

# Methodist Church of Aztec

## Bylaws

Last Updated 01/13/2024

### ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE

A. Methodist Church of Aztec: This congregation of believers shall be known as Methodist Church of Aztec. The church is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of New Mexico.

B. Purpose: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining Christian worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

### ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff, and volunteers. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith. At the discretion of the Church Leadership Council, all activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this church, or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid) in said facilities, and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the statement of faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the statement of faith, the pastor and Church Leadership Council, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.

#### B. Statement of Faith

1. We believe there is but one living and true God, Creator and Preserver of all things, and in the unity of this Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that the Word, or Son of God, was made man. God and Man were joined together in one person, Jesus Christ.
3. We believe that Christ was truly resurrected, after which He ascended into heaven.
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit
5. We believe in the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation
6. We believe in the Old Testament and the 10 Commandments
7. We believe in Original Sin and that all people are sinners.
8. We believe in Free Will.
9. We believe in Justifying Grace, that because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we are accounted righteous before God.

10. We believe in the forgiveness of sin by God's grace, and that by that grace we can rise again and amend our lives. Forgiveness is available to all who repent and call upon the Lord.
11. We believe in good works, and in doing more than is required.
12. We believe in the sacrament of Baptism for children and adults as a sign of profession and a mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others, and also a sign of regeneration and new birth.
13. We believe in the sacrament of The Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, as a sign of our redemption by Christ's death. We believe that the table is open to all Christian believers.

C. Love. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal graciously, humbly, gently, and patiently with those who oppose us. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21, 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-46; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:17-18)

#### D. Additional Religious Beliefs

1. All persons are made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect.
2. Beginnings and endings of life are set by God.
3. All life is sacred and we are opposed to the practice of abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and call upon all Christian disciples to prayerfully support women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources.
4. We are called by God to care for the poor and marginalized members of our society.
5. We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all.
6. Marriage and Sexuality
  - a. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility or space owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined by anatomy at birth (and not subject to change). Whenever there is a conflict between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Gen. 2:24; Eph 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; I Cor. 7:1-9)
  - b. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined in (a) above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity, or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts are contradictory to God's natural design and purpose for sexual activity. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

- c. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:26-27)
7. We recognize the sacred worth of each individual and strongly denounce all expressions of sexual behavior, such as pornography, polygamy, promiscuity, and trafficking that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others.
8. Protection of Children. We believe that children are a blessing from the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child. (Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:6, 19:14, Mark 10:14)
9. We are all called to exercise self-control and holiness in our personal lives, generosity and kindness in our relations with others, and grace in all matters of life.
10. We believe in the rule of justice and law in society, in individual rights to follow God's call and to lawfully immigrate to new places, and the pursuit of peace both between nations and individuals.
11. We believe that the practice of the Golden Rule, treating others as we would wish to be treated, can effectively guide our social and business relationships. We seek to cultivate the mind of Christ and a heart for others.
12. We believe in the free exercise of religious beliefs without fear of persecution and that governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the larger society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age or political views.
13. We believe in the final triumph of righteousness when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work towards that end as Christ's light and salt of the earth.

### **ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Qualifications for Membership: Members of the Methodist Church of Aztec are those members who were previously members of the Aztec United Methodist Church. Those seeking new membership must:
  1. Through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
  2. Be interviewed by the pastor, pastoral staff and/or church leadership council to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders.
  3. Membership will be granted upon the recommendation of the pastor, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
    - a. By baptism at this or another church.
    - b. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized.

- c. By testimony of faith, having been baptized in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice.

## B. Privileges

1. Only members of at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church may only exercise voting privileges in those areas that are defined and limited by these bylaws. Members may not vote to initiate any church action; rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and the Church Leadership Council.
2. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel of the Church Leadership Council. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical (clergy) matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor and Church Leadership Council shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The church leadership council shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.
3. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor or individual designated by the church leadership council has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor or person designated by the Church Leadership Council, be treated as a trespasser.
4. A member may inspect the prepared annual financial statement of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided he/she shall have made a written request upon the church stating the precise records requesting to be viewed and the reason for the request, and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Requests may be denied if such request is deemed to be frivolous by a majority vote of the Church Leadership Council. Church Leadership Council Meeting minutes and discipline committee meetings, as well as other information involving privacy interests such as, but not limited to, donor records, lists of names and addresses of church members, individual benevolence, individual salaries, health information, background checks, and social security numbers, are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection without a court order. Members may not copy or take digital images or records of any ministry record without authorization from the pastor or chair of the Church Leadership Council. Members agree that information obtained from any inspection of records will be kept in the strictest confidence.

