

# By-Laws of Life Community Church of Owensboro Kentucky

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## I. Membership

### i. Qualifications

Membership of Life Community Church will consist of:

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation
3. Completion of the membership class
4. A commitment to abide by the membership covenant

### ii. Candidacy and Reception

Membership can be attained by:

1. Meeting each of the qualifications of membership
2. Majority vote of the church in any of its regular Family meetings
3. Transfer of letter from another Baptist church or by statement of faith of their prior conversion experience and scriptural baptism by immersion
4. By restoration to the church membership after having been terminated

### iii. Termination

Membership will be terminated when a member

1. Requests a letter of transfer to join another Baptist church
2. Is dropped from the rolls of membership when he joins a church of another denomination
3. Is deceased
4. Verbally requests to be removed from the church, in the presence of two witnesses

### iv. Discipline

1. It is the basic purpose of the church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The senior pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Reconciliation, rather than punishment, is the

guideline that governs the attitude of one member toward another.

2. Should some serious situation exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the senior pastor and deacons to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18:15-35, I Corinthians 5:1-13, and II Corinthians 2:1-11.
3. All such proceedings will be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and patience. If it is determined that the welfare of the church would be best served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose, and the church may proceed to declare the offender to no longer be a member of the church.

v. Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which made it necessary for the church to exclude him, may upon evidence of his repentance and reformation, be restored to membership by:

1. The request of the individual
2. Recommendation of the pastor and deacons
3. Affirmation vote by the church

vi. Inactive Status

1. Each first and seventh month of the church year, the church roll will be examined for names of members who are inactive by the pastor and deacon body. An inactive member is defined as one who has generally not attended more than they are present for a period of six months, provided they are physically able to attend.
2. Any person identified as inactive will be personally contacted by a member of the deacon body or the pastor with the intention of ministering.
3. After confirmation of inactive status, the deacon body will recommend to the church that these names be placed on the church roll as inactive after a majority vote of the church members present at a family meeting. An inactive member will not be allowed to vote on any church business until that inactive member has been reinstated to active status by a

majority vote of the church members present at a regular family meeting or in response to a time of decision (invitation) at a regular church service. This individual will be restored to full voting privileges after 60 days.

vii. Rights of Membership

1. Every active member will have the right to participate in the matters of:
  - The annual budget
  - The disposition of church assets
  - The merger or dissolution of the church
  - Acquisition of property
  - Amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws of the church
2. Every active member is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in a family meeting, provided the member is present.

## II. Church Officers

### i. Pastor

1. Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor

The senior pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The senior pastor is the under-shepherd of the church in divine worship, passionate evangelism, deliberate discipleship, and compassionate ministry. As such he will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the pastoral staff to perform their tasks. The pastor will counsel with the deacon fellowship and be responsible for the church.

In addition, the pastor should meet the requirements laid out by Paul in I Timothy 3:1-7.

2. Call of the Senior Pastor

Upon chartering, the newly constituted church will receive the recommendation for the pastor from the Mother church. The body will then affirm the recommendation by majority vote.

In the search for a new senior pastor, the deacons, in cooperation with the nominating team, will select a pulpit committee. The recommendation of this team will be for the election of the pastor search team.

### 3. Search for a New Senior Pastor

The search team will bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. The vote for the senior pastor will be at a specially called family meeting. Election will be by secret ballot. In order to affirm the vote, the vote must be at least 80 percent.

### 4. Acceptance of Resignation of the Senior Pastor

In the event of the senior pastor's resignation, the senior pastor will give two weeks notice before terminating his responsibilities as pastor. The letter of resignation will be given to the personnel team and the personnel team will give notice of the resignation to the church.

### 5. Termination of the Senior Pastor

In the event of the need to terminate the senior pastor, the church may declare the office of senior pastor vacant. Such action will take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which the membership has been given two weeks written notice. The meeting may be called upon recommendation by the deacons and the personnel team. The moderator will preside at the meeting. The vote to declare the office vacant will be by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the eligible voting members present will be necessary to call the office vacant. If the membership votes the office vacant, the termination of pastoral duties will be effective immediately upon publication of the results of the vote. The leadership of the church council will determine a fair separation package, not to exceed 30 days salary. If the affirmative does not prevail, the same question cannot be presented to the church until the lapse of at least three months from the date of the vote.

