

# **Town Center Community Church**

## **Bylaws**

**Revision and Approval Dates:**

**November 16, 1997**  
**November 19, 2000**  
**March 20, 2003**  
**March 16, 2006**  
**March 26, 2011**

## **PREAMBLE**

We the people of Town Center Community Church have entered into a volunteer Christian not-for-profit organization with each other and covenanted together that this church will be to the honor and glory of God, the witness and service of Jesus Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Under the authority of God and in witness to the world, we give ourselves to the above preamble.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the church, as organized under these bylaws, is to guide and facilitate the business activities of acquiring and holding real estate, to collect and disburse money, and to appoint and direct the agencies of the church. It is organized for religious, charitable, and education purposes for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME AND AFFILIATION**

The name of this organization is Town Center Community Church of God, Inc., which now meets for worship, fellowship, & to promote discipleship, missions and evangelism at 1040 Blackwell Road, NE, Marietta, Georgia 30066. For the purpose of this document, the word “corporation” is synonymous with the word “church”. This church will be in harmony with the standards of the Bible as held by the North American Assembly of the Church of God, which meets annually during the month of June in Anderson, Indiana. This church holds a 501(c)(3) exemption under the umbrella status of the North American Assembly of the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana.

## **ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1.**

Participating in this church will not in any way be confused with membership in the universal Body of Christ, which is in the hands of God and God alone. However, for the purpose of orderly and legal conduct of business, the criteria listed in Section 2 will be followed. Registration of all eligible voters will be accomplished at the beginning of each business meeting.

### **Section 2. Voting Qualifications**

- (a) Voting participants will have confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- (b) They will live according to biblical principles set forth in God’s Holy Word.
- (c) They will have worshipped for a period of three consecutive months with this congregation prior to voting in any business meeting. Persons desiring to vote that do not meet the three consecutive month criteria can ask to be included. A majority vote must ensue at the business meeting to determine acceptance.
- (d) They shall be at least sixteen (16) years of age.

## ARTICLE III – THE BOARD OF ELDERS

### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Board of Elders, hereinafter referred to as “the Elders,” will be to function as the official board for the church, serving as corporate officers and as legal representatives of the church. Together with the Pastoral Staff they will direct ministry priorities. The Elders will serve as the legal agency of the church in matters of who may lease, rent, or use the church’s property or facilities for financial gain to benefit the church, or for human services in the name of Christ and for Christian witness and renewal.

### Section 2. Number

The number of elders will be determined by the Elders and will be consistent with the size and ministry needs of the church. The number of elders may increase or decrease to whatever number is deemed appropriate by a majority of the Elders, but shall not fall below six voting members. If a vacancy occurs the remaining Elders may or may not consider a replacement. If the retiring member is replaced, the replacement will serve for the remaining period of time that was originally intended. However, the replacement must first be ratified by a special called business meeting and voted by show of hands or voice vote by the congregation.

### Section 3. Qualification and Selection

Elders shall be selected in accordance with the qualifications described in “Appendix A”.

### Section 4. Pastoral Role

As the spiritual overseer of the church, the Senior Pastor will be a full voting member of the Elders. Other paid pastoral staff shall be ex-officio members but not eligible to vote at the Elder meetings.

### Section 5. Terms

The elder term of service will be comprised of an initial two-year term, optionally followed by a maximum of three additional successive one-year terms, for an accumulated total of four consecutive terms totaling 5 years. Elders must be re-nominated for each successive term. One full year will have elapsed before a former member of the Elders can become eligible for re-nomination and ratification. All terms begin on the first day of the fiscal year.

An elder may resign at any time. Complaints or charges brought against an Elder will be investigated by the Executive Elders. They in turn will present their findings to the other Elders for a final vote and disposition. If an elder conducts themselves in a manner which is in direct violation of the biblical qualifications listed in “Appendix C” and does not show signs of repentance, forced removal from the Elders will occur upon three-fourths majority vote of the other elders.

### Section 6. Elder Roles

Upon ratification by the congregation, the newly elected Elders will meet and select from among its members the Executive Elders (Officers), Ministry Team Elders, and Shepherding Elders according to their spiritual gifts. The Executive Elders will serve one-year terms beginning at the first meeting of the fiscal year. The Executive Elder positions will coincide with the

corporation officers of the same name. Their selection shall follow the process outlined in “Appendix A”.

