

BYLAWS

As Approved by the Elder Board on March 20, 2021

Preamble: The purpose of these By-laws is to set forth the rules by which this Church as a corporation is managed, as well as the structure by which this Church fulfills its purposes as a Christian community confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and operating under the authority of the Scriptures.

1. ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

1.1. Procedure

- 1.1.1. Those desiring membership in this church shall meet the qualifications for membership (as described in the Constitution, Article 4, Section 5), be a minimum of 14 years of age, and complete an application process.
- 1.1.2. All applicants shall have the church's Statements of Belief and the responsibilities of membership explained to them.
- 1.1.3. All applicants shall have 'Article V: Discipline' of these Bylaws explained to them.
- 1.1.4. When the application is reviewed and approved by the Senior Pastor, the applicant will be officially received into the membership of the church so long as the total number of members added over the preceding twelve months is less than 20% of the average membership during that time frame. Additional member applications must be approved by the Board of Elders before the member is received into the membership of the church.

1.2. Member Responsibilities

- 1.2.1 Be faithful to and supportive of the worship services of the church.
- 1.2.2 Commit time, talent and financial resources toward the church's objectives.
- 1.2.3 Participate in congregational decisions (a member must be 18 years of age or older to vote).
- 1.2.4 Live in accordance with God's Word and submit to the authority of the elders in matters pertaining to the church including, if necessary, discipline for conduct or attitudes unbecoming a Christian testimony.

1.3. Membership Status

- 1.3.1. Each year the Board of Elders shall review the membership roll to identify those names on the membership roll that are not fulfilling the responsibilities of a member.

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2 1.3.2. Special care shall be given in this roll revision, with attention given to special
3 needs and the reclaiming of the inactive member.
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- 5 1.3.3. When the responsibilities of a member have not been fulfilled for one full year
6 and when no intention to resume these responsibilities is evident, the Board of
7 Elders shall transfer the person's name from the membership roll to an “inactive
8 list”.
9
- 10 1.3.4. A member whose inactivity is due to reasons such as sickness, military service,
11 college attendance away from home or mission work shall not be considered
12 "inactive." However, inactivity due to distance for reasons not related to the
13 above shall not be a basis for remaining "active".
14
- 15 1.3.5. Any name on the “inactive” list may be returned to the membership roll if
16 responsibilities of a member are resumed. The Board of Elders are the final
17 arbiters of membership.
18
- 19 1.3.6. Only those named on the membership roll are entitled to vote at congregational
20 business meetings.
21

22 2. ARTICLE II. BOARD OF ELDERS

23 **Purpose**

24 The purpose of the Board of Elders is to guide the church so that its life and ministry is pleasing
25 to the Lord Jesus Christ and so that it fulfills its mission in the world today (I Peter 5:1-4).
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27

28 2.1. Definitions

29 2.1.1. Elder

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31
32 2.1.1.1. Elders are the spiritual authority in this local church, subject to the Lord
33 Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd of the sheep.
34

35 2.1.1.2. Qualifications

36
37 2.1.1.2.1. Be members of the church.

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39 2.1.1.2.2. Meet the biblical qualifications of an elder.

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41 2.1.1.2.3. Be in agreement with the Statements of Belief in the Constitution.

42
43 2.1.1.2.4. Supportive of the Teaching Positions when teaching members and
44 attenders of the church.

45
46 2.1.1.2.5. Be faithful in attendance at a Worship Service.

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2 2.1.1.2.6. Be willing to work in harmony with church goals as developed by the
3 staff and elders.
4

5 2.1.1.2.7. Possess the requisite training, be selected and recommended by the
6 Elders and approved by the members of the church at a business
7 meeting.
8

9 2.1.1.3. Staff elders are those who serve on the paid staff and who also serve on the
10 Board of Elders.
11

12 2.1.1.4. Lay elders are those elders who are selected according to these bylaws to
13 serve on the Board of Elders, but who are not staff elders.
14

