

A.

Legal Jargon

Main idea: The church is not a business, but, we do have aspects of the church that must be “business-like.” Basically, this section describes how we might handle business affairs, as they arise. And, it legally sets up a brief overview of our structure, again. This is necessary to us being recognized as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization.

Article I: Name and Principal Office

The name of this Corporation is Ecclesia Church.¹ This Corporation may also hereinafter be further referred to in the Bylaws as "the Church". The Church maintains its principal office at 300 24th Street South, Birmingham, AL 35233.

Article II: Membership

Any person is qualified for full membership in the Church upon his or her profession

¹This is the incorporated name of the church. We are able to use any “face name” (or “doing business as” name that we wish. Hence, we use Crossroads Community Church). This is a common business practice, and just about any church you see will have some slightly different version of its face name for the legal name of the entity. Being a legal corporation allows us to do things like buy and sell property, carry liability insurance, etc. (Part of the reason for this is that there cannot be any business with duplicate legal names.)

of saving faith in Jesus Christ², their subsequent statement of desire to be identified with the Church, and upon completion of an orientation session, outlining the purpose, philosophy and ministry of the Church.³ Membership is removed upon request of the member, on behalf of the member by a sister church of like faith, by death, or by scriptural means as set forth in scripture, specifically, Matthew 18. Matters of church discipline shall be administered by the elders.⁴

Article III: Church Leadership

The Church leadership shall be comprised of two groups: 1) elders (vocational/staff pastors and lay pastors), and 2) deacons (vocational/staff deacons and lay deacons).⁵

²Note, children are the exception to this. They can join the church with their parents, because church membership does not equal salvation. We bring them into the faith community, pledging to raise them to become followers of Christ.

³*Forth going, new members will need to attend the attend the membership class. (And, as we have stated in other sections of this booklet, you are free to attend the class without any obligation or pressure to join the church. If you do plan on being a member, attendance is required.).*

Notice, too, that membership is not contingent on baptism, although we do practice and encourage baptism. See the chapter on baptism for more information on this.

⁴We must hold some criteria whereby to determine who a member is/ is not. This simply states that we do have a church membership. In other words, you are not automatically a member just because you worship here— or even because you have signed up to do a ministry. We certainly appreciate that involvement— for it makes what we do possible. But, we really want everyone to know what we're about and how we are organized to make the most of this experience together.

⁵The difference between “staff” and “lay” is that “staff” are paid, and “lay” leaders are not. That is the only distinction. They serve on the same level, meet in the same meetings, fall under the same structure. There are many leaders who feel called to “secular” work, who can serve at the highest level of church leadership, never desiring to be on staff. And, there are others, because of their obligations at the church and the fact that their roles require more time, need to be on staff (preaching/ teaching ministry, worship ministry, for instance). Eventually, this may be true of children’s ministry, youth ministry, and other areas. But, as we have a policy and history of

Pastors/ elders

Elders/ Pastors (we are using the terms interchangeably, as we see in Scripture, along with the term “overseer”) shall meet and maintain moral and spiritual qualifications as set forth by Scripture in Titus 1:5-9 and I Timothy 3:1-7. The number of Pastors may be increased as God’s spirit leads.⁶ Termination of any Pastor must have a one hundred percent vote of the remaining Pastors or⁷ a seventy-five percent vote of the Church body at a specially called Ministry Meeting by the Pastors. Staff pastors may be hired by the elders, and will serve on the same leadership “level” as lay pastors. This will bring balance to the position by having both vocational and lay pastors on the same team. The teaching pastor/ lead pastor sits on the elder board, but has no greater vote or voice than the other elders/pastors. Although he does receive more exposure, due to his pulpit time, his ministry in this area merits no greater voice than the pastors ministering in other area. All are part of the same whole, and are functioning in complementary roles. The church will be led by this team of pastors.⁸

raising leaders from within, moving someone to “staff” would not mean a change in their status or position— rather, it would mean they are now free to spend more time doing what they were doing all along.