## C. Termination

1. The membership of any individual member shall be terminated without notice if:
  - a. The member in question has not attended a regular worship service, or participated by supporting of the church in the preceding 24 months.

This provision may be waived at the discretion of the pastor and the Church Leadership Council upon the showing of good cause.

- b. The member adopts opinions—verbally, in print, or in any other manner or medium—that are in direct contravention to the church’s statement of faith. Since agreement with the church’s statement of faith is a requirement for membership in this church, the member’s non-conforming statements will be treated by the pastor and the Church Leadership Council as the member’s resignation.
  - c. The member unites in membership with another church.
  - d. The member files a lawsuit in violation of the statement of faith.
  - e. The member dies.
2. For any memberships terminated in accordance with the above provisions, with the exception of memberships terminated under (e) above, the church will send a letter informing the prior member of the termination.
- D. Transfer or Resignation of Membership: Members not under the disciplinary process of Article 3 section E may request a letter of transfer be sent to another church. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.
- E. Discipline of A Member
1. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the local church or the body as a whole, he or she is to go to the offending party and seek to restore the offender. Before going, the confronter should first examine him or herself and go with a spirit of humility and the goal of restoration.
  2. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter by going again to the offending party. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
  3. If the matter is still unresolved after taking the steps outlined in section E.1 and E.2 above, the two members aware of the offense shall, in keeping with Matthew 18, bring the issue before the pastor and/or the Church Leadership Council, who are representatives of the church body.
  4. If the pastor and Church Leadership Council agree with the member that the offending conduct is of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of the member or the body as a whole, they shall attempt to meet with the offending brother or sister. If reconciliation is not reached, the pastor and Church Leadership Council, as representatives of the church body, shall, upon a majority vote of those present at a meeting of the Church Leadership Council, terminate the offending individual’s membership without further notice to him or her. Unless the matter involves an issue of safety or security to the members of the church at large, the specifics of the matter shall not be addressed in a public forum or with the general church membership.
  5. The pastor and Church Leadership Council shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline. If the pastor or a church council member is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he or she shall not be permitted to vote on his or her own membership termination.

6. For any memberships terminated in accordance with this provision, the pastor will cause a letter to be written informing the prior member of the termination.
  7. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.
- F. **Affiliated Co-Laborer:** Those desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this church on a temporary basis but who maintain membership in a like body of believers outside this locality may be granted affiliated co-laborer status with this church. The affiliated co-laborer may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and Church Leadership Council and may attend member fellowship events. This affiliation does not, however, grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s) so affiliated. Affiliated co-laborers shall not be entitled to hold any office, vote in, or have any say in any church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. A person wishing to become an affiliated co-laborer with this church must make a request to the pastor or his designee who will determine if affiliated co-laborer status should be granted to the individual. If the pastor or his designee so determines, the person may be granted co-laborer status upon a majority vote of the Church Leadership Council.

#### **ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS**

- A. **Designation of Corporate Officers:** The Lay Leader shall serve as president of the corporation; the chair of the Trustees Committee shall serve as vice president of the corporation; the church secretary shall serve as secretary of the corporation; and the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.
- B. **Church Officers:** The Lay Leader shall serve as the Chair of the Church Leadership Council. All other Ministry Area chairs shall be represented on the Church Leadership Council. The church shall have at least five Church Leadership Council members.
- C. **Eligibility For Church Officers:**
1. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the statement of faith set forth in Article 2. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm in writing their agreement with the statement of faith.
  2. All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the Pastor and Church Leadership Council to commence or continue in their offices.
  3. Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position.
- D. **Election of Church Officers:** The Church Leadership Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee, which shall make recommendations of candidates to fill the positions of the Church Offices. The annual election of officers, other than the senior and other pastors, by the church membership shall occur during the month of October at the annual church business meeting. Officers of the church must be elected by a majority of the eligible

membership present at a regular or special church business meeting. The pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to the approval of the Church Leadership Council. Members may submit to the pastor and the Church Leadership Council nominations for corporate officers.