15 2.1.1.5. Members who are elders by virtue of service to missions agencies or other
16 Christian ministries or who are retired from active professional ministry
17 may be recognized as elders by the church through action by the Board of
18 Elders but these individuals do not hold membership on the Board of Elders
19 solely on the basis of such recognition.
20

21 2.1.1.6. Members desiring to be considered elders due to licensure or ordination to
22 the Christian Ministry through this church for the purpose of service to other
23 Christian agencies or ministries may petition the Board of Elders and follow
24 the board's prescribed procedures.
25

26 **2.2. Composition of the Board of Elders**

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28 2.2.1. The Board of Elders constitutes the Board of Directors of Grace Community
29 Church of Seal Beach.
30

31 2.2.2. The Board of Elders is composed of those elders described in section 2.1.1.3 and
32 2.1.1.4 above.
33

34 2.2.3. There shall be a minimum of seven elders on the Board of Elders. Additional
35 elders may be added as required to fulfill the pastoral needs of the church.
36

37 2.2.4. No more than two members of a family may serve on the Board of Elders.
38

39 2.2.5. A family member is defined as parents/children, brothers, uncles, first cousins, or
40 in-laws of their spouses.
41

42 2.2.6. No more than three staff elders shall be voting members of the Board of Elders.
43

44 2.2.7. No staff elder may serve with a family member.
45

46 2.2.8. Staff elders are not compensated for services rendered as members of the Board

1 of Elders.

- 2
3 2.2.9. The Board of Elders may choose to invite other staff to meetings to participate as
4 non-voting members.

5
6 **2.3. Selection**

- 7
8 2.3.1. Names of potential elders may be initially proposed to the Board of Elders by any
9 member of the church.

- 10
11 2.3.2. The Board of Elders shall make a preliminary evaluation of a recommended
12 person in light of biblical qualifications and service to the church.

13
14 2.3.2.1. Candidates shall usually have been members of the church for at least
15 two years.

16
17 2.3.2.2. Candidates shall have had prescribed training and service in
18 leadership.

19
20 2.3.2.3. Candidates will submit responses to a Board-provided questionnaire
21 and provide references.

- 22
23 2.3.3. The Board of Elders shall interview and approve each candidate.

- 24
25 2.3.4. The name of an approved candidate shall be submitted to the congregation for
26 final vote according to Section 6.2 of these Bylaws.

27
28 **2.4. Term of Service**

- 29
30 2.4.1. Other than staff elders, elders shall serve three-year terms. Elders may serve up to
31 two consecutive three-year terms and may be eligible for re-election after a one-
32 year break from service. This shall be an incentive to develop new leadership and
33 shall provide a leave for a proven leader.

- 34
35 2.4.2. If necessary to achieve a smooth schedule of rotation on and off the Board of
36 Elders or to achieve the desired number of elders on the Board, the Board may at
37 its discretion:

38
39 2.4.2.1. Submit a name to the congregation for a one-year term or a two-year
40 term; and/or

41
42 2.4.2.2. Extend an elder's expiring term by one year, provided that the extension
43 is approved by the congregation and the elder will have served no more
44 than six consecutive years on the Board of Elders.

- 45
46 2.4.3. An elder absent for three consecutive meetings of the Board of Elders shall be

1 considered to have resigned the position, subject to a decision by the Board of
2 Elders. The purpose of the provision is not for discipline but for continuity of
3 participation in this office.
4

5 2.4.4. Any elder who no longer fulfills the biblical qualifications of an elder shall be
6 removed by action of the Board of Elders or by the members of the church at a
7 properly called business meeting.
8

9 2.4.5. An elder may be removed by a decision of the Board of Elders for any reason.
10

11 2.4.6. An elder's request for a leave of absence may be considered and approved by the
12 Board of Elders.
13

14 2.5. Responsibilities

15
16 2.5.1. The Board of Elders shall have oversight of and responsibility for the affairs of
17 the church.
18

19 2.5.2. The Board of Elders may amend or overrule any action of a church ministry team
20 or direct it to reconsider such action.
21

22 2.5.3. The Board of Elders shall specifically oversee matters of church doctrine, moral
23 issues, discipline, worship, shepherding care, prayer life, goal development,
24 counseling ministries, and the membership roll.
25

