

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS FOR
SANTA FE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
October 15, 2017**

2017

Constitution and Bylaws

SANTA FE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

APPROVED OCTOBER 15, 2017

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PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the Scriptures, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this Church, and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of like precious faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

I. NAME

This Congregation shall be known as the Santa Fe Christian Church of Santa Fe, Texas.

II. PURPOSE

This congregation seeks to proclaim and promote the purposes of God as given in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Within this purpose are the following:

- A. A desire to understand the whole message of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, identifying the areas in which we are united in our understanding, and seeking further enlightenment in the others.
- B. A desire to encourage individuals to be responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and responsible to God.
- C. A desire to work and worship together in unity and mutual understanding of God's will.
- D. A desire to work with other Congregations and groups for the advancement of God's purposes in the community and throughout the world.
- E. A desire to go forth from the Congregation and share with others the good news of Jesus Christ as commanded by the Great Commission given in Matthew chapter twenty-eight.

III. GOVERNMENT

The Old and New Testament Scriptures comprise the final authority for faith and practice for this Congregation, the government of which is vested in its membership as set forth in the Bylaws accompanying this Constitution. This Congregation is not subject to control by any other ecclesiastical body, nor does the name "Christian" imply sympathy or antipathy toward the teachings or practices of other groups bearing the same name.

IV. PROPERTY

Title to all property acquired by the Congregation or by organizations or individuals for use by the Congregation shall be held by the Congregation. The Congregation is a non-profit corporation in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation of Santa Fe Christian Church as

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a Texas Non-Profit Corporation. In the event of its dissolution, the designated receiver for the assets of Santa Fe Christian Church is Galveston Interfaith Ministries.

V. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No board member may exercise his vote in any financial matter in which he has a personal financial interest

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BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

The membership of the Congregation shall consist of those who publicly proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and accept Him as Lord and Savior; and have been baptized by immersion in accordance with the New Testament, and who express their desire to participate in the life and work of this Congregation.

SECTION 2. DUTIES

Members are expected to seek the Lord's guidance and respond in service through the work and worship of this Congregation, especially in the light of its purpose as expressed in the Constitution.

SECTION 3. STATUS

Only members over the age of eighteen years may have voting status. Any member, who does not attend any of the regularly scheduled services of the Congregation for a period of eight consecutive weeks, except when health does not permit, shall be transferred from voting to non-voting status. Reinstatement to voting from non-voting status shall be made when the member attends any of the regularly scheduled services of the Congregation for four consecutive weeks.

SECTION 4. RIGHTS

Only members with voting status may vote in the business meetings of this congregation and, as the Scriptures permit, hold office or other positions of service in the Congregation, whether by election or appointment.

SECTION 5. TERMINATION AND REINSTATEMENT

Termination of membership in this Congregation, as well as associated conditions for reinstatement in applicable cases, shall occur under the following conditions:

- 1). Death of the member.
- 2). Notice from the member, whether for removal from membership or transfer of membership to another congregation.
- 3). Failure to attend any of the regularly scheduled services of the Congregation for a period of twenty-four weeks, unless exempted by the elders for reasons of health, work schedule, or military service. Requests in writing to the elders for an exemption must be received at least 30 days prior to termination and any appeal to the elders must be received in writing within 30 days following

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termination. Reinstatement of membership for a person whose membership was terminated in this way shall occur after a public statement expressing their desire for membership, willingness to fulfill their responsibilities as a member of the Congregation, and attendance of a regularly scheduled service for a number (not more than eight) of consecutive weeks determined by the elders.

- 4). Recommendation by petition with written Scriptural support and Congregational vote of approval as described in Article V of these Bylaws. Reinstatement of membership for a person whose membership was terminated in this way shall occur following the same procedure.

