



PO Box 5076  
Largo, Florida  
33779

888.233.NCLL (6255)  
info@NCLL.org  
www.NCLL.org

## **Bylaws of New Life Methodist Church**

### **ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE**

- A. Name: This congregation of believers shall be known as New Life Methodist Church. The church is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Alabama
- B. Purpose: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

### **ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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

- B. Statement of Faith

- 1. Beliefs on Doctrine

- We profess Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God, and resurrected Lord of heaven and earth.

- We believe in God the Father engaged in our lives. God the Father hears and answers our prayers and provided a way for us to be saved from sin and death. Brings us into a loving and hope-filled relationship with Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

- We believe in God the Son who is both fully human and fully God. We believe Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We believe Jesus lived a sinless life and willingly died on the cross to bring us into a relationship with God the Father. We

believe that Jesus' sacrifice brings the opportunity of salvation to all people who will believe in Him and trust their lives to His authority.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit who is equal with the Father and the Son. We believe the Holy Spirit is God's very presence in us. We believe the Holy Spirit not only helps us accept Jesus and the salvation, but the Holy Spirit is continually transforming followers of Jesus into the image of Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives every follower of Jesus spiritual gifts that we use to help us be an effective witness for Jesus.

Salvation simply means having a right relationship with God both now and forever. We believe sin separated us from God. Those who put their faith in Jesus Christ repent of their sin, confess Jesus as their Savior, publicly come into God's family.

We believe baptism is an outward sign of our adoption into God's family (the church). We believe that baptism does not save a person. However, baptism is an essential step in one's faith journey, publicly identifies a person as follower of Jesus Christ.

We believe Communion is a time to remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and renew our relationship with Him. Each time Communion is offered we welcome all who seek Jesus to the table.

We believe that God has a unique purpose for every person. As followers of Jesus, we seek to discover our specific purpose.

We believe that all people have a sinful nature and all people have sinned. We believe salvation is available to any person who will put their faith in Jesus as Savior.

We believe the Church is made up of all those in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We believe the Church is called to live in fellowship with one another, worship together in unity and help each other become more like Christ.

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. We believe the Bible contains all we need to know about salvation and it is the final authority for our faith and practice.

## 2. Marriage and Sexuality

- i. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility or space owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined by anatomy at birth (and not subject to change). Whenever there is a conflict between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; I Cor. 7:1-9)
  - ii. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined in (a) above. (Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
  - iii. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:26-27)
- b. Sanctity of Life

- i. We believe that an intentional act or omission that facilitates premature death, is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. (; Acts 17:28)
- ii. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. {139:13-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
- c. Love. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal graciously, humbly, gently, and patiently with those who oppose us. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:17-18)
- d. Lawsuits within the Church. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits within the church. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- e. Protection of Children. We believe that children are from the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child. (Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:6, 19:14; Mark 10:14)

### **ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Qualifications For Membership. Members of the church are those members who were previously members of the New Life United Methodist Church. Those seeking new membership must:
  - 1. Through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
  - 2. We recommend attend a pre-membership class led by a member of the pastoral staff or appointee in which they will review the church's statement of faith, bylaws, general practices and policies, and expectations of members. If someone does not attend a class they should state/sign that they have read and understood the church bylaws.
  - 3. Be interviewed by the pastor, pastoral staff and/or church council to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders.
  - 4. Membership will be granted upon the recommendation of the pastor and a majority vote of the church body at any service where the pastor presides over, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
    - a. By baptism at this local church following a profession of faith as a believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
    - b. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized subsequent to a profession of faith; or
    - c. By testimony of faith, having been baptized in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice.

## B. Privileges of Membership

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

## C. Automatic Termination of Membership

1. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if:
  - a. the member adopts opinions—verbally, in print, or in any other manner or medium—that are in direct contravention to the church's statement of faith. Since agreement with the church's statement of faith is a requirement for membership in this church, the member's non-conforming statements will be treated by the pastor and the church Governing Board as the member's resignation.
  - b. the member unites in membership with another church.
  - c. the member files a lawsuit in violation of the statement of faith.
  - d. the member dies.
2. For any memberships terminated in accordance with the above provisions, with the exception of memberships terminated under (d) above, the church may send a letter informing the prior member of the termination, but this is not required.