26 2.5.4. Elders shall lovingly provide leadership and care, as examples and shepherds, for
27 the newcomers and members of the congregation.
28

29 2.5.5. Elders shall develop new leaders for the church through personal example,
30 discipleship and training.
31

32 2.5.6. The Board of Elders shall oversee and approve the selection of and
33 commissioning of missionaries and the commissioning, licensure and ordination
34 of ministers and chaplains.
35

36 2.5.7. The Board of Elders shall oversee and approve the selection of Compassion
37 Ministry Partners.
38

39 2.5.8. The Board of Elders shall hire and dismiss all Pastors and Director-level staff (or
40 delegate these powers) and approve ministry staff job descriptions, except that the
41 selection of a Senior Pastor also requires approval by the congregation at a
42 Business Meeting as defined in section 6.2.
43

44 2.5.9. The Board of Elders shall receive from the Finance Ministry Team and approve
45 an annual budget, to be submitted to the congregation's Annual Meeting. Board
46 members who are paid employees of the church shall abstain from voting on

1 issues pertaining to the pay and benefits of church employees.

2
3 2.5.10. The Senior Pastor or his designee can approve up to \$5,000 of expenditures for
4 unbudgeted items. The Finance Ministry Team can approve expenditures for
5 unbudgeted items up to \$20,000. The Board of Elders shall approve expenditures
6 in excess of \$20,000 upon recommendation from the Finance Ministry Team for
7 unbudgeted items. Money held in ministry funds are considered unbudgeted and
8 subject to the above approval process.

9
10 2.5.11. As role models, elders shall maintain consistent attendance patterns in Sunday
11 worship services, in a life group or ministry team, and at Threefold Communion
12 Services. They shall be faithful financial supporters of the church. Elders should
13 lead the way in showing a warm welcome to visitors at worship services and to
14 people considering this church for a church home.

15
16 2.5.12. Should the church be without the services of a Senior Pastor, all functions of the
17 Senior Pastor shall revert to the Board of Elders collectively, or to its designee.

18 19 **2.6. Meetings**

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21 2.6.1. The Board of Elders shall meet regularly (usually monthly) for prayer, Bible
22 study, and conducting the pastoral affairs of the church.

23
24 2.6.2. An annual calendar of meetings shall be provided to the Board of Elders by the
25 chairman at the beginning of each calendar year to allow for advanced planning
26 and maximum participation in the meetings.

27
28 2.6.3. A meeting of the Board of Elders can be called by the chairman, vice-chairman or
29 50% of the members of the Board of Elders.

30
31 2.6.4. A quorum of over fifty percent is necessary for making official decisions. An
32 elder taking a leave of absence shall not be counted in determining the total
33 number of elders.

34
35 2.6.5. An email vote, called by the chairman and approved by a minimum of two-thirds
36 of the Board of Elders, may be substituted for a vote that takes place during a
37 meeting of the Board of Elders. An email vote must be approved before the next
38 meeting of the Board of Elders, or it will be considered void. The results of an
39 email vote will be recorded in the next meeting's minutes.

40
41 2.6.6. The Board of Elders shall strive to be unanimous in its decisions. In instances
42 when a unanimous decision cannot be reached, a two-thirds vote of elders present
43 is necessary for passage. There is no provision for absentee voting or voting by
44 proxy.

45
46 2.6.7. An elder shall not be present during any deliberations or voting in which that

1 elder has a personal conflict of interest, such as (but not limited to) a financial
2 stake in a decision or the hiring or firing of staff that are family members.

3
4 2.6.8. The Board of Elders shall appoint the following positions:

5
6 2.6.8.1. A chairman, who shall conduct business aspects of the meetings using
7 Robert's Rules of Order as a guide.

8
9 2.6.8.2. A vice-chairman, who shall conduct business in the absence of the
10 chairman, and carry out any assignments given by the chairman.

11
12 2.6.8.3. A secretary, responsible for recording minutes of meetings.