E. Terms of Service for Officers

1. The relationship between the senior pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special church business meeting by following the procedures outlined in Article 6, provided notice of the meeting is given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to the meeting. A majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to remove the pastor from office. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership from the church.
2. Any other Church Leadership Council member may be removed from office before his term expires for any reason stated or unstated upon motion by any Church Leadership Council member and an affirmative majority vote of the other Church Leadership Council members at a duly called meeting of the Church Leadership Council. No congregational vote is necessary for Church Leadership Council member removal. This process is intended to protect the personal or private information of any Church Leadership Council member being removed from office.
3. The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor and other staff members, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-elected or re-appointed.
4. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the Church Leadership Council, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church business meeting by a majority vote of eligible members present.
5. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless removed for disciplinary reasons.

F. Calling a Pastor: Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the statement of faith and bylaw provisions of the church and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor as described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:

1. The Church Leadership Council shall select a Pastor Seeking Committee to consist of at least five other members elected by a majority vote or the Church Leadership Council. The Pastor Seeking Committee shall interview potential candidates and will only consider those who completely subscribe to the statement of faith and who have read these bylaws.

2. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include, at a minimum, the following: a background check, a credit check, a reference check, and the filling out of a detailed application that explains the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry as well as the candidate's positions on issues of doctrinal significance.
3. Upon a majority vote of the Pastor Seeking Committee, the Pastor Seeking Committee will formally announce the candidate to the church, after which the candidate must preach at least one regularly scheduled church service and be available for a church-wide question/answer time prior to being voted upon by the church membership.
4. Notice from the pulpit must be given 2 consecutive Sundays prior to a formal candidate's preaching service(s), and 2 consecutive Sundays prior to the church membership vote.
5. The candidate must be elected as pastor by a majority vote of members present and qualified to vote. This vote shall be taken by written, secret ballot at a meeting at which the candidate is not present. The Pastor Seeking Committee will only present for consideration to the membership one candidate at a time, and an up or down vote must be cast prior to consideration of other potential candidates.

## **ARTICLE 5**

### **DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

#### **A. The Pastor**

1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He or she shall administer the ordinances of the church, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of Scripture, the pastor has the final authority.
2. The pastor and Church Leadership Council, on behalf of the church, shall establish committees and appoint the members of the various committees at the annual church business meeting or, in the case of a vacancy or newly created committee, at any duly called special meeting. The Nominating Committee Chair shall inform all newly elected officers of the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He or she shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to the position of pastor. He or she shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he or she exercises the ministry God has given him.
3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for any other purposes, are under the control of the pastor, who, with the advice and counsel of the Church Leadership Council, shall be able to determine the



appropriateness of all property use, as well as persons permitted to use the church property.

4. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his absence, he or she, or the chair of the Church Leadership Council in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform his duties, or the head of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, shall be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith.
5. The pastor and the Church Leadership Council shall be responsible to establish mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs. There will be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to abuse of minors, the elderly, or other vulnerable adults, and any reasonable suspicions of abuse alleged to be perpetrated by staff, volunteers, members or non-members will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement or child abuse prevention authorities. The pastor or his designee will be responsible to provide yearly abuse prevention training for all staff and volunteers.

B. The Church Leadership Council

1. The Church Leadership Council shall be composed of all of the Committee Chairs in the Church. The Church Lay Leader shall be the Chair of the Church Leadership Council. There shall be at least 5 members.
2. The Church Leadership Council shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the church. The Church Leadership Council is responsible for making preparations to observe church ordinances and shall consider applications for church membership and affiliated co-laborers. The Church Leadership Council shall consider benevolence needs, disburse the benevolence fund in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The Church Leadership Council shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable, or the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the Church Leadership Council may appoint a Pastor Seeking Committee. Following the annual church business meeting, the Church Leadership Council shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a secretary for the Church Leadership Council.
3. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the Church Leadership Council under these bylaws, the Church Leadership Council has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called business meeting:
  - a. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