ARTICLE II. CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP AND OTHER NON-BUSINESS MEETINGS

SECTION 1. WORSHIP

- 1). The Congregation shall meet for worship each Lord's Day.
- 2). The Lord's Supper shall be observed at a service each Lord's Day for those who desire to take part.
- 3). Other services for worship shall be as determined by the Elders or the Church Board.

SECTION 2. NON-BUSINESS MEETINGS

Other non-business meetings for education, fellowship, prayer, recreation, and related matters shall be as determined by the Elders or the Church Board, which is described in Article VI of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE III. ELECTED POSITIONS

SECTION 1. ELDERS

- 1). Qualifications for the position of Elder are as set forth in the New Testament, membership in the Congregation with voting status for a minimum of two years, and service as a Deacon for one or more terms.
- 2). Duties of Elders are as set forth in the New Testament, especially as they pertain to general oversight of the congregation, with special attention to its teachings and the spiritual welfare of its members, and the representative status of Elders to the community and other congregations of Christians. Related duties are delineated and summarized in Article VI of these Bylaws.
- 3). A member may be elected as an Elder in a manner consistent with Article V of these Bylaws.

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- 4). Elders shall be ordained to their positions within one month of their selection and shall serve a term of three years. An Elder may serve multiple successive terms.
- 5). An Elder may be removed from his position by recommendation by petition with written Scriptural support and Congregational vote of approval as described in Article V of these Bylaws.
- 6). Santa Fe Christian Church is an elder led congregation. If at any time there is no one in the office of elder, the Church Board is temporarily empowered to make decisions and take actions normally reserved for the elders. However all of these decisions and actions require a unanimous vote of approval by all remaining board members and no changes will be made to this document until a plurality of biblically qualified elders is elected and ordained. In addition, no written policies will be rescinded or revised and no new policies created until the plurality of elders is established. These temporary powers are revoked once a plurality of elders is established

SECTION 2 DEACONS

- 1). Qualifications for the position of Deacon are as set forth in the New Testament and also include membership in the congregation with voting status for one year.
- 2). Duties of Deacons are as set forth in the New Testament, especially as they may pertain to meeting the material needs of the Congregation and its members. Related duties are delineated and summarized in Article VI of these Bylaws.
- 3). A member may be elected as a Deacon in a manner concordant with Article V of these Bylaws.
- 4). Deacons shall be ordained to their positions within one month of their selection and shall serve a term of two years. A Deacon may serve multiple successive terms.
- 5). A Deacon may be removed from his position by recommendation by petition with written scriptural support and Congregational vote of approval as described in Article V of these Bylaws.

SECTION 3 PASTORS

- 1). Pastors are persons so recognized and ordained by the congregation to exercise leadership in spiritual and/or administrative capacities within Santa Fe Christian Church, and may or may not be financially supported by the Congregation.

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- 2). Pastors who meet the qualifications may be elected to serve as a voting member of the Church Board. Qualifications for a Pastor to serve as a voting member of the Church Board include membership in the congregation with voting status for one year. Pastors elected to these positions shall serve a term of one year and may serve multiple successive terms.
- 3). Qualifications and duties of Pastors shall be determined by the Church Board described in the Church Policy Manual. Qualifications shall be established with due attention to New Testament scriptures including marks of spiritual maturity. Pastors must meet the qualifications for membership in this Congregation and maintain status as voting members of the congregation.
- 4). A Pastor may be removed from his position by recommendation by petition with written Scriptural support and congregational vote of approval as described in Article V of these Bylaws.

SECTION 4. TRUSTEES

Elected Elders shall act as Trustees of the Congregation as long as they are serving in the office of Elder. The duties of Trustees are as determined by applicable Federal and State laws.

SECTION 5 CHURCH BOARD

Voting members of this Board shall include the Elders, the Deacons, as well as any Pastors selected as board members by the congregation at a business meeting. This is intended to ensure that each of the primary leadership offices is represented on the board. When board members are selected, the selection process will include notification of which office the member will fill. Pastors not selected to positions with voting status, serve on the board in non-voting advisory positions. Other members of the Congregation with voting status may, at the discretion of the Board, be appointed to a non-voting advisory position helpful to the functioning of the Board. Board members and prospective board members may be subject to background checks at the discretion of the Elders.