13
14 2.6.9. Minutes of all meetings shall be maintained and made available to members of the
15 church during normal business hours.

16
17 **2.7. Board of Directors of the Corporation**

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19 2.7.1. The Board of Elders shall serve as Directors of the Corporation and maintain all
20 documents and reports as required by law.

21
22 2.7.2. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall also serve as the Chairman of the
23 Board of Directors of the Corporation.

24
25 2.7.3. The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall also serve as the Secretary of the Board
26 of Directors of the Corporation.

27
28 2.7.4. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Corporation or the Secretary of the
29 Corporation may call a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation by
30 notifying all Directors of the corporation of the time and place of the meeting not
31 less than forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

32
33 2.7.5. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall annually elect the following
34 officers of the Corporation (no more than one of which may be a staff member,
35 nor shall the office of President and office of Secretary be held by the same
36 person):

37
38 2.7.5.1. President of the Corporation, who also serves as Moderator of the
39 Congregation

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41 2.7.5.2. Vice-President of the Corporation, who also serves as Vice-Moderator of the
42 Congregation

43
44 2.7.5.3. Secretary of the Corporation, who shall keep the official seal of the
45 Corporation, certify documents and records on behalf of the Corporation,
46 take and maintain minutes of all meetings of the Membership, and of the

1 Board of Directors, keep other necessary records. The Secretary of the
2 Corporation may, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the
3 Corporation, appoint an assistant to take minutes of the meetings.
4

5 2.7.5.4. Treasurer of the Corporation, who shall be the chief financial officer.
6

7 2.7.6. The Board of Directors shall authorize all purchases, sales, leases, easements, and
8 similar transactions involving real estate and real property of the Corporation.
9

10 3. ARTICLE III. DEACONS 11

12 3.1.1. Deacon 13

14 3.1.1.1. Deacons are ministers of the church responsible for serving in specified
15 leadership tasks and on specified committees designated as deacon-level
16 roles. Deacons serve under the direction of the Board of Elders.
17

18 3.1.1.2. Deacon positions shall include, but not be limited to, the positions of:
19

20 3.1.1.2.1. Voting members of the Missions Commission
21

22 3.1.1.2.2. Members of the Finance Ministry Team
23

24 3.1.1.2.3. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of ministry teams
25

26 3.1.1.2.4. Stephen Ministers
27

28 3.1.1.3. Qualifications 29

30 3.1.1.3.1. Be members of the church.
31

32 3.1.1.3.2. Meet the biblical qualifications of a deacon.
33

34 3.1.1.3.3. Be in agreement with the Statements of Belief in the Constitution.
35

36 3.1.1.3.4. Supportive of the Teaching Positions when teaching members and
37 attenders of the church.
38

39 3.1.1.3.5. Be faithful in attendance at Sunday Worship Services.
40

41 3.1.1.3.6. Be willing to work in harmony with church goals as developed by the
42 staff and elders.
43

44 3.1.1.3.7. Possess the requisite training, be selected and recommended by the
45 Board of Elders to serve in specific deacon-level roles.
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2 3.2. Names of prospective deacons shall be submitted to and approved by the Board of
3 Elders.

4
5 3.3. Deacon appointments are for up to one year.
6

7 3.4. Deacon appointments may be renewed indefinitely provided that the biblical
8 qualifications are maintained by the officeholder (as evaluated by the Board of Elders)
9 and that the deacon maintains the responsibility of the deacon position.
10

11 3.5. A deacon who does not fulfill the biblical qualifications and church requirements for
12 the office shall be removed by the Board of Elders after careful, biblical consideration.
13 The termination shall be immediate.
14

15 4. **ARTICLE IV. MINISTRY TEAMS**

16 4.1. **Listing of Ministry Teams**

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18
19 4.1.1. The Board of Elders will establish ministry teams at its discretion to fulfill the
20 mission of the church. These ministry teams may include the following:
21

