

# Oakwood Community Church

## Bylaws

### Article I: Membership

#### Section One - Admission

Persons 18 years and older may be received into membership after:

1. satisfactory completion of the pastoral membership class
2. public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior before the body of Oakwood Community Church
3. believer's baptism by immersion
4. agreement with our statement of belief
5. a meeting with an Elder or Pastor

#### Section Two - Rights and Privileges of active members

1. vote and petition
2. receive the provided training and ministries
3. benefit from the Church's care
4. hold positions of leadership

#### Section Three - Responsibilities

Members are expected to:

1. strive to keep the unity of the spirit and live according to the truth revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through the study of God's Word (Ephesians 4:3-7)
2. wholeheartedly support the ministries and activities of the church with attendance, prayer, offerings, and the use of their spiritual gifts in service to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12)
3. submit to the governance of this local assembly and to the leadership of the Elders (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

#### Section Four - Inactive Statute

The Board of Elders may declare inactive any member who:

1. has moved from the area
2. has been absent from the Church for a period of six months.

#### Section Five - Dismissal

A member may be dismissed by the Board of Elders:

1. to the fellowship of another church
2. if no longer living
3. by personal request
4. after remaining in inactive status for six months
5. if the member shows evidence of non-Christian conduct (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; Romans 16:17). Persons dismissed as a result of discipline may be readmitted into membership after a process of restoration to be overseen by the Board of Elders.

#### Section Six - Re-application for Membership

1. If a former member chooses to apply for membership, they may do so according to the general requirements for membership. If they previously left the church in good standing they will not be required to enroll in the new members' class. The person will, however, be required to meet with an Elder in order to be updated and instructed as to the doctrine, policy, and direction of the church.

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2. If a former member left because of corrective discipline, they may be restored if they give satisfactory evidence of repentance. The Elders shall communicate to the entire church that the person has been restored to full membership (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

### **Section Seven - Membership Record**

1. In order to keep an accurate membership roll, there shall be an annual review of the membership roll by the Elders prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
2. All who have been declared inactive for whatever cause will be classified as such and will be notified of this action.

## **Article II: Elders**

### **Section One - Qualification**

A member of the Board of Elders:

1. must be a man in agreement with our Statement of Belief
2. must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4
3. must be a member in good standing
4. would preferably be at least 30 years of age

### **Section Two – Responsibilities**

As the spiritual overseers of the Church, the Board of Elders is responsible for:

1. determining the authority structure and the relationships between the Pastors, Board of Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, ministries, departments and committees.
2. organizing the Church work into committees and departments, determining what positions are necessary for their proper functioning. The Board of Elders will appropriately appoint all positions
3. preparing, managing and presenting the annual Church budget
4. ensuring the availability of preaching through the Pastors or other means in the Pastor's absence
5. sending of missionaries
6. exhortation and encouragement
7. visitation of the sick
8. the contents of the operational manual, in cooperation with the Deacons and Deaconesses
9. overseeing the annual meeting and the affirmation of Board Officers
10. determining the active or inactive status of members
11. calling Church business meetings and appointing the presiding officer
12. any matter previous to its being brought before the Church
13. the election of a Chairman who shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Elders and the Church annual meeting
14. having at least three-fourths of the Elder Board participate to transact official church business.

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### **Section Three – Authority**

The Elders authority shall include, but not be limited to:

1. deciding doctrinal matters
2. taking appropriate action to accomplish the items for which they are responsible
3. deciding any issue the Deacons and Deaconesses cannot determine
4. overriding decisions of the Lead Pastor
5. administer Church discipline as required in Matthew 18:17

### **Section Four - Accountability**

Each Elder is accountable to God, the Board of Elders and the Church as a whole.

### **Section Five – Selection**

1. The elders will prayerfully consider eligible members of the congregation for service on the Board of Elders.
2. The elders will present the person(s) to the congregation by visibly posting their name(s) two weeks prior to the annual meeting or special meeting.
3. An affirmation by three-fourths of members present at the meeting will confirm the selection of the elder.