## **ii. Staff**

The church staff will include both ministerial and non-ministerial staff members.

All ministerial staff members will be recommended to the church by a search team, following the same procedure established for the call of a pastor.

The church may terminate a ministerial staff member by a majority vote of the church following the recommendation of the deacons and the personnel team. The termination of duties will be effective immediately upon publication of the outcome of the vote. Compensation may continue for up to 14 days after written notice is given, as determined by the personnel team.

The personnel team, with the Senior Pastor, will have the authority to employ and terminate approved and budgeted non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services will be with the recommendation of the immediate supervising staff member, as appropriate, with consultation of related teams or councils of the church.

All non-ministerial staff members will be professing Christians, who agree to abide by any morality clauses set forth by the personnel team upon offer of employment.

### **iii. Deacons**

#### **1. Qualifications**

Candidates for Deacon Fellowship will be considered on the basis of 1 Timothy 3:8-16 and Acts 6:1-6.

#### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. The responsibility of the Deacons will be to serve the church in accordance with scriptures, proclaiming the Gospel to believers and nonbelievers, caring for church members and other people in the community, leading the church to engage in fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, application, and leading the church in performing its tasks. The deacons also assist in serving the Lord's Supper, teaching, visiting, and any additional roles that are determined needful, with regard to their biblical responsibilities.
- b. The deacons will also be responsible for creating a marriage and sexuality policy for the church. This must be created within the first three months following chartering of the church.

### 3. Election of Deacons

- a. Deacons will be elected for a term of three years after which they will be considered an inactive deacon for a minimum of one year. Subsequent terms may be served on the election by the church family. Shorter terms may be set for deacons newly elected for fulfillment of uncompleted terms and to prevent an unbalanced number of members from rotating off in the same year.
- b. The chairman of deacons will be rotated each year and elected by the Deacon Fellowship.
- c. The deacon chairman, one other active deacon, and the pastor will examine all men nominated by the church family for the ministry of deacon. All current deacons are encouraged to submit written questions for the prospective deacons at this time. After discussion and prayer, the findings of the three will be presented to the deacon fellowship and the deacon fellowship will make a motion at a future business meeting for the election and/or ordination of the selected candidates on an as needed basis. This process should be kept confidential.
- d. All Deacons will be elected by secret ballot on an annual basis by the church body. The number of Deacons will be determined by the Pastor to adequately serve the number of church members with a minimum of 2 deacons at all times.

### 4. Ordination of Deacons

- a. Candidates are interviewed by the pastor and deacon chair.
- b. Candidates are questioned by the deacon ordination council.
- c. Candidates are interviewed in front of the church body, voted upon, and ordained in the ordination service.
- d. Ordained deacons are then voted upon, as needed, by the church for service on the deacon body.

## 5. Termination

The office of deacon may be terminated in the following manner:

- By the deacon's own request
- Misconduct/disqualification (interpreted to mean immoral character, practices, and vices contrary to biblical teachings held by the church and as defined in 1 Timothy 3:8-16)
- Doctrinal lapse
- Destroyer of fellowship within the church

In order to be terminated, the recommendation is brought to the church by the deacon body and voted upon by the church at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Vote for termination will require a simple majority.

## iv. Moderator & Vice Moderator

The church will elect a moderator and vice moderator annually. It will be the duty of the moderator to preside over all family meetings of the church. The moderator and vice moderator will be nominated by the nominating team. The pastor will not serve as moderator, except in case of absolute necessity.

## v. Clerk & Assistant

The church will elect the church clerk and assistant annually. It will be the duty of the clerk to keep, in a suitable manner, a record of the actions of the church, except as otherwise outlined. This person is responsible for keeping a register of the names of the members with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptism. This person will issue letters of dismissal as voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notices of all meetings, where such notices are necessary, as indicated in these by-laws. All church records are church property and will be filed in the church office, when an office is maintained, and designated off-site storage facility approved by church vote in a family meeting.

## **vi. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer**

The church will elect a church treasurer by ballot every three years. It will be the duty of the treasurer to keep an itemized account of all receipts, disbursements, and/or things of value paid or given to the church, as well as to receive, maintain, and disburse funds. The treasurer will make available such records as determined necessary by the Finance Team, to provide for an annual audit.