- (a) The Chair will preside at all elder and business meetings or designate another elder. The Chair will have no Ministry Team responsibilities and will vote only to break a tie. The Chair will have the power to call meetings of the Elders and of the congregation with the approval of the Executive Elders.
- (b) The Vice Chair will preside in the absence of the Chair or by the Chair’s appointment for specific meetings of the church. The Vice Chair will preside over the Bylaws Committee. The Vice Chair will also be responsible to head one Ministry Team or be a Shepherding Elder.
- (c) The Secretary will keep official minutes of the Elders and any congregational business meetings. He/she will keep on file and authenticate all pertinent minutes and collect other appropriate documentation used in making decisions and/or taking action.
- (d) The Treasurer will be responsible to collect, record and disburse all church monies and will do so according to the budget and the direction of the Elders. The Treasurer will also head the Finance Team.
- (e) Other officers may be created as the Elders deem appropriate, and any existing officer may perform any additional duties assigned by the Elders.
- (f) An officer may be removed from office (but not necessarily from the Elders) by a two-thirds majority vote of the other Elder members. In the case of a vacant office, the Elders will appoint another elder to complete the remainder of the one-year term.

### **Section 7. Ministry Team Elders**

Ministry Team Elders will serve one-year terms beginning the first meeting of the fiscal year and will be responsible for the successful performance of a ministry team. Ministry teams will be identified and functions laid out in the Policies and Procedure Manual.

### **Section 8. Shepherding Elders**

Shepherding Elders will serve one-year terms beginning the first meeting of the fiscal year and will be responsible for the oversight and coordination of all lay ministry to the families of the church that are not participating in a small group. The Shepherding Elders may also be assigned to other pastoral care ministries as directed by the pastoral staff.

### **Section 9. The Executive Elders**

The Executive Elders, composed of the four officers and the senior Pastor, shall have the responsibility to act for the elders (and the church) in matters of an emergency nature in accordance with previously approved Ministries and Budget. The Executive Elders may also handle matters of business under the direction of the entire group of Elders. This Executive group will meet at least quarterly. Only specified members of the Executive Elders and their designees will be authorized signers on checks paid from the church accounts.

### **Section 10. Other Duties of the Elders**

- (a) Review and present for ratification the church budget at the annual business meeting.
- (b) Provide for an annual audit of the financial records of the church.
- (c) Perform yearly reviews of the Senior Pastor including salary and benefits.
- (d) Help the Senior Pastor evaluate the salaries and benefits for all paid staff.

- (e) Provide liability coverage for all personnel and church property in an amount determined by the Executive Elders.

### **Section 11. Meetings**

Elders will meet regularly to pray, study and conduct church business. Special meetings may be called at the request of two or more elders.

### **Section 12. Quorum**

A simple majority of elders provides a quorum for the Elders' meetings.

### **Section 13. Spending Limits**

The Elders may not spend any amount of money for repairs and for other matters under its authority in excess of 1.5% of the yearly church budget unless the funds are designated offerings or the expenditure has been approved by the church at a regular or special meeting. This applies to the total per incident expenditure, such that the entire cost is not divided into smaller subtotals. In case of extreme emergency, such as when the facility of the church is threatened, the Elders shall spend whatever is necessary. The Executive Elders will be authorized to approve unbudgeted expenditures up to \$1500.00.

### **Section 14. General Assembly Appointees**

The Elders shall appoint delegates to the Georgia Fellowship of The Church of God's annual meeting according to the bylaws of the Georgia Fellowship. Delegates shall also be appointed to the North American Assembly of the Church of God, which meets annually at Anderson, Indiana. Delegates may serve at more than one assembly. The appointments shall be for one year.

## **ARTICLE IV FINANCE TEAM**

### **Section 1. The Finance Team**

- (a) The Treasurer will head the Finance Team and be responsible for items mentioned in Article III, Section 6 (d).
- (b) The Treasurer will identify and nominate a Financial Secretary to be a part of the Finance Ministry Team and who will be responsible for recording all financial giving by church attendees. The Financial Secretary will send out quarterly giving notices to all recorded givers to the church. The Financial Secretary nominee must be ratified by the Elders. The Financial Secretary must agree to maintain the confidentiality of all giving records.
- (c) The Finance Team will oversee the receipt and disbursement of funds of the church which will be kept in a bank account in the church's name.
- (d) The Finance Team will oversee the annual audit of the congregation's financial records with direction from the Elders. With consultation from the Ministry Team Leaders the Finance Team will draft an annual budget and will submit it to the Elders for approval. This includes working with the Elders to determine proposed salaries and benefits of all paid staff each year. The Finance Team will present the endorsed proposed budget to the congregation for ratification at the Annual Business Meeting. The Finance Team will operate within the fiscal year of the church and be subject to one year terms. Appointments to this team are to be made annually, recommended by the Treasurer and ratified by the Elders.