### **Section Six – Term of Office**

1. The Lead Pastor is a permanent member of the Board of Elders.
2. The other elders are limited to a three year term. After serving on the Board of Elders, an elder must take at least one year off before he can be considered to be invited back to serve again on the Board of Elders.
3. Voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon 30 days' notice by the elder. The Board of Elders will take final action regarding a resignation.
4. In-voluntary termination. It may be terminated by a three fourths vote of the membership at a meeting called by the Board of Elders. This meeting must be announced by a notice visibly posted at the Church two weeks prior to the meeting. Previous to this posting, the Board of Elders must ask the elder for his resignation and give him two weeks to respond.
5. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the dismissal can be accelerated.

## **Article III: Lead Pastor**

### **Section One – Qualifications**

He is:

1. to be a man in agreement with our statement of Belief
2. to meet the Scriptural qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4

### **Section Two – Responsibilities**

The Lead Pastor as an overseer and spiritual shepherd:

1. serves as a member of the Board of Elders and oversees the church activities
2. preaches and teaches the Word of God, administers the ordinances and, along with the elders, directs the spiritual welfare of the Church
3. oversees the pastoral staff, all ministries and all employees

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### **Section Three – Authority**

He shall have the freedom:

1. to act administratively, to give counsel to, and to participate in or override any decisions of those for whom he is responsible
2. to determine his pastoral objectives, with input & affirmation from the Elder Board
3. to determine his own weekly pastoral schedule

### **Section Four – Limitations**

The Lead Pastor is:

1. not to make any decisions reserved to be made by the Board of Elders
2. able to be overridden by a majority decision of the other Elders
3. not able to serve as the Chairman of the Board of Elders

### **Section Five – Accountability**

The Lead Pastor is accountable to:

1. the Board of Elders
2. the congregation

### **Section Six – Selection**

The Lead Pastor shall be selected as follows:

1. The Board of Elders shall approve a job description and candidacy process.
2. A pastoral search committee appointed by the Board of Elders shall recommend a candidate to the Board of Elders.
3. Upon approval of a candidate, the Board of Elders shall present him to the Church. Only one candidate at a time shall be presented.
4. His acceptance requires a three fourths affirmation by the members present at a special business meeting. A written notice of the meeting is to be visible posted at the Church two weeks prior to the meeting.

### **Section Seven – Term of Office**

1. Voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon 30 days' notice by the Lead Pastor. The board of elders will take final action regarding a resignation.
2. In-voluntary termination. It may be terminated by a three fourths vote of the membership at a meeting called by the Board of Elders. This meeting must be announced by a notice visibly posted at the Church two weeks prior to the meeting. Previous to this posting, the Board of Elders must ask the Lead Pastor for his resignation and give him two weeks to respond.
3. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the dismissal can be accelerated.

### **Section Eight – Vacancy**

When the office of Lead Pastor is vacant, the Elder Board may appoint a temporary replacement while a pastoral search committee is formed and a new Lead Pastor is chosen.

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### Article IV: Associate Pastor

#### Section One - Qualifications

He is:

1. to be a man in agreement with our statement of belief
2. to meet the scriptural qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4

#### Section Two – Responsibilities

Associate Pastors have the responsibility for the organization and supervision of their ministry.

#### Section Three – Authority

Associate Pastors shall have the authority to act administratively to, give counsel to, participate in, and override any decision of, those for whom they are responsible.

#### Section Four – Limitations

Associate Pastors are:

1. not to make any decisions reserved to be made for the Lead Pastor, the Board of Elders or other pastors
2. able to be overridden by the Lead Pastor
3. eligible to serve on the Board of Elders but not eligible to be the Chairmen of the Elders

#### Section Five – Accountability

The Associate Pastors are accountable to the Lead Pastor.

#### Section Six – Selection

The Associate Pastors are to be selected as follows:

1. The Board of Elders shall approve a job description and selection process.
2. After the candidate is approved by the Lead Pastor, the candidate requires an affirmation vote of the members of the Board of Elders.

#### Section Seven – Term of Office

1. Voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon two weeks' notice by the Associate Pastor.
2. In-voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon two weeks' notice by the Lead Pastor.
3. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the dismissal can be accelerated.