22 4.1.1.1. Finance Ministry Team

23 4.1.1.2. Facilities Ministry Team

24 4.1.1.3. Women's Ministry

25 4.1.1.4. Men's Ministry

26 4.1.1.5. Life Groups

27 4.1.1.6. Missions Commission

28 4.1.1.7. Compassion Ministry Team

29 4.1.1.8. Stephen Ministry

30 4.1.1.9. Worship Ministry

31 4.1.1.10. Children's Ministry

32 4.1.1.11. Youth Ministry

33 4.1.1.12. Security Ministry Team

34 4.1.1.13. Hospitality Ministry Team
35

36 4.2. All Ministry Teams shall operate under a Board of Elders-approved Philosophy of
37 Ministry that includes, at a minimum, a description of the mission, values, strategy and
38 measures of the ministry.
39

40 4.3. All Ministry Teams are authorized to utilize their Elder and Church Member-approved
41 budgets as they deem proper based on a method of their own choice, either by
42 authorizing the chair to make expenditures or through a vote of the members of the
43 Ministry Team. The limits of section 2.5.10 apply to the Finance Ministry Team. In
44 cases of financial concern for the church, the Board of Elders may notify ministries of
45 restrictions to ministry expenses.
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2 **5. ARTICLE V. DISCIPLINE**

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4 **5.1. Authority**

5
6 5.1.1. The authority for a church to discipline its own is explicitly given by Jesus Christ
7 and the practice is demanded by the Apostle Paul. A Scriptural basis for church
8 discipline is to be found in Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17; I Cor. 5; I Cor.
9 6:9-11; I Thess. 5:12-15; I Tim. 5:17-25; and Titus 3:10-11.

10
11 5.1.2. Disciplinary authority is vested with the Board of Elders.

12
13 **5.2. Discipline of Leadership**

14
15 5.2.1. A charge against a church leader (staff, elder, or deacon) must be supportable by
16 biblical grounds and biblical procedure. Rumor shall never be a basis for
17 discipline.

18
19 5.2.2. After the Board of Elders or an independent investigation team appointed by the
20 Board of Elders has carefully investigated all the charges and defenses, they shall
21 make a final decision on reconciliation, discipline or whether or not to remove the
22 leader.

23
24 5.2.3. If removal is deemed appropriate, the leader shall be removed from office and a
25 public announcement of the removal made as the Board of Elders deems wise.

26
27 **5.3. Discipline of Membership**

28
29 **5.3.1. Matters of Personal Contention**

30
31 5.3.1.1. It is the responsibility of the offended party to strive for reconciliation on a
32 personal basis, then by means of one or two neutral mediators before the
33 dispute is brought to the attention of the church.

34
35 5.3.1.2. The church, through the Board of Elders, shall strive for reconciliation. If
36 there is no reconciliation and the grievance of the plaintiff is deemed valid,
37 the offending party shall be removed from the membership and denied the
38 fellowship of the church.

39
40 **5.3.2. Matters of Morality**

41
42 5.3.2.1. Issues of moral concern which constitute grounds for discipline include, but
43 are not limited to, fornication, adultery, dishonest dealings, theft, lying,
44 covetousness, slander, drunkenness, homosexual acts, dealing in or using
45 illicit drugs, profaning the Lord's name, aiding or procuring an abortion, and
46 violating the bond of marriage.

1
2 5.3.2.2. In all such cases the Board of Elders shall, with great care, evaluate the
3 charges and the presence or absence of genuine repentance. Every effort
4 shall be given to listen to the viewpoint of the person involved and to work
5 with that person for repentance and healing.
6

7 5.3.2.3. If the wrongful conduct is validated and a lack of repentance evident, the
8 Board of Elders shall notify the party of an intent to exercise discipline. The
9 Board of Elders shall give notice to the congregation of the discipline as it
10 deems appropriate.
11

12 5.3.3. **Contention within the Church**

13
14 5.3.3.1. Issues of contention which constitute grounds for discipline include, but are
15 not limited to, causing division through teaching contrary to the Statements
16 of Belief, gossip, criticism which is not constructive and not conducted in
17 love, determined unwillingness to work within the church's structure and
18 goals, and lack of respect for church leadership.
19