- (e) Signature authorization of checks are reserved to the Executive Elders or designated church secretary only as outlined in Article III, section 9. Church monies will only be used to support the approved ministries of the church and in administration of its properties.

## **ARTICLE V – THE PASTORAL STAFF**

### **Section 1. Definition**

The pastoral staff will consist of the Senior Pastor and any Associate Pastors, paid or unpaid.

### **Section 2. The Senior Pastor**

- (a) The Senior Pastor will be called by a three-fourths majority vote of the members.
- (b) The Senior Pastor will be an ex-officio member of all other teams, committees and boards. As an ex-officio member, the Senior Pastor has the right to be present at any meeting, though his or her presence is not required.
- (c) The Senior Pastor will perform yearly reviews of the Associate Pastors.

### **Section 3. Senior Pastor Selection Committee**

In the event the church is without the services of a senior pastor, a Pastoral Selection Committee will be appointed by the Board of Elders and ratified by a three-fourths majority of the church in a special called business meeting. This committee will consist of a minimum of five (5) persons, including one Associate Pastor and a minimum of one person from the congregation at large. The Pastoral Selection Committee will investigate the availability of prospective pastors and study their qualifications as to character, leadership abilities, experience, ministerial recognition, and status.

### **Section 4. Senior Pastor Selection Procedure**

- (a) The Pastoral Selection Committee will:
- seek the guidance of a counseling minister, selected by the church or appointed by the Georgia Fellowship of the Church of God.
  - contact Church of God Ministries in Anderson, Indiana for inclusion on their national pastoral search website.
  - consult the Georgia Fellowship of the Church of God Credentials Team for information and certification of ministerial standing before submitting the name of any prospective minister to the church for a vote.
- (b) After an agreement has been reached by the committee on a prospective pastor, a special business meeting of the church shall be called. The committee will submit the name of only one prospective pastor at a time for consideration and possible call. In the event he/she does not receive as much as a three-fourths majority vote of the qualified voters, the committee will proceed to select another prospective minister for presentation. This order of procedure will be followed until a pastor is duly called.
- (c) The pastor's moving expenses, compensation package, and similar considerations will be agreed upon before he/she accepts the call.
- (d) The committee will arrange with the duly called pastor and with ministers in the area for a service of installation that will add dignity to his/her call and express the church's recognition of leadership.

**Section 5. Associate Pastor Selection Procedure**

In the event the church is seeking additional paid pastoral staff, the search team will consist of the Senior Pastor, two elders and a minimum of one person from the congregation at large selected by the Board of Elders. After an agreement has been reached by the committee on a prospective associate pastor the vote is taken to the Board of Elders. Associate Pastors will be called by a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Elders. The committee will submit the name of only one prospective associate pastor at a time for consideration and possible call. In the event he/she does not receive as much as a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Elders, the committee will proceed to select another prospective minister for presentation. This order of procedure will be followed until a pastor is duly called.

**Section 6. Resignation**

The Senior Pastor may terminate their office by notifying the Board of Elders of their resignation in writing. When to vacate the pastorate will be agreed upon by mutual satisfaction of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders. A member of the pastoral staff may terminate their office by notifying the Senior Pastor of their resignation in writing. In the event the church is without a senior pastor, said resignation would be submitted to the Board of Elders.

**Section 7. Vote of Confidence**

A vote of confidence may be called by a member of the pastoral staff regarding his/her leadership or may be called by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. Such a request will be presented to the Board of Elders, and a meeting of the congregation will be called and announced at least one week prior to the date of said meeting. The results of the vote are confidential to the staff member and the Executive Board of Elders

**Section 8. Termination**

The Board of Elders with a three-fourths majority vote of the congregation may terminate the Senior Pastor. The termination will be immediate and all responsibilities relieved. The Board of Elders will determine any severance salary and benefits. A member of the pastoral staff may be terminated at the discretion of the Senior Pastor and a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Elders.

**ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS****Section 1. Notice**

All business meetings of the church will be announced from the pulpit, posted and in public printed form no later than one week (7 full days) prior to the said meeting. The meeting announcement shall include the meeting time, place, date, and purpose.

**Section 2. Annual Business Meeting**

The Annual Business Meeting of the congregation will be held during the last month of the fiscal year. During the Annual Business Meeting the congregation shall:

- (a) Receive reports from the Pastoral Staff and Elders.
- (b) Ratify the nominees for the Board of Elders.
- (c) Ratify the annual budget for the coming fiscal year.

**Section 3. Quorum**

A quorum of fifty percent (50%) of the membership, as determined by the average number of registered voters in the previous three annual business meetings, will be required for all business meetings in which any voting decision is made.

**Section 4. Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or by the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

**Section 5. Parliamentary Guide**

Robert's Rules of Order may be used to guide this body in its business procedures unless otherwise determined by the Board of Elders.

**ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.**

These bylaws will be approved by the Board of Elders and ratified by a three-fourths majority vote in accordance with Article II, Section 2 and Article VI, Section 3 at any regular or special meeting. Amendments shall be made available in written form and posted at least seven (7) days prior to the date called for action. Amendments shall not contradict or nullify the stated purpose and church affiliation contained within these bylaws. All amendments shall first have been approved by a majority of the Board of Elders.

**Section 2.**

Any voting member of the congregation may submit a Bylaws amendment recommendation in writing to the Board of Elders for consideration.

**Section 3.**

At their discretion, the Board of Elders may appoint a Bylaws Committee to study the bylaws and recommend amendments.



## **APPENDIX A: QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9)**

### **PREFACE**

The Apostle Paul instructed first century churches and their pastors to appoint “elders,” those with certain gifts from God, to “direct the affairs of the church” and provide the leadership God ordained for His body (1 Timothy 5:17). Paul made a number of statements regarding the qualifications of those who were to be chosen. Some observations about those statements are appropriate.

- (a) These qualifications given by the Apostle are principles governing the selection of elders. They are guidelines. While one may not measure up to all these guidelines all the time, they are qualities toward which elders must always strive. They are not to be taken lightly. They are very important in helping to determine the kind of persons to look for in the choosing of elders.
- (b) God gives gifts to both men and women through the Holy Spirit for the benefit of service to Christ and the ministry of the church. It is and has historically been the position of Town Center Community Church that the Bible, when interpreted comprehensively, teaches the full equality of men and women in status, giftedness and opportunity for ministry. Therefore, Town Center affirms the participation of women in all levels of leadership, including elder positions and teaching positions (based on spiritual qualification and giftedness).

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 state that the church needs elders who excel in Christian discipline and who are gifted and equipped by God to manage its direction and ministries. Elders should be:

- (a) **ABOVE REPROACH** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7). Persons of integrity and unquestioned character, whose morals and ethics are not open to attack; having reputations for godly Christian character both in the church and in the community at large.
- (b) **HIGH IDEALS OF MARRIAGE** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). The person, whether or not married, holds and demonstrates a sacred regard of marriage and the home is committed to God’s principles regarding marriage and if married, is a faithful husband/wife. This does not mean the leader must necessarily be married, or that the person has never been divorced.
- (c) **TEMPERATE** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Self-controlled, possessing a character which avoids extremes, not pugnacious or quick-tempered.
- (d) **PRUDENT** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Wise, sensible, balanced in judgment; not given to quick and superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- (e) **HOSPITABLE** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Open to the needs and hurts of others, willing to share their heart and home with others in need; unselfish with their personal resources.
- (f) **ABLE TO TEACH** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9). One who teaches by example and by instruction, who communicates beliefs and truths in a manner that encourages Christian commitment.
- (g) **GENTLE** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). Not violent or quarrelsome, but patient.
- (h) **FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). Not stingy, greedy, or preoccupied with amassing material things. A person who tithes to the local congregation and