### Article V: Deacon and Deaconess

#### Section One - Qualifications

Deacons and Deaconess:

1. must be a male or female member in good standing
2. must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-10
3. would preferably be at least 21 years of age

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### **Section Two - Responsibilities**

1. organize and perform Church work that the Board of Elders has determined to be under their authority
2. overseeing the receipt of offerings given in church and the distribution of church funds designated to be in their care

### **Section Three - Authority**

The Deacons and Deaconess shall:

1. take appropriate action to accomplish the items for which they are responsible
2. maintain church property in coordination with the Board of Elders
3. maintain the operational manual, in cooperation with the Board of Elders

### **Section Four – Accountability**

The Deacons and Deaconess are:

1. accountable to the Board of Elders and the Church as a whole
2. accountable for the Church property

### **Section Five - Selection**

1. The elders will prayerfully consider eligible members of the congregation for service as a Deacon or Deaconess
2. A member may make written nominations to the Board of Elders no later than four weeks prior to the elections, at which time the nominations will close
3. The Board of Elders shall review all nominations and the Board of Elders shall post a slate of candidate's two weeks prior to the annual meeting or any special meeting to fill a vacancy
4. Their affirmation requires a three-fourths affirmative vote of the members present at a special business meeting. Prior to affirmation a two-week written notice is to be visibly posted at the Church

### **Section Six – Term of Office**

1. Deacons and Deaconesses are limited to a three year term. After serving as a Deacon or Deaconess a person must take at least one year off before being considered to be invited back to serve again as a Deacons and Deaconess
2. Voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon 30 days' notice by the Deacon or Deaconess. The Deacons and Deaconesses will take final action regarding a resignation
3. Involuntary termination. It may be terminated by a three fourths vote of the membership at a meeting called by the Board of Elders. This meeting must be announced by a notice visibly posted at the Church two weeks prior to the meeting. Previous to this posting the Board of Elders must ask the Deacon or Deaconess for his or her resignation and give them two weeks to respond
4. In the case of extraordinary circumstances the dismissal can be accelerated

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### Article VI: Treasurer

#### Section One - Qualifications

The Treasurer:

1. must be a male or female member in good standing
2. must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-10
3. would preferably be at least 21 years of age

#### Section Two - Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. recording tithes and offerings
2. preparing annual giving statements
3. appointing a bookkeeper (or bookkeeping service) for non-confidential tasks within the parameters of the approved budget:
  - a. Payment of invoices and data entry from payroll service
  - b. Preparation of monthly and annual financial statements
  - c. Bank account reconciliation

#### Section Three – Authority

The treasurer is authorized to manage the bank account(s) and add or remove approved signatures

#### Section Four - Accountability

The Treasurer answers directly to the Board of Elders concerning all financial matters

#### Section Five – Selection

1. The elders will prayerfully consider eligible members of the congregation for service as a Treasurer
2. A member may make written nominations to the Board of Elders no later than four weeks prior to the elections, at which time the nominations will close
3. The Board of Elders shall review all nominations, and visibly post in the church one candidate's name two weeks prior to the annual meeting or any special meeting to fill a vacancy
4. Their affirmation requires a three-fourths affirmative vote of the members present at a special business meeting

#### Section Six – Term of Office

1. Term of Office is three years
2. Voluntary termination. It may be terminated upon 30 days' notice by the treasurer. The Board of Elders will take final action regarding a resignation
3. In-voluntary termination. It may be terminated by a three fourths vote of the membership at a meeting called by the Board of Elders. This meeting must be announced by a notice visibly posted at the Church two weeks prior to the meeting. Previous to this posting, the Board of Elders must ask the treasurer for his/her resignation and give two weeks to respond
4. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, the dismissal can be accelerated

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## Article VII: Ministry Leaders

### Section One - Qualifications

Ministry Leaders:

1. must be a male or female member in good standing
2. must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-10
3. would preferably be at least 21 years of age

### Section Two - Responsibilities

Ministry Leaders:

1. will head the department in the area of their service
2. will operate under the direction of the Deacons and Deaconesses or the Board of Elders according to the authority structure determined by the Board of Elders

### Section Three – Authority

Ministry Leaders have authority to:

1. take appropriate action to accomplish the items for which they are responsible

### Section Four – Accountability

Ministry Leaders:

1. in paid staff positions will be accountable to the Lead Pastor
2. in non-paid positions will be accountable to either the Deacons and Deaconesses or the Board of Elders according to the authority structure determined by the Board of Elders

### Section Five - Selection

The leaders of the various departments and committees shall be appointed by the Board of Elders.