- b. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.
  4. All powers of the Church Leadership Council shall be compatible with the laws of the State of New Mexico.
  5. The Church Leadership Council shall, in conjunction with the pastor, conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a church financial investment policy (if applicable).
  6. Each Church Leadership Council member shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the Church Leadership Council that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the bylaws.
- C. Secretary: The church secretary, along with any assistant or co-officer or church clerk, shall:
  1. Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
  2. Maintain and file minutes of all church business and Church Leadership Council meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these bylaws.
  3. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
  4. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the chair of the Church Leadership Council.
  5. Serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a member in good standing.
- D. Treasurer: The Church Treasurer along with the Chair of Finance, shall:
  1. Be responsible for appointing and training persons assigned to the task of ensuring that all monies received as church offerings be counted and recorded into a

- permanent record. The counting and recording is to be done under dual control by two appointed persons.
2. Monies shall be collected from the offering plates immediately following each church service by two assigned church officials. The offering is to be counted the following Monday (or in the event of a Monday holiday), Tuesday morning, by two officially appointed persons for verification and recording of the funds.
  3. Convey in a timely manner all funds received to the person designated by the church council for verification and deposit in the bank, including monies received from outside sources.
  4. Maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue an official receipt to each contributor quarterly and at the end of the fiscal year.
  5. Keep in the church office an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds; make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by the pastor and the Church Leadership Council, and for annual, quarterly or otherwise special or regular meetings.
  6. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.
- E. Trustees: The Church Leadership Council must establish a Board of Trustees to serve under its authority and oversee all real estate needs including legal issues, construction, repairs, and general upkeep. All bids must be submitted in writing. They will advise the Church Leadership Council regarding the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real and personal property on behalf of the church. They will work with the Finance Committee and the Church Leadership Council regarding determination to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges. The Trustees will elect their own chairperson and secretary.
- F. Staff Parish Relations: The Church Leadership Council must establish the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) to serve under its authority and to oversee all personnel issues. The SPRC will work with the Nominating Committee and the Pastor Seeking Committee to fill all vacant staff positions, to fill the pulpit on a temporary and/or permanent basis, and will conduct annual performance and compensation reviews of all staff positions.
- G. Duties Of All Officers

1. All officers (committee chairs) shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
  2. Any officer who neglects his or her duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from office, at the discretion of the pastor, and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the un-expired term.
- H. Actions of Committees: Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Their primary function is to research and recommend. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the pastor and Church Leadership Council, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. Each committee shall have a secretary who keeps and timely submit minutes of each meeting to the pastor and church secretary to be filed with church records. If deemed appropriate by the pastor and Church Leadership Council, the committee secretary, in conjunction with the chair, will submit an annual report to the church of the decisions and plans of the committee.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **CHARGE/CHURCH CONFERENCE AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- A. Charge/Church Conference
1. The Charge/Church Conference for the election of officers and the transaction of other business shall be held annually. A quorum shall consist of the eligible members present. Public notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.
  2. The Presiding Lay Leader shall preside over the Charge/Church Conference as moderator. In the event of his or her absence, the Presiding Lay Leader will appoint a designee.
  3. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling.
  4. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, he may, in his sole discretion, revoke the

disruptive person's right to remain on the premises and treat the person as a trespasser.

5. Church Leadership Council meetings, including Charge/Church Conferences and special meetings, may be held by electronic video means for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person church business meetings. A quorum shall be all eligible voting members attending the virtual meeting, and voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the Church Leadership Council. Notice of business meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the Church Leadership Council to be most likely to reach church members at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Such notice satisfies "notice from the pulpit" when that method of notice is otherwise required by these bylaws. Attendance at the meeting without protest shall be deemed a waiver of notice.
6. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

B. Church Special Business Meetings: The pastor or the Church Leadership Council may call a special church business meeting by giving notice from the pulpit to the church of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or for the discipline or removal of the pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Article 4 Section E.

C. Voting: Voting at any church meeting is limited to eligible members in good standing with the church who are physically present at the meeting; an exception to this in-person vote requirement exists if the church is meeting electronically as permitted by Article 6, Section A.5 of these bylaws. Absentee voting is not permitted, and any member who is undergoing church discipline at the time of a vote is not permitted to vote. A majority vote of those attending the meeting, whether in person or electronically, will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of amendments and motions, whether by the Church Leadership Council voting at a Church Leadership Council meeting or by the members voting in a church business meeting.