ARTICLE IV. HIRED OR CONTRACTED POSITIONS

SECTION 1. PASTORS

- 1). Candidates for the position of Senior Pastor shall be investigated and recommended to the congregation by the Church Board and the Elders. The Congregation shall vote on the recommendation as described in Article V of these Bylaws.
- 2). Other Pastors hired or contracted to serve in a paid position shall be investigated by the Elders and recommended to the Church Board. A three fourths majority

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approval of a quorum of the board shall be required to offer a position to a candidate.

- 3). A Pastor's term of service is indefinite, but is reviewed annually and may also be terminated by resignation with a notice of thirty days. A Pastor may be suspended with pay from his duties for a period of time by the Elders for reasons of spiritual misconduct based on New Testament principles. The Elders may later reinstate the Pastor, terminate his service, or refer the matter to the Congregation for a vote as described in Article V of these Bylaws. If his service is terminated the Pastor shall receive thirty days' remuneration. When a Pastor's service is terminated for unrepentant spiritual misconduct, the Elders shall also rescind his license to preach.
- 4). Pastors must place membership in the Congregation when they assume their positions if they are not members already.

SECTION 2. OTHER PAID POSITIONS

- 1). All other positions are at will positions whether hired or contracted and candidates shall be investigated by the elders and recommended to the Church Board. A three fourths majority approval of a quorum of the board shall be required prior to offering the position to the candidate.
- 2). Duties and qualifications for these positions shall be determined by the Church Board as described in the Church Policy Manual.

ARTICLE V. CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

SECTION 1. PLACE

All congregational business meetings shall take place at the regular place of worship.

SECTION 2. TIMES

- 1). The Fiscal-Year-End Business Meeting shall take place on a Lord's Day determined by the Elders at least seven weeks in advance.
- 2). The Elders shall call for a Mid-Year Business Meeting that shall take place in August on a Lord's Day determined by the Elders giving at least two weeks advance notice to the congregation.
- 3). Times for other business meetings of the congregation shall be determined by the Elders so that they occur within five weeks of an acceptable establishment of agenda as described in section 4 of this Article, due consideration also being given to the advanced notices described in Section 5 of this Article.

SECTION 3. QUORUM

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One half of the members with voting status shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 4. ESTABLISHING AGENDA

- 1). Any Business Meeting may include the election of Elders, Deacons, and Pastors to the Church Board. Members with voting status who desire these offices should express their interest to the elders in advance as noted in Section 5 of this article. The Elders shall determine those qualified and secure their consent to nomination after giving them a published description of the duties for review.
- 2). The Fiscal-Year-End Business Meeting shall include an itemized budget proposal for congregational vote of approval, commissioned and approved by the Church Board as described in the Church Policy Manual.
- 3). The Fiscal-Year-End Business Meeting, as well as the Mid-Year Business Meeting, shall include a report of the Ministries to the Congregation.
- 4). The Congregation may vote on the election of Candidates for the position of Elder, Deacon, or Pastor at any business meeting if the candidate is recommended by the Church Board and Elders as noted in Article III of these Bylaws, and if the advanced notices as noted in Section 5 of this Article, are obtained.
- 5). At all congregational business meetings, all other agenda requiring a Congregational vote shall be established by securing petitions stating proposals with Scriptural support and bearing the signatures of two thirds of or more of the Elders, or of two thirds or more of the members of the Church Board, or of one-third or more of the members of this Congregation with voting status.