### Section Six - Term of Office

1. They shall serve an indefinite term
2. Paid positions may be dismissed at the discretion of the Lead Pastor
3. Non-paid positions may be dismissed at the discretion of the Board of Elders

## Article VIII: Committees

The Church shall have committees which support and oversee various aspects of the Church's ministries

### Section One – Committee Types

The Church may have

1. Standing Committees – carry on an ongoing work within the Church
2. Special Committees – created by the Board of Elders for specific, temporary purposes and which are dissolved upon the conclusion of the task

### Section Two – Committee Members

The Board of Elders may commission and dissolve standing or special committees

1. Members are appointed or selected from volunteers
2. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of every committee



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### Article IX: Discipline

#### Section One - Purpose

1. The chief aim of church discipline is the restoration of the offender. Therefore, church discipline is a process designed to give the offender opportunity to repent and be restored. Even the act of exclusion is designed to awaken the offender to the seriousness of his condition
2. The secondary aim of church discipline is to protect the Congregation by removing the temptation to sin and by preserving a high moral standard among the members
3. Scripture warns against practicing any sin, but not every sin shall be an infraction subject to church discipline. Certain sins are particularly harmful both to the member and to this Church; it is for these kinds of sins that a member of this Church will be subject to church discipline

#### Section Two - Procedure

1. The beginning stage of church discipline does not involve this Church; one member who is aware of the sin of another has the initial responsibility to confront that member for the purpose of prompting repentance and restoration
  - a. Members aware of sin of another member are encouraged to follow the procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-17
  - b. Members are warned against bringing public accusations against elders and should only do so on the evidence of two or more (1 Timothy 5:19)
2. If the member is unwilling to repent and be restored, the matter shall be presented before the Elders at a special meeting called for that purpose
3. The Elders shall investigate the matter to determine if an offense warranting church discipline has been committed and whether the member involved understands the position and standard of this Church
4. If the Elders determine that such an offense has been committed they shall meet with the member involved for the purpose of prompting repentance and restoration
5. The Elders shall determine if the matter shall be presented to the congregation
6. Any church discipline matter presented to the congregation shall be presented at a special meeting called for that purpose

#### Section Three - Protection of Member

1. The goal of church discipline and the procedure outlined in this section is the restoration of the member involved, not his or her dismissal
2. The Elders who investigate the matter and meet with the member involved shall keep the information obtained confidential
3. Those who are present at the special meeting of the Elders, shall keep the information obtained confidential
4. The special congregational meeting shall be opened only to active members of this Church, as shown on the membership roll at the time of the meeting

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## Article X: Meetings

### Section One - Voting

The following matters require the vote of the members:

1. The affirmation of Lead Pastors, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, and Treasurer
2. The approval of the annual budget
3. Amendments of the Constitution and Bylaws
4. The purchase, sale or mortgaging of real estate and major property

### Section Two - Annual Meetings

The annual meetings of the Church for the affirmation of officers and the approval of the budget shall be held at a time specified by the Board of Elders. A four-week prior notice is to be given to the membership.

### Section Three - Special Meetings

Special meetings to transact business may be called by the elders at any time upon two (2) weeks' notice to the membership.

### Section Four - Petitions

After the Deacons and Deaconesses or Board of Elders have decided a matter, members have the right of petition. The Elder Board must call a special meeting upon receiving a petition having signatures of 30% of the active membership. A two-thirds majority vote of all active members is required to override the decision. Absentee votes will be acceptable until the start of the special meeting.

## Article XI: Operational Manual

### Section One - Provision

The Board of Elders and the Deacons and Deaconesses are to provide an operational manual for the administration of the Church.

### Section Two - Contents

The operational manual shall contain

1. the structure of the Church organization
2. the responsibilities, authority, and accountability of each Church position
3. the policies and procedures of each committee and department of the Church

## Article XII: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote of the members present. A four-week prior notice is to be given to the membership.