⁶Each of the pastors will serve on the team until they feel led to resign, or as long as they qualify for the office (see the Biblical qualifications in the subsequent chapter in this booklet).

Also, we are not setting a number, or quota. As long as God raises leaders, we will trust His sovereignty and appoint them. Not having a quota (minimum requirement) will keep us from placing unqualified and untested men in the role. Not having a maximum cap will prevent us from neglecting to train and equip and release those who might be called into the role but are boxed-out because others have beat them to it.

⁷In other words, this could be handled by the pastors alone. Read the overview of the CCC church structure for more on this.

⁸It is very important to understand that elders are not assistants to “the pastor,” or a sounding board for him. Rather, they are pastors. The teaching/ preaching pastor is “an elder,” or “a pastor,” not “the pastor.”

“I am convinced that the underlying reason many Christians fear the plurality of elders is that they don’t really understand the New Testament concept or its rich benefits to the local church. New Testament eldership is not, as many think, a high-status, board position that is open to any and all who desire membership. On the contrary, an eldership patterned on the New

Elders/ Pastors may join the group of pastors in at least one of two ways. Other methods may arise, too, as God's Spirit leads. Either 1) the man may feel called by God to serve as a Pastor/ Elder of the church and then approach the other elders with his desires (as we see in 1 Timothy 3:1-7), or 2) the elders may approach a man about filling this role.⁹ In either case (or other cases that arise), the man will begin attending the regularly scheduled Elders/ Pastors meetings. Although he will not yet serve in this official capacity, it will be assumed he is stepping towards that role– and he will already be serving significantly in some area of the life of the church. For a period of *at least six months*, he will be disciplined by another Elder/ Pastor, spending time reading theology, attending conferences, and doing other activities which may help determine his fitness for the role. At any time, this man may back or, or be let go. It is an intentional trial period for both him and the other Pastors to determine God's calling. At the end of the period, the man will be recommended to the church body, which will have at least three subsequent Sundays to approach the chair of the elder team with questions or concerns. Should none arise, this will be deemed as the Body's acceptance of the candidate, and the man will be set aside as a Pastor in the church.¹⁰

Testament model requires elders who must meet specific moral and spiritual qualifications before they serve (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Such elders must be publicly examined by the church as to their qualifications (1 Timothy 3:10). They must be publicly installed into office (1 Timothy 5:22, Acts 14:23). They must be motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do their work (Acts 20:28). Finally, they must be acknowledged, loved, and honored by the whole congregation. This honor given by the congregation includes the giving of financial support to elders who are uniquely gifted at preaching and teaching, which allows some elders to serve the church full or part time (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Thus a team of qualified, dedicated, Spirit-placed elders is not a passive, ineffective committee; it is an effective form of leadership structure that greatly benefits the church family" (From Alexander Strauch's *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call...* pp38-39)

⁹We have seen this work both ways at CCC. For more information on this process see the chapter on qualifications for elders and deacons.

¹⁰It is important that members understand that they should not withhold the appointment of someone because of personal bias alone. There must be Scriptural reasons for withholding appointment. At the same time, it is important to know that members of the church can reject the appointment of a man that the pastoral team brings forwards to them for approval. Although we will not "vote" on the nomination, there is a practical way that this can happen, which empowers the congregation more than a vote would.

If there are real concerns that a member has during this time

Deacons/ Ministry Team Leaders

Deacons may be appointed from time-to-time by the joint decision of the staff/pastors/elders.¹¹ Deacons will be chosen, as set forth in accordance with Scripture, to handle administrative ministry needs as they arise.¹² They, also, *must* meet the criteria assigned to them in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. Whereas the elders/pastors must be men, the deacons may be, according to 1 Timothy 3, men or women. In effect, they will lead the ministry teams of the church, much in the same way that the deacons of the early church carried the administrative load of feeding widows and orphans (see Acts 6). Deacons will meet regularly, with the elders, to continue moving the ministry of the church forwards.¹³

(which will usually be the final month of the testing period), they should take those concerns directly to the candidate, first of all, to make sure they are not misunderstanding an issue. If this does not resolve their concern, or if they do not feel they can go to that candidate, they should go to the chair of the elders— period. These matters should not be taken to other church members— or to other elders. The correct line is to go to that one person alone, unless some exception is announced beforehand. This is to honor the person(s) involved, as well as the Biblical guidelines which we are to follow. Also, this guards the integrity of the process and keeps it from being a popularity contest.