20 5.3.3.2. The Board of Elders shall investigate charges against the accused with great
21 care. If the charges are substantiated, the party shall be given every effort to
22 respond positively and to be restored to harmony.
23

24 5.3.3.3. Should there be no sign of change of heart or practice after two attempts at
25 reconciliation are made; the membership of the offending party shall be
26 revoked.
27

28 5.4. **Discipline of Non-members**

29
30 5.4.1. A non-member of the church, having not entered into a covenant relationship with
31 the church, cannot be made subject to formal church discipline.
32

33 5.4.2. The Board of Elders may advise a non-member regarding beliefs and conduct.
34

35 5.4.3. The Board of Elders may request that a non-member cease attending the church
36 and sever all contacts with the church.
37

38 5.4.4. Inactive members remain subject to church discipline.
39

40 6. **ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS**

41 42 6.1. **Church Services**

43
44 6.1.1. The Staff shall develop a weekly schedule for the Worship Services and Life
45 Groups.
46

- 1 6.1.2. The Worship Services shall be celebrations of worship and praise and include
2 singing, praying, giving, teaching and response.
3
- 4 6.1.3. Singing, sharing, teaching and prayer are to be encouraged in Life Groups. Life
5 Groups should not, however, be structured or viewed as a substitute for the
6 Worship Services.
7
- 8 6.1.4. A worker in the church shall be encouraged to be faithful to the Worship Services
9 and shall not be given a load of responsibilities on Sunday mornings which
10 routinely prevents attendance at Worship.
11
- 12 6.1.5. Threefold Communion Services shall be held at least twice a year, with priority
13 going to Easter and Thanksgiving seasons. Threefold Communion Services shall
14 be regarded as high-priority gatherings and no church activity shall displace or
15 conflict with a Threefold Communion Service.
16

17 6.2. **Business Meetings**

- 18
- 19 6.2.1. The Board of Elders shall call an annual congregational business meeting for the
20 purposes of:
21
- 22 a. Election of nominees to the Board of Elders.
 - 23 b. Vote on the proposed annual budget.
 - 24 c. Announcement of church goals and projects, and,
 - 25
 - 26 d. Action on other matters proposed by the Board of Elders.
27
- 28
- 29
- 30 6.2.2. Other business meetings of the congregation may be called by the Board of Elders
31 or by written request to the Board of Elders by ten percent of the voting
32 membership.
33
- 34 6.2.3. The date, time, place and purpose of all business meetings shall be published in
35 the church bulletin for the two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.
36
- 37 6.2.4. Only members of the church (pursuant to Article I of these Bylaws) 18 years of
38 age or older may vote at business meetings.
39
- 40 6.2.5. A quorum shall consist of 10 percent of the members 18 years of age or older.
41
- 42 6.2.6. A two-thirds approval by those who vote is necessary for the adoption of any
43 business item.
44
- 45 6.2.7. There is no provision for voting by proxy or absentee ballot.
46

6.3. Other Meetings

6.3.1. During the week, Life Groups shall meet for service, fellowship and/or study in the Word of God. Such groups shall function in harmony with the church's beliefs, goals, and leadership. Leaders of Life Groups shall be approved by the Senior Pastor or his designee and a current listing of groups shall be maintained in the church office.

6.3.2. Other ministry teams and organizations (such as musical group rehearsals, evangelism training, women's and men's meetings, etc.), shall meet as the Senior Pastor, or his designee, approves their function, time and place. A Master Calendar of these events shall be maintained in the church office and all such groups shall be diligent to observe their schedules and keep the office informed of their plans.

7. ARTICLE VII. Amendment Process

7.1. Procedure

7.1.1. In order to keep these Bylaws relevant to changing needs of the church, the Bylaws can be amended by the Board of Directors.

7.1.2. Individual directors shall be notified by agreed-to communication at least one week before the vote. Notification shall include a copy of the proposed amendment.

7.2. Communication

7.2.1. Amendments shall be communicated in writing to the congregation and staff.

7.2.2. Amendments shall be incorporated into the next publication of the Bylaws.

7.2.3. A current version shall be maintained by the Secretary of the Corporation.