D. Meetings of the Church Leadership Council

1. Regular Meetings. The Church Leadership Council may meet at such time and place as the Church Leadership Council determines.
2. Special Meetings. The pastor or the lay leader may call a special meeting of the Church Leadership Council at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the Church Leadership Council may be held.
3. Notice of Meetings

- a. Requirement of Notice: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the Church Leadership Council unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the Church Leadership Council.
  - b. Method of Notice: Notice shall be sent to each Church Leadership Council member for special meetings by means of the secretary's chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, or email at each Church Leadership Council member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the Church Leadership Council member to the secretary for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the lay leader or the pastor. In the event the pastor or lay leader refuses to give notice, any Church Leadership Council member may give notice of any meeting. The secretary is responsible for verifying that notice is duly provided.
  - c. Content of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
4. Quorum: A quorum for meetings or the church membership shall consist of qualified members present and voting at any duly announced meeting. A quorum for meetings of the Church Leadership Council shall consist of a majority of the members. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date properly noticed to all church council members for not more than ten days thereafter, at that later noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those church council members then present.
5. Roles: At every meeting of the Church Leadership Council, the lay leader, or in his absence, the vice-chair, shall act as chairman and shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner as determined by the chairman. If neither is present, a member will be chosen by the council to act as chair. The secretary of the Church Leadership Council shall act as secretary of all meetings and shall take accurate minutes of Church Leadership Council meetings and promptly deliver such minutes to the church secretary. In the absence of the Church Leadership Council secretary, the chairman may appoint another person to act as Church Leadership Council secretary of the meeting.
6. Participation in Meetings: Any one or more Church Leadership Council members may participate in meetings of the Church Leadership Council by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for the purposes of determining if a quorum is present.

**ARTICLE 7**  
**EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES**

- A. Purpose: The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program (either a Sunday School and/or a weekday educational program) for the purposes of winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.
  
- B. Church Participation: All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor and Church Leadership Council, on behalf of the church, may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interests of the church.
  
- C. Agreement with Statement of Faith: All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or who expresses disagreement with the statement of faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of the faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

**ARTICLE 8**  
**DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

The church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Treasurer and the Finance Committee. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1.

**ARTICLE 9**  
**CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions:

1. Interested Person: Any director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Church Leadership Council-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
2. Financial interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement.
  - b. A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement; or
  - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
  - d. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Church Leadership Council decides that a conflict of interest exists.
3. Compensation: Direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
4. Church Leadership Council: The Church Leadership Council of directors of the church. The pastor and Church Leadership Council will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

B. Procedures:

1. Duty to Disclose: In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Church Leadership Council and, if applicable, members of committees with governing Church Leadership Council-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.



2. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the Church Leadership Council or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Church Leadership Council or committee members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
  - a. The lay leader shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - b. After exercising due diligence, the Church Leadership Council or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - c. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Church Leadership Council shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
4. Violations of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy
  - a. If the Church Leadership Council has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
  - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Church Leadership Council determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
5. Records of Proceedings
  - a. The minutes of the church council shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the church council or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
  - b. The minutes of the church council also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or

arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

6. Compensation
  - a. A voting member of the Church Leadership Council or any committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
  - b. A voting member of the Church Leadership Council or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, are required to provide information to any committee regarding compensation.
7. Annual Statements: Each director, officer, and member of a committee with governing church council-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
8. Periodic Reviews: To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:
  - a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
  - b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.
9. Use of Outside Experts: When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for above, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Church Leadership Council of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **BINDING CHRISTIAN ARBITRATION**

- A. Submission To Arbitration: Members of the church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be

resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

- B. Arbitration Procedures: The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Church Leadership Council. If the church council has not adopted procedures, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS**

- A. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.
- B. Political involvement: No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- C. Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of the church, no part of the organization's earnings or assets may inure to the benefit of any of its members; and the Church Leadership Council shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes, as the church council shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.
- D. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, biological sex, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. This policy

statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws or regulations.

- E. Limitation of Activities: Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article I.

## **ARTICLE 12 AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at any regular church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen days before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving same.

If anything is not addressed in these bylaws, refer to Global Methodist Church Book of Doctrine and Discipline.

These initial bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the council members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church council in which a quorum was present.

Date

Church Secretary