¹¹Most of these leaders have actually arisen on their own, much in the same way that Paul describes the pattern of elders in 1 Timothy 3:1f. We have a children's ministry, a student ministry, and a missions team (among other things) because God placed a call in someone's heart to lead something that did not yet exist. Of course, in each instance the pastors of the church were able to give a high endorsement to the character and Christian walk of these leaders. This is important, because as people step into leadership roles we want to give them a high amount of trust (to lead, help form budgets, make purchase requests, etc.), along with high respect for their position and the leadership they provide to us.

¹²Deacons are really the ministry team leaders at CCC. For a helpful distinction between pastors and deacons and members see the chart in the section on the church's structure. Elders/ pastors are overseers who give direction to the church. So, the two groups work hand-in-hand.

¹³As we continue adding new ministries— and as leaders continue arising to lead them— this will increase the breadth of what we do as a church body.

The deacons are, in effect, the practical, hands-on, leadership team of the church. Whereas the elders help keep the church focused on the big picture, the deacons help equip the members of CCC to make sure the big picture has flesh. In general, deacons will be supervised by the elders, but will be free to run their ministry areas.¹⁴

In each meeting of the deacons, the stewardship team leader (also a deacon) will update the deacons on the most recent financials of the church. After these meetings, the information will, in print, be made available to the membership of CCC. As needed, the deacons and pastors together may determine to call membership meetings¹⁵ and/or business meetings.¹⁶

¹⁴They will help make budgets for those areas, do the purchase requests, take the lead in determining curriculum (in appropriate areas), handle scheduling (and coordinate it with the larger church calendar), etc. In other words, they are pro-active in initiating ministry– not doing things at the whim of the pastors/ elders. The pastors/ elders provide directional leadership to the church as a whole– these leaders provide hands on applicable leadership. Much of the leadership locus of responsibility is on this group– and as the church gets larger that load will increase by necessity.

¹⁵As you read on you will see that we will have a Ministry Meeting at least once every six months, which does encompass some of the “business meeting” functions of a church.

¹⁶Note in the church structure how financials go out. They will emerge in a few ways:

- We will give them to the deacons/ ministry team leaders at each monthly meeting, who can then, in turn, give them to their ministry teams;
- We will send them out quarterly to everyone who has contributed financially (that is the way we would have your name in our financial software– so if you do not give, you will not receive them– not as an act of vengeance or retribution, but, because we won't have your information in that database, and are not going to run through that one and our membership list comparing it to see who has not contributed. Worship is giving/ giving is worship. We're assuming all members will participate in this aspect of this church, since you are committing to tithe when you join);

Would-be deacons may be called in the same way as elders, by either being appointed or stepping forwards to a specific ministry. But, they do not face the same six-month trial period. They can be installed at the decision of the elders and other deacons. As new ministry teams arise (for example, missions team, youth ministry, etc.), they will, at first, be led by deacons.¹⁷

- You can approach the stewardship team leader, who will give you the most current version that he/she has shown to the leadership team. No new information will be released under any circumstance until it has first been directed to the elders/ pastors and deacons/ leadership team.

- 4) The church will have at least two Ministry Meetings (“Business Meetings”) per year– see Article V and the notes on it. This will be another venue in which the budget is shared and explained, as well as the financial progress of CCC. The biggest part of the Ministry Meetings, however, is not to share financial information– financial information, really, shows what kind of stewards we are and what ministry we are, thus, able to do– and that is the greater reason for the meetings, to relay what Ministry is happening. This is why we call them Ministry Meetings and not “business meetings.”