Transfer or Resignation of Membership: Members not under the disciplinary process of Article 3 section E may request a letter of transfer be sent to another church. A member may resign at any

time. A member can request a letter of transfer or written statement of good standing upon such resignation. However, no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon resignation for a member under the disciplinary process of Article 3 section D, except at the discretion of the pastor.

#### D. Discipline of A Member

1. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the local church or the body as a whole, he or she is to go to the offending party and seek to restore the offender. Before going, the confronter should first examine him or herself and go with a spirit of humility and the goal of restoration.
2. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter in going again to the offending party. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
3. If the matter is still unresolved after taking the steps outlined in section E.1 and E.2 above, the two members aware of the offense shall, in keeping with Matthew 18, bring the issue before the pastor and the church Governing Board, who are representatives of the church body.
4. If the pastor and church Governing Board agree with the member that the offending conduct is of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of the member or the body as a whole, they shall attempt to meet with the offending brother or sister. If reconciliation is not reached, the pastor and church Governing Board, as representatives of the church body, shall, upon a majority vote of those present at a meeting of the church Governing Board, terminate the offending individual's membership without further notice to the him or her. Unless the matter involves an issue of safety or security to the members of the church at large, the specifics of the matter shall not be addressed in a public forum or with the general church membership.
5. The pastor and church Governing Board shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline. If the pastor or a church Governing Board member is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he or she shall not be permitted to vote on his or her own membership termination.
6. For any memberships terminated in accordance with this provision, the pastor may cause a letter to be written informing the prior member of the termination, although he or she is not required to do so.
7. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.
8. Affiliated co-laborers: A person desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this church but not a member, but hold our same beliefs, may participate in activities and may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and the church Governing Board. This individual does not, however, grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s). Service shall not entitle them to hold any office, vote in, or have any say in any church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. However, we do seek input from everyone who participates in church activities, even if they are not members.
  - a. If the pastor or his designee so determines, this person should not be participating they may remove them from an activity.
  - b. For an individual removed from participating, must make a request to the pastor and the governing board for approval before participating further or in any other activity. It requires a majority vote from the governing board before this individual may participate going forward. The governing board may require the individual to take classes or seek other training before participating in any activity.

**ARTICLE 4**  
**OFFICERS**

- A. Designation of Corporate Officers: As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor or chairman of the governing board shall serve as president of the corporation; the chairman of the governing board or trustees chair on the governing board shall serve as vice president of the corporation; the governing board SPRC (Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee) shall serve as secretary of the corporation; and the governing board finance chairman shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.
- B. Church Officers: The church officers are pastor(s), church Governing Board members, and any other officers the church deems necessary. The church shall have at least three (3) church Governing Board members with a maximum of fifteen (15) members.
1. One time only existing governing board of New Life United Methodist church shall become the governing Board of New Life Methodist Church until a vote by a church conference in 2023.
- C. Eligibility For Church Officers
1. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the statement of faith set forth in Article 2. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm in writing their agreement with the statement of faith.
  2. All church officers must be approved initially by the pastor to commence in their offices.
  3. Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position. Affiliated co-laborers with this church are not eligible for such election or appointment.
- D. Election of Church Officers: The annual election of officers, other than the senior and other pastors, by the church membership shall occur during the month of \_\_\_ January\_\_\_ at the annual church Conference; with the exception of year 2023 it should occur in the month of February. The Governing Board may, from time to time, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote by a majority of the eligible church membership, present and voting at any governing board meeting, special church business meeting or Church Conference. Members may submit to the pastor and the church Governing Board nominations for the governing board. The pastor and the church Governing Board shall then serve as the nominating committee for all general elections of board members.
- E. Terms of Service for Officers
1. The relationship between the senior pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special church business meeting by following the procedures outlined in Article 6, provided notice of the meeting is given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to the meeting. A majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to remove the pastor from office. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership.
  2. Any other church Governing Board member may be removed from office before his term expires for any reason stated or unstated upon motion by any church Governing Board member and an affirmative majority vote of the other church Governing Board members at a duly called meeting of the church Governing Board. No congregational vote is necessary for church Governing Board member removal. This process is intended to protect the personal or private information of any church Governing Board member being removed from office.
  3. The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor and other staff members, shall be three years, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-elected

or re-appointed with a vote of the majority of the governing board, if that member request to remain on the governing board at the end of their term.