SECTION 5. ADVANCED NOTICES

- 1). In the case of proposals for amending these Bylaws or the Constitution proper, or for Congregational vote of approval for hiring a Senior Pastor, announcement shall be made at the regular worship services for four weeks preceding a vote, and published copies of the proposals shall be made available to members with voting status during this entire period.
- 2). Members desiring to serve as voting members of the Church Board in the positions of Elder, Deacon, or Pastor; shall express their interest to the Elders at least six weeks in advance of the business meeting. The Elders shall make available published lists of the approved candidates to appear on the ballot two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- 3). Candidates for the position of Senior Pastor, once recommended by the Church Board and the Elders as noted in Article III of these Bylaws, shall speak before

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the Congregation at least two weeks in advance of a Congregational vote to employ them in these positions.

- 4). In the case of other proposals requiring a Congregational vote, announcement shall be made at the regular worship services for two weeks preceding a vote, and published copies of the proposals shall be made available to members with voting status during this entire period.

SECTION 6. VOTING PROCEDURES

Voting shall be by secret ballot and the ballots shall be counted by representatives from the Elders and the Deacons. The Elders shall be responsible for the preparation of ballots. Members with voting status who are unable to be present to cast a ballot due to travel, illness, or work schedules may request an absentee ballot from the Elders during the week prior to the vote. To be counted in the vote, the ballot must be completed and either returned to the elders or placed in the ballot box prior to the end of the voting session. The election ballots shall be sealed together subsequent to the election for a period of ninety days in the event that there is a request for a recount.

SECTION 7. VOTES OF APPROVAL

- 1). A three-fourths vote of approval by a quorum in a business meeting is required for the amendment for these Bylaws or the Constitution proper.
- 2). A two-thirds vote of approval by a quorum in a business meeting is required in the following instances: The election or removal of Elders, Deacons, Pastors, and members, as well as reinstatement of members removed by this means; and material expenditures involving indebtedness.
- 3). A majority vote of approval by a quorum in a business meeting is required for other proposals brought before the Congregation.

SECTION 8. PRESIDING AND RECORDING

The Elders shall appoint from among themselves a person to preside at each business meeting. Likewise the Elders shall appoint a person from among the members of the congregation with voting status to record the decisions and matters discussed at each business meeting and this information shall be made available to members of the Congregation.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF MINISTRY LEADERS, MINISTRY COORDINATORS, ELDERS, DEACONS, THE CHURCH BOARD, AND PASTORS

SECTION 1. THE MINISTRY SYSTEM

The Ministry System shall be established by the Church Board and recorded in the Church Policy Manual.

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SECTION 2. MINISTRY LEADERS

The duties of Ministry Leaders shall be established by the Church Board and recorded in the Church Policy Manual.

SECTION 3 MINISTRY COORDINATORS

The duties of Ministry Coordinators shall be established by the Church Board and recorded in the Church Policy Manual.

SECTION 4. ELDERS

- 1). The Elders shall elect from among themselves a Chairman to conduct meetings and call special meetings of the Elders upon request of one third or more of the Elders. The Elders shall elect a Recording Secretary from among themselves to record the minutes from their meetings. The Elders shall determine their own meeting schedule. At least two thirds of the Elders constitute a quorum. Decisions of the elders are effective upon an agreement of at least two thirds of the elders whether the decisions are reached in a meeting, through written, electronic, or telephone confirmation, or through a combination of these methods. The decisions, persons present, and the matters discussed at these meetings, if not of a confidential nature, shall be recorded and made available to members of the Congregation.
- 2). The Elders shall establish the names and basic functions of the Ministry Groups and Ministries of the Congregation.
- 3). The Elders shall appoint Ministry Leaders for the Ministry Groups and Ministry Coordinators for the individual Ministries of the Congregation. The Ministry Leaders shall be members of the Congregation with voting status and shall be selected from the members of Church Board. The Ministry Coordinators shall be members of the Congregation with voting status.
- 4). Each Elder shall serve in some manner in at least one of the Ministry Groups or Ministries.
- 5). The Elders shall review all Congregational activities and may veto decisions by the Deacons, the Church Board, or any of the Ministries or other groups in the Congregation as such decisions pertain to the Congregational activities, by documents bearing at least three fourths of the Elders signatures and the reason, with Scriptural support, for their decisions. The Elders may not, however prevent properly petitioned proposals from going before the congregation for a vote, as described in Article V of these Bylaws.
- 6). The Elders shall Perform other duties as set forth in other Articles of these Bylaws, including representative status; recommendation, in conjunction with the Church Board, of candidates for the position of Senior Pastor for