¹⁷ If you want to start a full-fledged ongoing ministry at CCC (as opposed to organizing a one-time service project, for instance), you need to meet the Biblical qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:9f. Why? Not to be legalistic– but there are a few reasons:

- We will place a high degree of trust and responsibility on you. You will be managing people, financial resources, and other assets.

- Most problems in a church that occur can be traced back to leadership issues. Either someone in leadership has started a problem– or they had the opportunity to address and stop one and chose not to.

- It is Biblical that we have such requirements. People in the church rise to the level of the leadership– and usually no higher.

Article IV: Board of Directors

The Ecclesia Church Board of Directors shall be comprised of the pastors/ elders of the Church.¹⁸ The Ecclesia Church Board of Directors hereafter referred to as the Board shall be the Board of Directors pursuant to The Alabama Nonprofit Corporations Act. It shall be the duty of the Board to act as legal representatives of the Church and to take such actions and execute any documents necessary to accomplish the purpose of any matter authorized by the Church.¹⁹

All that to say, leaders will be tested and approved, as 1 Timothy commands we do. Although the testing and approving process of elders/ pastors is spelled out, the process for deacons is not. It will be worked out on a case-by-case basis, much depending upon the role the leader is going to assume, their experience leading at CCC, and their knowledge and application of Scripture. The testing and approving process will consist of 1) actually participating in hands-on ministry, 2) reading and familiarizing yourself with how things work at CCC, as well as 3) studying relevant materials to your ministry area. Quite simply, if you do not have the time and commitment to do these things, you do not have the stamina or commitment to lead.

¹⁸Remember, the primary function of the elders/ pastors is not to be the “board” of the church. That would be an unBiblical exaggeration of their role. However, we do have to have a board, legally. And, it makes sense to use the men who 1) have been tested and approved, 2) who do lead at the highest level of leadership in the church, and 3) who are the most familiar with the “big picture” of the church. Quite simply, serving on the board, in our thinking, is a lesser task than leading the church spiritually. And, if a man is not qualified to serve on the board, then he is certainly not qualified to spiritually oversee our church.

Note, as you continue reading the by-laws that the stewardship team leader (who could be a deacon or elder, depending on who and when it is) will sit on the board, as well, since they have custody of the church funds. They will serve as the Treasurer. So, they would be the exception that might not be an elder sitting on the board.

Men in the testing and approving process who are being disciplined are not considered board members until they are installed into their office publicly. But, remember, the board function of the elders is just a minor detail that is necessary for legal purposes.

¹⁹The pastors, then (elders– both staff elders and lay elders, together) are the Board of the non-profit. We are assuming that they would be the most qualified to make such decisions, since they are involved at the highest level of leadership– and should have the greatest qualifications.

Any such documents may only be executed by the Board. The Board shall exercise all powers of the Church except those which are conferred upon the elders or reserved by law, the Articles of Incorporation²⁰, or these Bylaws to the membership of the Church. No matter may come before the Church for discussion until such time as the appropriate administrative ministry team or the Board shall have first had reasonable time to act on the matter.²¹ Any matter then not resolved by the Board is then a proper subject for transaction at a regular or specially called ministry meeting of the church.²²

Directors meetings shall be scheduled at least on a monthly basis.²³ (Recall, then, the pastors/elders have both a spiritual function and a business function.). Financials and other pertinent information will be available to the elders in these meetings, although they may opt to review them at the regularly scheduled deacons meetings.²⁴

²⁰“Articles of Incorporation” refers to the legal charter with the State of Alabama that makes us a legal corporation.

²¹This simply means that there is a chain of command, so to speak. The elders will not simply throw information out to the church— rather, information will flow to the leadership team (deacons) first, then, to the church. Notice that we will distribute financials in this way each month— to the ministry team leaders, first, then to the church.

²²This allows for information to be passed to the church body in the instance that it gets grid-locked with the Board (pastors) or deacons. If those two groups cannot come to consensus, which they should, the matter could go to the church Body. Of course, the groups may choose to take something to the church Body, anyway, even when they do agree (for example, the purchase or sell of real estate or other assets).