- a. If there are nominees for a board position that have been approved by governing board, and the current member wishes to continue at the end of their term then there should be an election for that position, in the next Church Conference, the governing board cannot just re-appoint.
  - b. A term is from January after the annual conference for three years.
  - c. For 2023 only, the board should be divided into 3 groups so that the church conference is not voting for all new members every 3 year, For the current board members Chair 1<sup>st</sup> term to be 3 years, Co Chair 2 years, Sec 1 year.
  - d. Board members may serve more than one position on the board when required.
  - e. Members of the board will become members of the Corporation.
    - i. Pastor or chairman of governing board is the President of the corporation
    - ii. Chairman governing board or Chair of trustees is the Vice president corporation
    - iii. SPRC is the secretary of the corporation
    - iv. Finance chairman is the treasurer of the corporation
  - f. Chairman of the governing board should be elected or reappointed by the members of the governing board not elected directly by church conference vote. That position should be re-evaluated each year by the governing board after the Church Annual Conference.
4. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the church Governing Board, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled for the duration of their term at any regular church business meeting by a majority vote of Governing Board members present.
  5. All elected and appointed officers can serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless for personal reasons they cannot serve or are removed for disciplinary reasons.

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

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

**ARTICLE 5**  
**DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS**

**A. The Pastor**

1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He or she shall administer the ordinances of the church; act as moderator, or appoint a moderator, at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters; supervise the teaching ministries of the church; and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of Scripture, the pastor has the final authority.
2. The pastor and church Governing Board, on behalf of the church, shall establish committees and appoint the members of the various committees at the annual church business meeting or, in the case of a vacancy or newly created committee, at any duly called special meeting. The pastor shall serve as the president of the corporation. He or she shall publicly inform all newly elected officers of the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He or she shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to the position of pastor. He or she shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he or she exercises the ministry God has given him.
3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for any other purposes, are under the control of the pastor, who, with the advice and counsel of the church Governing Board, shall be able to determine the appropriateness of all property use, as well as persons permitted to use the church property.
4. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his absence, he or she (or the chairman of the church Governing Board and/or the lay leader in the church in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform his duties) shall be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith.
5. The pastor and the church Governing Board shall be responsible to establish mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs. There will be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to abuse of minors, and any reasonable suspicions of child abuse alleged to be perpetrated by staff, volunteers, members or non-members will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement or child abuse prevention authorities. The pastor or his designee will be responsible to provide yearly child abuse prevention training for all staff and volunteers.

**B. The Church Governing Board**

1. The church Governing Board shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the church. The church Governing Board is responsible for making preparations to observe church ordinances and shall consider applications for church membership and affiliated co-laborers if the pastor is not available to make these determinations. The church Governing Board shall consider benevolence needs, disburse the benevolence fund in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The church Governing Board shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the church Governing Board may appoint a pulpit committee.



2. Following the annual church business meeting, the church Governing Board shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman and other positions within the Governing Board as required.
  3. A full time pastor should server as president of the Corporation and be part of the governing board. the chairman shall serve as vice president of the corporation, SPRC shall serve as secretary of the corporation and finance chairman shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.
    - a. In cases of part time pastor they may server as president of the corporation, if they agree to take this position. If they do not take this position see ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS (A), but the part time pastor is still part of the governing board.
  4. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the church Governing Board under these bylaws, the church Governing Board has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called business meeting:
    - a. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
    - b. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
    - c. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.
    - d. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.
  5. All powers of the church Governing Board (other appointed group) shall be compatible with the laws of the state of Alabama.
  6. The church Governing Board shall, in conjunction with the pastor, conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on child abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a church financial investment policy (if applicable).
  7. Each church Governing Board member shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the church Governing Board that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the bylaws.
- C. Secretary of the Corporation: Shall with the church governing board member/s, along with any designated assistant by the church governing board shall:
1. Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
  2. Maintain and file minutes of all church business and church Governing Board meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these bylaws.

