section 2 – Bethel Deacon Election and Term – Names of prospective Bethel Deacon candidates shall be submitted to the Executive Pastor one month prior to the annual business meeting by any member of the church. All names will be considered by the Executive Pastor and Bethel Elder Board. The selected candidate for each Bethel Deacon position will then be presented to the members two (2) weeks prior to a business meeting



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where they will be voted on. Approval is by a simple majority of those members present and voting. Bethel Deacons shall be elected to a three (3) year renewable term.

Section 3 – Campus Deacon Election and Term – Names of prospective Campus Deacon candidates shall be submitted to the appropriate Campus Pastor one month prior to the annual business meeting by any member of the respective campus. All names will be considered by the Campus Pastor and Campus Elder Board. The selected candidate for each Campus Deacon position will then be presented to the respective campus members two (2) weeks prior to a business meeting where they will be voted on. Approval is by a simple majority of those members present and voting. Campus Deacons shall be elected to a three (3) year renewable term.

Section 4 – Duties – The Deacon’s duties shall include:

- A. Chair the assigned commission, if applicable.
- B. Develop and implement programs and ministries to carry out assigned tasks.
- C. Meet as required with commission members (if applicable) and appropriate staff to carry out assigned tasks.
- D. If serving as Chair of a commission, appoint members to the commission as needed subject to the approval of the Executive Pastor for Bethel commissions or the appropriate Campus Pastor for campus commissions.

Section 5 – Removal from Office – If a Bethel Deacon or commission member willingly neglects their duties or is guilty of conduct that impairs their service in office, the Executive Pastor, with approval of the Bethel Elders, may remove such a person from their position. If a Campus Deacon or commission member willingly neglects their duties or is guilty of conduct that impairs their service in office, the respective Campus Pastor, with approval of the respective Campus Elders, may remove such a person from their position.

Section 6 – Vacancies – Vacancies in Deacon positions may be filled through appointment by the Executive Pastor and Bethel Elders for Bethel Deacons or by the respective Campus Pastor and the respective Campus Elders for Campus Deacons. This appointment shall expire at the next annual business meeting.

## **ARTICLE VIII – BUSINESS CONDUCT**

Section 1 – Fiscal Year – The fiscal year shall be from August 1st through July 31st.

Section 2 – Regular Business Meetings – The regularly scheduled business meeting of the church will occur no later than two weeks prior to the end of the current fiscal year. As a minimum, the meeting will include election of officers, approval of the following year’s budget, and an oral report on the previous year’s activities and future goals by the Senior Pastor.

Section 3 – Special Business Meetings – Special business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, the Bethel Elders or by written request to the Bethel Elders by fifteen percent (15%) of the eligible voting membership of the church. Notice of such meeting and the purpose for which it is called must be given from the pulpit at least one (1) week prior to said meeting.

Section 4 – Quorum & Physical Presence – Twenty-five percent (25%) of the eligible voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Voting by absentee ballot is allowed when approved by the



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Bethel Elders on a case-by-case basis. Absentee voting counts towards the minimum number of members present and voting for any decision outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 5 – Voting Eligibility – The minimum age shall be eighteen (18) years.

Section 6 – Secret Ballot – The secret ballot shall be used for all voting by Bethel membership.  
~~hiring or termination of a Senior Pastor, for the annual election of officers, at the discretion of the Church Chairman, or at the request of a majority of voting members at any congregational business meeting.~~

Section 7 – Majority Rule – Unless specified elsewhere in the Constitution and Bylaws, a simple majority of members present and voting shall be sufficient to decide any question.

Section 8 – Order – All questions of order shall be guided by customary rules governing deliberative bodies as given in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.