²³This meeting is speaking of the meeting with the elders/ pastors alone. In addition, recall, they are meeting with the wives about once a month, as well, in order to get another perspective on how to move the church forward (see the church structure chapter for more information on this).

²⁴The elders of the church are meeting about three times a month— once alone, once with their wives (which is an informal meeting in which no minutes or “official” business is done), and once with the deacons/ leadership team. Since the financials are reviewed in every deacons/ leadership team meeting, it doesn’t make sense for them to spend time reviewing them every other time they get together, unless necessary for a

A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business or policy.²⁵

The officers of the Church shall be a president (Chair of elder board-- not the teaching pastor), such vice-presidents as may be deemed necessary (other pastors, for example, the teaching pastor, or lay pastors), a secretary (any of the pastors), a treasurer (stewardship team leader/ deacon), and such other officers as may be deemed appropriate by the pastors/elders.²⁶ All officers shall be elected by the Board and shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified. Each officer shall perform such duties as usually devolve upon the office and other such duties as prescribed by the Bylaws or the Board. Election of the officers of the Church shall be held annually by the board.²⁷ Replacement of vacancies may be elected immediately by the board. The treasurer shall be the Pastor of Administration or Stewardship Team Leader, as this position is added, or another member of the Board who also serves on the team assigned to stewardship accountability. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Church and shall perform such duties as are incident to the office or assigned by the Board or the

specific instance.

²⁵Information that is going to be discussed in these meetings has, historically, been emailed out upwards of a week before, so that everyone knows what will be discussed. On several instances, even when it is known certain people will be unable to attend, they are given a chance to respond/ write in early, so that they can state their point-of-view. Feasibly, it becomes impossible to cancel and reschedule meetings. At some point, they must go on. But, it is important to circulate ideas and get information out.

²⁶By law, an organization must have these offices. Note, though, that we have made the chair of the elders (not the teaching pastor) serve as the president of the corporation. This protects both the church and the teaching pastor. The teaching pastor already has influence-- in the form of 45-plus minutes of stage time virtually every week. This is one way we can bring a check and balance to the elder/pastor team-- as well as the idea that the chair of elders 1) formally leads the elders meetings and 2) formally calls church Ministry Meetings to order (after himself calling for them in a public announcement).

²⁷In other words, each year, preferably at the beginning of the new year, the pastors/ elders will need to determine who will fill each role. Note, though, that the chair is always the President, for business purposes, that the teaching pastor is never the President, that the stewardship team leader is always the Treasurer, etc.

president. Unless the treasurer is an elder, the treasurer will be required to only attend meetings when specifically requested to do so.²⁸

Article V: Meetings of Members

The meetings scheduled for conducting the business of the Church shall be known as Ministry Meetings²⁹ and are called by the Chair of the Elders/ Pastors³⁰ and/or the Board at least on a semi-annual basis and more often when deemed necessary.³¹ The Church-at-large may call a Specially Called Ministry Meeting during one of these meetings with a two-thirds vote of the congregation in attendance.³² Notification of any meetings shall be either written or oral and not less than two (2) weeks prior to the proposed meeting. A quorum shall consist of not less

²⁸Again, this is because the treasurer could be a deacon/ ministry team leader rather than an elder/ pastor. They would not need to be in every meeting, but, only when called in order to help carry forth some business function (which, again, is rare– this is only a tiny role of the overall elder job description).

²⁹This is what you might call a “Business Meeting.”

³⁰The chair of elders calls these meetings, not the teaching pastor. Although the teaching pastor may make announcements to the effect of helping get the word out, the meeting is official because it originates from the chair of elders.

³¹We will meet at least twice a year as a church body, for a formal meeting. More if necessary. Ideally, these meetings will occur about six months apart (perhaps in mid-May and mid-November). This will give us a chance to talk about upcoming ministries over the summer, as well as the New Year and approving a new budget, etc. This scheduling seems to make sense.