The nominating team will produce qualified names for consideration as necessary to fill the office.

The treasurer will be bonded, at the expense of the church.

## **vii. Trustees**

Three trustees will hold in trust the property of the church. They will have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It will be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. The trustees will serve as the officers of the corporation, as well as have oversight of the church properties with regard to upkeep and maintenance.

The church will annually vote one-third of the trustee body to serve for a three year term.

Should a trustee be unable to complete the term of office, a successor will be appointed to serve the remainder of the term. If the remaining term is less than one year, the successor will be eligible for appointment for an additional term of office. If greater than one year, the successor may not be elected to a successive term.

Only one deacon may serve as a trustee.

The nominating team will provide names for church consideration. The senior pastor, in cooperation with the fellowship of deacons, will appoint a replacement in the case of an unexpected vacancy.

Trustees will be trusted individuals, knowledgeable, financially sound, and competent.

Those serving as a trustee will have no personal financial responsibility assigned to them.

### **viii. Church Ministry Teams**

A nominating team will be selected by the senior pastor and deacon fellowship. The nominating team will have no fewer than five members, of which no more than one-third and not less than one are active deacons.

All church team members will be elected by the church from nominations presented by the nominating team. There will be a minimum of three team members with a chairperson. Any team member elected to fill any vacancy will serve the unexpired term of the position vacated. Each team chairperson will submit an annual budget request to the stewardship team. The chairman of a team may not serve as a chairman for any other team.

Teams are responsible for electing their officers and establishing operating guidelines. All teams are accountable to the church; however, all recommendations to the church will be evaluated by the church council in terms of church goals and objectives. All teams will bring reports to the church council and deacon fellowship at any time they determine it helpful or when they request such report.

The senior pastor, as well, or his representative from church staff or the deacon fellowship, will be an ex officio (non-voting) member of all ministry teams. (An Operations Manual will list all teams, responsibilities, and procedures for the selection and election of team members.)

### **ix. Church Council**

1. The church council is charged to lead the church in fulfilling the vision and purposes of the church.
2. The church council will consist of the chairs of the deacon body, trustees, each standing team, and the pastor—acting as the chair of the council. The moderator, church clerk, and secretary will attend the meetings and function as nonvoting members.

Others may be invited to attend, by a council member, in order to facilitate the work of the council.

3. The responsibility of the church council will be to lead in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:
  - Adopting and maintaining the church calendar
  - Reviewing and coordinating ministry and program plans
  - Reviewing and maintaining the marriage and sexuality policy
  - Referring financial and budget requests to the appropriate standing teams
  - Reviewing the constitution and bylaws annually
  - Making certain that the constitution and bylaws are followed
  - Communicating with the church body,
  - Presenting, at the first business meeting of the calendar year, the State of the Church address—to be read by the pastor or, in the absence of the pastor, the moderator
  - To develop and maintain the Core Values of the church
4. The church council will meet quarterly. Special meetings can be called, if needed, by the pastor, or moderator in the absence of the pastor.

### **III. Teams**

1. **Standing:**
  - a. Standing teams are permanent teams established for the structure and function of the church.
  - b. All standing team members will be selected by the nominating team and serve three year rotational terms and are not eligible to serve again on the same team for one year. They must be active members of the church at the time of their nomination and remain so through their term of service.

### 3. Nominating

- a. The nominating team is responsible for selecting and presenting to the church active members to fill vacant roles on standing and ministry teams.
- b. A nominating team will be selected by the senior pastor and deacon fellowship. The nominating team will have no fewer than five members, of which no more than one-third and not less than one are active deacons.

### 4. Personnel

- a. The personnel team will consist of at least five members to be appointed as follows:
  - i. the team leader of the facilities usage team to serve a one year term
  - ii. four additional individuals to be nominated by the nominating team and elected by the church to serve a three year term each
  - iii. at least one member will be female
  - iv. no more than two members will be active deacons
- b. Responsibilities of the Personnel Team will include recruiting, interviewing, and recommending paid staff (excluding those called by search committees), when these vacancies occur or when the need for such employees arises. The first personnel team will also create a policy and procedures manual to include: program of benefits, workplace guidelines, performance standards, and morality clause, in consultation with the senior pastor. They will also create and maintain pastoral and ministerial covenants.