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Congregational approval; Trusteeship of the congregation; determination of dates and agendas for congregational business meetings; determination, notification, and publication of the names of qualified nominees for Elder, Deacon, or Pastor before election to the Church Board; issuance of some proposals for Congregational approval; determination of who presides at congregational business meetings as well as who records the decisions and matters discussed at these; and the preparation, counting and sealing of ballots.

- 7). The Elders shall seek means to carry out the duties above in such a way as to allow time for prayer and study of the Scriptures among themselves.

SECTION 5. DEACONS

- 1). The Deacons shall elect from among themselves a Chairman to conduct meetings and call special meetings of the Deacons upon request of one third or more of the Deacons. The Deacons shall elect a Recording Secretary from among themselves to record the minutes from their meetings. The Chairman shall schedule meetings of the Deacons or call meetings at the request of one-third of the Deacons. At least two thirds of the Deacons constitute a quorum. The decisions, persons present, and matters discussed at these meetings, if not of a confidential nature, shall be recorded and made available to members of the Congregation.
- 2). Each Deacon shall serve in some manner on at least one of the Ministry Groups or Ministries.
- 3). The Deacons may review Congregational activities pertaining to its material aspects and recommend changes to the Elders, and they may administer special tasks, not readily falling under the functions of the Ministries, as directed by the Church Board.

SECTION 6. PASTORS

Duties for Pastors shall be established by the Church Board and listed in the Church Policy Manual.

SECTION 7. THE CHURCH BOARD

- 1). The Board members shall elect a Chairman from among themselves to conduct the meetings and call special meetings at the request of the Elders or one third of the Board members. The Board members shall elect a Recording Secretary from among themselves to record the minutes from their meetings. The Board shall establish a monthly meeting schedule. At least two thirds of the Board Members constitute a quorum. The decisions, persons present, and matters discussed at these meetings, if not of a confidential nature, shall be recorded and made available to members of the Congregation.

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- 2). The Ministries and Pastors shall periodically provide reports on their activities to this Board.
- 3). This Board shall approve an annual budget proposal by January 31st based upon the recommendations of the Budget Ministry, the various Ministry Groups, and projected giving. The Congregation shall vote on the proposal at the Fiscal-Year-End Business Meetings described in Article V of these Bylaws. In the event that the budget is not approved by the Congregation, this Board shall administer expenditures and resubmit a budget proposal bimonthly until a budget is approved. This Board shall then use this budget as a guideline to insure that expenditures are made in accordance with desires of the congregation and in accordance with sound financial practices and may amend it at any time during the following year when there are significant changes in the congregation's financial status. The board has the authority to deny expenditures based on the level of funds available even if the expenditure was authorized in the approved budget. Likewise the board may authorize expenditures that were not part of the approved budget if funds are available and the expenditure is an effective use of the congregation's resources.
- 4). Ministry Coordinators may be removed from their positions upon issuance of a document signed by two thirds of the Elders of the Congregation, or upon issuance of a document signed by two thirds of the Church Board.
- 5). This Board shall perform other duties as set forth in the Church Policy Manual in accordance with these Bylaws including determination of non-business meetings of the Congregation other than the regular worship services; recommendation of proposals for the duties and qualifications of Pastors for Congregational approval; and issuance of some proposals for congregational approval.

This 12 page document was approved by a Congregational vote on October 15, 2017

Randy Meek, Church Board Chairman Date