- a. All files can be kept electronically in a location that is accessible by the governing board. This includes minutes, and/or bylaws or other such church business documents.
  - 3. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
  - 4. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary of the corporation, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the chairman of the church Governing Board.
  - 5. The SPRC shall serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a member in good standing.
- D. Treasurer of the Corporation: The church finance chair, along with any assistant of the recording treasurer, shall:
- 1. Oversee the counting by two members of congregation and record in a permanent record all monies received as church offerings by the recording treasurer. This shall be done following each church service or day of services. The money collected should be deposited in the bank, including moneys received from outside sources.
  - 2. The recording treasurer to convey in a timely manner all funds received to the person designated by the church Governing Board for verification.
  - 3. The recording treasurer to maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue an official receipt to each contributor at the end of the fiscal year.
  - 4. The church treasurer to keep in the church office an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds; make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by the pastor and the church Governing Board, and for annual, quarterly or otherwise special or regular business meetings; and deliver such records to his or her successor upon leaving office.
  - 5. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.
- E. Trustees: The church will elect a Board of Trustees as part of the Governing Board to oversee all real estate needs including legal issues, construction, repairs, and general upkeep. The Governing Board will elect the trustees chairperson.
- 1. For 2023 only the trustees that were at New Life United Methodist Church, will be the trustees until their term expires.
- F. Lay Leader: The lay leader should be appointed by the pastor. The term of the Lay Leader should be three years but maybe reappointed by the pastor if the lay leader wants to continue that position.
- 1. The lay leader is a member of church, governing board and servers on lay leadership committee (steering committee).
  - 2. The lay leader is responsible for communications with the laity of the church and to serve as a liaison between the clergy and the members of the congregation.
- G. Duties Of All Officers
- 1. All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church admin assistant at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office or electronic location that can be accessed by the admin assistant, and or the governing board.
  - 2. Any officer who neglects his or her duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from office, at the discretion of the Pastor and Governing Board,

and another may be appointed by the Pastor & Governing Board to serve the un-expired term.

H. All members of the governing board may vote on any motion presented in the board meeting.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH GOVERNING BOARD**

#### **A. Annual Church Business Meeting**

1. The annual church business meeting, for the election of officers and the transaction of other business, shall be held in \_\_\_\_ January \_\_\_\_\_. A quorum shall consist of the eligible members present. Public notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.
2. The pastor or his designee shall serve as moderator of church business meetings. In the temporary absence of the pastor, or if the office of pastor is vacant, the church Governing Board chairman or his designee shall serve as moderator. In the event of a conflict of interest, the church Governing Board may substitute a moderator.
3. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling.
4. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, he may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises and treat the person as a trespasser.
5. Church business meetings, including the annual church business meeting and special meetings, may be held by electronic video means for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person church business meetings. A quorum shall be all eligible voting members attending the virtual meeting, and voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the church Governing Board. Notice of business meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the church Governing Board to be most likely to reach church members at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Such notice satisfies "notice from the pulpit" when that method of notice is otherwise required by these bylaws. Attendance at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
6. The fiscal year of the church shall begin \_\_\_\_January 1\_\_\_\_ and end \_\_\_\_December 31\_\_\_\_.

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

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

passage of amendments and motions, whether by the church Governing Board voting at a church Governing Board meeting or by the members voting in a church business meeting.