³²This provides for the unlikely instance in which the church membership does not feel that enough information was provided, they don't understand a directional issue, whatever... But, notice that it cannot be called on a whim. There must be 2/3 of the membership in attendance at the initial “Business Meeting” (Ministry Meeting) in which they call for a second meeting. And, that special meeting must be called for from the floor during that meeting. Ideally, the processes we have put in place will work. But, if they did not for some reason, this would be a way to schedule more discussion about issues at hand, particularly those which emerge from a grassroots level.

than ten percent (10%) of the church membership.³³ *In general*, Ministry Meetings shall be held where members might vote on any of the following matters: the Annual Church Ministry Investment Budget, the calling of elders, amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Church, the merger or dissolution of the Church, the disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the Church, the purchase of real estate, or non-budgeted capital improvements greater than \$1,000.³⁴ Other matters of concern to the Church may, from time to time, be brought before the Church.

Article VI: Process for Changing Legal Documentation

Changes in these Bylaws or in the Articles of Incorporation shall be made by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Church at a regular or specially called Ministry Meeting with the following provisions: The proposed change(s) shall be published and distributed to the membership at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting at which a vote is to be held. Each amendment shall be presented at a regular or specially called Ministry Meeting for a vote. In addition, before going to a vote, the resolution must have unanimously passed the Elders, then the Deacons.³⁵

³³By the time it gets to the church body, the issue has already passed the elders and deacons. It should be past the level of discussion on the leadership level, across the board. And, it could have already been shared by these team leaders with their team members– so, this is why we’re not calling for a large percentage quorum. Those who want to show up, can– and should. Otherwise, we can move ahead, since the process will have already been long-going at this point.

³⁴In general, the pastors may call for a vote on these things. But, notice, they do not have to do so. Nor does there necessarily have to be a big meeting for some of these things to occur. For instance, we probably will *not* have a meeting before installing a new pastor– because the conclusion of his testing period will be announced at a main worship service. That gives it more press time than a meeting. And, everyone will have a chance to respond for the three following weeks, at least. On the other hand, we will most likely have meetings and votes when approving a new budget, buying or selling land, etc. But, in all cases, the information will have already gone from the pastors to the deacons then to the membership. It will have already passed a “vote” by every level of leadership, then, so that there should be no questions from any of those groups.

³⁵The process for changing documentation would be very much the same process undergone to bring this material to fruition. The material emerged from the elders/ pastors, was taken to the leadership team/ deacons

Article VII: Adoption of Bylaws

These Bylaws are hereby adopted in lieu of and to supersede and take precedence over any previously existing Rules or Bylaws or any conflicting minutes of the Church, or any traditional/historical procedure or policy of the church and shall become effective on the date of adoption or as stipulated. Nothing herein shall be construed to affect the validity of any previous financial obligation of The Church.³⁶

Article VIII: Rules of Order

When meeting in business session, the chair of the elders will lead the meeting. He will lead informally, as long as the church is functioning as a family, with courtesy and harmony. If the meeting comes to a standstill, he may elect to use a formal means of leading the meeting.

In those cases, except where the Bylaws state otherwise, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the accepted pattern for the transaction of the business of the Church. The spirit of God's laws and the attitude of Christ's love will always supersede and have right of way to the technicality or formalities so long as the ethical integrity and spiritual harmony of God's Holy Word is not in jeopardy nor compromised.³⁷

for review and fine-tuning, then taken to the church body as a whole.

³⁶In other words, it doesn't matter how we've done things in the past— or talked about doing things in the past. This material does give an accurate reflection of how we have tried to run CCC for the past few years— and, now, it is a formal declaration of how we will strive to move forwards. And, of course, we can add and adjust as God's Spirit leads and ministry needs are added.

Notice, too, we are keeping any obligations we have made.

³⁷This should help clarify the spirit with which we hope to lead the meetings. However, it does allow for resolution should there be none. Quite frankly, though, if we cannot move ahead as a family, at the direction of one of the elders, we have bigger problems than just our inability to have a meeting. And that would probably be a good time to go back and study the house rule, repent to Jesus for our sin, and move ahead in a spirit of forgiveness towards each other and gratitude towards God.