### 5. Worship

- a. The Worship Team will be comprised of no fewer than three members (including the worship leader), to be recommended to the nominating team by the worship leader.
- b. Responsibilities of the Worship Team will include: purchases of equipment for staging, recruitment of volunteers for service during worship, and assistance in developing creative elements for the worship service.

## 6. Stewardship

- a. The Stewardship Team will be comprised of no fewer than five members.
- b. Responsibilities of the Stewardship Team will include: development and recommendation of an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans, advise and recommend in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound financial management.
- c. The Stewardship Team will work in conjunction with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

## 7. Discipleship & Education

- a. The Discipleship and Education Team will consist of three members, to be selected by the nominating team.
- b. The responsibilities of the Discipleship and Education Team will be to evaluate, review, and select appropriate Biblical material for Life Groups, new member classes, and other discipleship events on an annual basis. All educational materials selected must adhere to the core beliefs of Life Community Church.

## 8. Outreach & Missions

- a. The Outreach and Missions Team will consist of the pastor and two male and two female members, to be recommended to the nominating team by the pastor.
- b. The Outreach and Missions Team will be responsible for developing and implementing a strategy for community evangelism and planning evangelistic events.

## 9. Fellowship & Facilities Team

The Fellowship & Facilities Team will consist of five members and be responsible for planning social and recreational activities to promote and build the fellowship of the church, as well as maintaining a schedule of church events, unlocking and locking the church for these events, and ensuring that the policies for use are followed. The Fellowship & Facilities should submit planned events to the Church Council.

In each of these teams, the pastor is an ex-officio member. In the event that a team decision results in a tie vote, the pastor has the responsibility to cast a deciding vote.

## 2. Ministry Teams

Ministry teams are created on an as needed basis as recommended by the Church Council, Nominating Team, and/or the Church Body, for a specific purpose and time. At the end of that time, these teams may be reaffirmed, refined, replaced, or discontinued, as recommended by the Church Council, Nominating Team, or Church Body.

All ministry team members will be selected by the nominating team. They must be active members of the church at the time of their nomination and remain so through their term of service.

## IV. Church Meetings

### 1. Worship (times, places, days, etc.)

The church will meet regularly, at least each Sunday, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and worship. Any other church meetings, which will be essential in the promotion of church objectives, will be placed on the church calendar.

Worship services will be open for the entire membership of the church and all people.

### 2. Parliamentary Rules

Roberts' Rules of Order, revised edition, will be the parliamentary rules of procedure for church business. The moderator will select someone to function as parliamentarian, in case of procedural questions.

### 3. Business (semi-annual)

Regular church business meetings, known as "Family Meetings", will be held on a semi-annual basis. Family meetings will be held given a one week notice of the date, time, and location.

### 4. Special Business Meetings

1. Specially called family meetings may be held given a one week notice of the subject, date, time and location, unless an urgent matter necessitates otherwise.

2. Specially called family meeting may be called by the Church Council.

## V. Ordinances

### 5. Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, makes a profession of faith, and a commitment to follow Christ as Lord will be received for baptism.

- Baptism is by immersion in water.
- Baptism will be administered by the pastor or whomever the church authorizes.
- Baptism will be administered as an act of worship during a service called for that purpose.

### 2. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience in which members of the church, by receiving the bread and fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ and look to His second coming. The Lord's Supper is reserved for baptized Christians.

- The Lord's Supper will be observed regularly, at least once each quarter.
- The pastor and deacons, or whomever the church authorizes, will be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- The deacons will be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper during worship services.

### 3. Licensing and Ordaining of Ministers

#### i. Licensure

Any member of the church who has demonstrated and felt the call to the Gospel ministry may, by vote of the membership, at a regular family meeting, may be licensed by the church to the ministry.

#### ii. Ordination

Members of the church who are scripturally qualified and have demonstrated their ability to act as a minister of the Gospel may be ordained if:

- a. A church of like faith makes a written request, or

b. The Church Council recommends

The pastor will assemble an ordaining council for the ordination of qualified, recommended candidates.