- D. Motions: Members who desire that a certain motion be made or subject matter be discussed during an annual, regular, or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the pastor and church Governing Board two weeks prior to the set meeting, who will then consider the proposal and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church. All other motions will be presented by the pastor and/or chairman of the church Governing Board (or other moderator if the office of pastor is vacant) unless the pastor and/or the church Governing Board has delegated authority to another member and/or officer to raise certain motions. No motions will be made from the floor.
- E. Meetings of the Church Governing Board
1. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the church Governing Board shall be held at such time and place as the church Governing Board determines.
  2. Special Meetings. The pastor or any two Governing Board members may call a special meeting of the church Governing Board at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the church Governing Board may be held.
  3. Notice of Meetings
    - a. Requirement of Notice: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the church Governing Board unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the church Governing Board.
    - b. Method of Notice: Notice shall be sent to each church Governing Board member for special meetings by means of the governing board chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, text, or email at each church Governing Board member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the church Governing Board member to the admin assistant for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the chairman or the pastor. In the event the pastor or chairman refuses to give notice, any church Governing Board member may give notice of any meeting. The governing board member that provides notice, but is responsible to verify that notice is duly provided.
    - c. Content of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
  4. Time of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall be delivered by the person charged with giving notice, not less than two days before the date of the meeting.
  5. Waiver of Notice: A church Governing Board member may waive notice of a meeting of the church Governing Board by written statement, and attendance by the church Governing Board member at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
  6. Quorum. A quorum for meetings shall consist of a majority of the church Governing Board. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date certain duly noticed to all church Governing Board members for not more than ten days thereafter. At that later-noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those church Governing Board members then present.
  7. Roles. At every meeting of the church Governing Board, the chairman, or in his absence, the officer designated by the chairman or in the absence of a designation, the person (who shall be one of the officers, if any is present) chosen by a majority of the church Governing Board members present, shall act as chairman and/or moderator, and shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner as determined by the chairman. The Governing Board will determine at each meeting who record accurate minutes of church Governing Board meetings and

promptly deliver such minutes to be posted electronically. In the absence of the designated recorder the chairman may appoint another person to act as Governing Board recorder of the meeting.

8. Participation in Meetings. Any one or more church Governing Board member may participate in a meeting of the church Governing Board by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for purposes of determining if a quorum is present. The members that are present in a meeting may decide to accept or decline conference call participants if it's not advantageous to do so or reschedule the meeting for the party or parties, when it is acceptable for a majority of participants.

## **ARTICLE 7 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES**

- A. Purpose: The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program (either a Sunday School and/or a weekday educational program) for the purposes of winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.
- B. Church Participation: All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor and church Governing Board, on behalf of the church, may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interests of the church.

Agreement with Statement of Faith: All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God.

## **ARTICLE 8 COMMITTEES**

- A. Committees: The pastor and church Governing Board, on behalf of the church, may designate or form any committees and may appoint members and/or chairpersons of said committees as considered by the pastor and church Governing Board to be in the best interests of the church. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees.
- B. Actions of Committees: Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Their primary function is to research and recommend. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the pastor and church Governing Board, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. Each committee shall have a secretary who keeps and timely submit minutes of each meeting to the pastor and the designee of the church governing board to be filed with church records, the preferred method of keeping records is electronically when possible. If deemed appropriate by the pastor and the church Governing Board, each committee, in conjunction with the chairman, will submit an annual report to the church of the decisions and plans of each committee.

## **ARTICLE 9 DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

## **ARTICLE 10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

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

### Definitions

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

### B. Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the church Governing Board and, if applicable, members of committees with governing church Governing Board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the church Governing Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining church Governing Board or committee members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a. The chairman of the church Governing Board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - b. After exercising due diligence, the church Governing Board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - c. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the church Governing Board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
4. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy
- a. If the church Governing Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
  - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the church Governing Board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
5. Records of Proceedings
- a. The minutes of the church Governing Board shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the church Governing Board or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
  - b. The minutes of the church Governing Board also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.
6. Compensation
- a. A voting member of the church Governing Board or any committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
  - b. A voting member of the church Governing Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, are not prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.
7. Annual Statements: Each director, officer, and member of a committee with governing church Governing Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
8. Periodic Reviews: To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
  - b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.
9. Use of Outside Experts: When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for above, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the church Governing Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

## **ARTICLE 11 BINDING CHRISTIAN ARBITRATION**

- A. Submission To Arbitration: Members of the church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.
- B. Arbitration Procedures: The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the church Governing Board. If the church Governing Board has not adopted procedures, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

## **ARTICLE 12 TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS**

- A. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.
- B. Political involvement: No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- C. Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of the church, the church Governing Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the church Governing Board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.
- D. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate against members, applicants for membership, students, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. This policy statement



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

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

**ARTICLE 13  
AMENDMENTS**

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

1. For the year 2023 only, the Governing Board may make changes to the bylaws as required, however, all changes made would be submitted for approval at the next church business meeting.

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

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Date

**From:** Barbara Weller bweller@gibbsfirm.com   
**Subject:** Re: NCLL sample Methodist Bylaws  
**Date:** February 4, 2023 at 2:02 PM  
**To:** Robert Godsey rjgodsey@me.com

BW

TO: Mr. Robert Godsey, New Life Methodist Church, Grant, AL

Thanks for forwarding your Bylaws-in-progress. I congratulate you for taking this process so seriously as you are making this document your own. I have several comments below—many of which are related to the comments made in your document.

1. With regard to why we include a specific statement of faith on the LGBT issues—1) this is one of the primary reasons you are leaving the UMC, 2) as Francis Shaeffer once said, the most important issues for a church to deal with are the key cultural (or doctrinal) issues of the day, which in our day are the LGBT and life issues, and 3) courts will recognize a church's beliefs in this area (i.e., not marrying same sex couples, not allowing a biological male with gender dysphoria to use the ladies bathrooms or sleep with female teens on a youth group trip, etc.); however, the church must clearly state those beliefs. I have attached alternate marriage policies that the church GB could enact. Article 12, D refers back to this type of Statement of Faith or policy.
2. People interpret the Bible in different ways—generally to suit what they already believe. So the UMC church will still say that the Bible supports same sex marriage and ordaining same sex or transgender clergy. Again, this is one of the reasons you are leaving the UMC. Therefore, it is important to state how your church interprets the Bible in these matters. The same would be true of abortion and euthanasia. Different churches interpret the Bible differently in these areas.
3. With regard to euthanasia, there is both active and passive euthanasia. A patient can just refuse additional treatment and die naturally—that is passive euthanasia (or not euthanasia at all). Active euthanasia involves a doctor removing food and water or injecting morphine or other drug to actually cause the death of a person who otherwise would not die—and that is active euthanasia and is what we are addressing here.
4. Of course you can omit any of these cultural beliefs that you don't want to include.
5. You can decide for yourselves what you want to do about a church membership class or other membership requirements. Churches do different things in this regard.
6. Your voting age or age of membership can also be whatever you want to make it, but 16 is probably the lowest you should go.
7. I have attached a church Trespasser Policy for you. In these days when you never know whether some nut job will enter the church to cause a disruption, you need to have some way to deal with that. However, since the church building is your church's private property, and the law permits anyone to ban someone from their private property for any reason, this does not need to be included in the Bylaws in order for the church to legally take this action when/if necessary.

8. Your reasons for dismissing someone from membership can be whatever you want them to be. Generally, they include disruption or no longer identifying as a Christian—perhaps saying bad things about the church on Facebook or other social media.
9. The church discipline of a member (which would generally lead to dismissal) can be whatever you want it to be. Some churches have their Governing Board make this decision. Others allow the pastor to dismiss members. The problem comes when churches will only dismiss someone after a membership vote. That generally requires all the members to be given too much information about that person. Churches have been sued for defamation, slander or violation of privacy rights if all members are given too much information about a situation (primarily money or sex or other family problems).
10. We include affiliated members as a substitute for an inactive membership list. Normally, only active church members (whoever you consider those to be) can vote at church meetings. This avoids having a lot of inactive members show up to vote on (and determine) a controversial issue when they haven't been to church in 5 years or they actually live somewhere else. And obviously, you would not want anyone who is not yet a full church member to vote at church meetings.
11. An active member eligible to vote is a qualified member. Sometimes a church accepts members at 16 but doesn't allow them to vote until 18.
12. Since you are now a registered corporation, as well as a church, you are required to have at least a president, secretary and treasurer of the corporation. You can elect those people any way you like. And the corporation treasurer could merely be a figurehead, while you hire a CPA to actually keep the books. The same could be true of a secretary—a figurehead while you hire someone to do actual secretarial work. Quite often the chairman, secretary and treasurer of the GB would also serve as the corporate officers. These are the people who would sign outside legal documents— things like mortgages, etc.
13. Your Governing Board members can serve as long as you like. The key is to state how and when they are elected in your Bylaws. You can also replace them however you like. The key is to be able to vote a GB member out if they become disruptive, senile, etc. with or without cause.
14. Pulpit committees can be organized as you like but should include a cross-section of membership.
15. Generally only an ordained pastor administers the sacraments. And only an ordained pastor can marry. But some churches allow lay members to assist with communion.
16. Churches determine for themselves what are the duties of the pastor and the duties of the GB.
17. Some churches have Deacons and some don't. Same with Trustees or Elders. Once the church corporation owns the property, there is no need for Trustees. Most churches have only one governing board to handle all church business—although a church can choose to

have several different governing boards with differing duties. Again—your choice.

18. With regard to counting offerings, more than one person should always be involved to avoid fraud and embezzlement (or such allegations).
19. We recommend no motions from the floor to avoid controversy and give the GB and pastor time to consider any motions ahead of the meeting to make recommendations. However, some churches do allow motions at the end of the meeting from the floor or even during the meeting. Again—your choice
20. Churches generally only want teachers who support the church's Statement of Faith. Teaching is a position of authority, so why have someone teaching something the church does not believe?
21. Churches are permitted to engage in political lobbying about issues of concern to the church, but should not use more than 7-10% of their time and money for that. What churches may not do is to officially endorse a candidate during an election. This IRS rule was not enforced under Pres. Trump, who believed churches should be able to freely engage in politics (which is what America's Founders thought as well). This IRS candidate endorsement prohibition rule was made by House Speaker Lyndon Johnson in the 1950s to punish nonprofits who objected to his fraudulent elections in Texas, but our Founders expected churches to be active in electing America's leaders. Biden put that IRS rule back in place (although the IRS does not enforce it these days for Democrat-leaning churches). If Pres. Trump is re-elected again in 2024 and has a GOP Congress, this IRS prohibition might be removed altogether.

I hope this addresses all your concerns and I congratulate you again for so carefully considering all of this. Let me know if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Weller  
Ministry Consultant  
Attorney | admitted in Florida

National Center for Life and Liberty  
PO Box 5076  
Largo, FL 33779-5076

727-362-3700  
888-233-NCLL (6255)  
Fax: 727-398-3907  
Email: [bweller@gibbsfirm.com](mailto:bweller@gibbsfirm.com) | [www.NCLL.org](http://www.NCLL.org)

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PO Box 5076  
Largo, Florida  
33779

888.233.NCLL (6255)  
info@NCLL.org  
www.NCLL.org

## Trespasser Policy NCLL Sample

### Sample Trespasser Policy:

Although the general public is invited to all the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor, (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board), be treated as a trespasser.

### Additional guidelines/suggestions for implementing a trespasser policy:

- If a disruption in church services/scheduled event, etc., is anticipated, the ministry should notify law enforcement ahead of time.
- Protestors have an absolute legal right to peacefully protest on public sidewalks outside the church or ministry. Under such circumstances, consider offering protestors water, coffee, donuts, etc., as a witness to the community; however, this should only be done if the protestors are acting peacefully.
- Trespass charges may only be brought if protestors come onto the church's private property or if the protest is not peaceful.
- Persons who become disruptive should be asked to leave the property and police should be notified/called if such persons refuse. Have a plan in place for how to manage the congregation or other large group if the disruption occurs during a church service or other official function (e.g., plan to have the music director lead the congregation in singing until police arrive and resolve the situation)
- It is up to the ministry whether to allow known or potential disruptors to enter the ministry property and only to treat them as trespassers if they actually become disruptive.

## Sample Church Marriage Policy Provision

(Consider including with the Church's Marriage Policy)

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, <CHURCH NAME> will only recognize marriages between one man and one woman, as biologically determined. <INSERT APPLICABLE SCRIPTURAL/BIBLICAL REFERENCES HERE>. Further, the ministers and staff of <CHURCH NAME> shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman, as biologically determined, and the facilities and property of <CHURCH NAME> shall only host weddings between one man and one woman, as biologically determined.