- supports through attendance, prayer and service the total program and ministry of the church.
- (i) **MANAGES ONE'S FAMILY WELL** (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6). One whose leadership in the family is worthy of their respect because that leadership shows good management and judgment, for "if one does not know how to manage one's own family, how can that person take care of God's church?" An elder's children must not be wild, rebellious or unruly due to inadequate discipline.
  - (j) **NOT SELF-WILLED** (Titus 1:7). One who is not stubborn, who does not demand one's own opinions on others, and not arrogantly self-satisfied. One who is willing to serve without self-interest and must not abuse authority.
  - (k) **DEVOUT** (Titus 1:8). Holy and set apart for God's use. A devoted follower of Christ, seeking to be conformed to Christ's image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of scripture and to guarding their own walk.
  - (l) **NOT A RECENT CONVERT** (1 Timothy 3:6). Persons tested in their faith long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.
  - (m) **HOLDING FAST TO THE WORD** (Titus 1:9). Persons stable in their faith and obedient to the Word of God in all respects, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
  - (n) **NOT ADDICTED TO WINE** (or similar temptations of indulgence) (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). Free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
  - (o) **GOOD REPUTATION WITH OUTSIDERS** (1 Timothy 3:7). One who is well respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
  - (p) **LOVES WHAT IS GOOD** (Titus 1:8). One who desires the will of God in every decision.
  - (q) **JUST** (Titus 1:8). One who seeks to be fair and impartial, whose judgments must be based on scriptural principles.

## **APPENDIX B: PROCESS FOR ELDER SELECTION**

Each year the current elders will determine the number of positions, if any, that need to be filled by the following process.

1. The congregation will be provided with teaching regarding the biblical qualifications for elders and their scriptural role. With the biblical qualifications in mind, members of the church will be given at least 4 weeks to prayerfully submit in writing to the Board of Elders the names of members for consideration. Those submitting a name should receive permission from the proposed nominee before their name is submitted. The Board of Elders may add additional names for consideration. Any nominee may withdraw their name from consideration at any time.
2. Each nominee will be offered a written job description and application to complete. The Board of Elders will conduct interviews with all interested nominees to determine if that nominee is qualified to serve as an elder and to evaluate their level of commitment. After prayerfully considering each nominee, the Board of Elders will determine the final list of candidates by a three-fourth majority vote. No two members of the Board of Elders may be spouses. All nominees will be informed of the decisions of the Board of Elders. Selected nominees will acknowledge their intentions by reading and signing the current elder covenant as adopted by the Board of Elders.
3. The names of the final elder candidates will be presented to the church at least 2 weeks before the Annual Business Meeting.
4. Elder candidates and Elder Incumbents who were re-nominated by the Elder Board, will be presented to the congregation for by a three-fourth-majority vote at the Annual Business Meeting.
5. All elders, including those newly elected, will later be presented to the congregation at a Sunday morning service for the purpose of dedication.
6. At any time during the year, the Board of Elders may determine the need to add a member. In this case, the Board of Elders may refer to the previous nominees, select new nominees, or may re-initiate any or all of this selection process, as they deem necessary. The elder candidate(s) will then be presented to the congregation for affirmation by a three-fourth-majority vote at a regular or special business meeting. Any voting member, at any time, may present their name to the Board of Elders for consideration of becoming an elder.
7. For clarification of above, the term “ratification” simply means “to approve or give sanction to.”

### **APPENDIX C: PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE ELDER SELECTION**

Upon the first called meeting of the new fiscal year, the newly appointed and incumbent Board of Elders shall appoint Four Executive Elder Board (also referred to as the “Officers of the Church”) as defined in Article III, Section 7, points (a), (b), (c) & (d) in the following manner:

1. The first meeting of the fiscal year will be chaired by the Senior Pastor and an appointed Elder to serve as recording secretary for the initial nomination process.
2. Each of the newly elected and incumbent board members must prayerfully consider the four Executive Elder positions and submit a name for nomination. Each position should be considered based on spiritual giftedness and talents of those individuals.
3. The order of nomination will be the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer.
4. Each nominated individual should carefully consider the position and affirm or deny their interest in serving within that position. If a person denies serving in that capacity, then a renomination process from the Board of Elders should begin until a person affirms their interest.
5. Each nominee for the four positions will be dismissed in the order stated above while the remaining Board of Elders discuss & prays about the nominees qualifications. A paper ballot vote will be taken with three-fourths majority vote needed for election.
6. Upon Board of Elders approval, that individual assumes the position immediately. In case of the Chairman, he/she will assume the role of chairing of this meeting.
7. The newly Elected Executive Elders will serve for one year.
8. The Executive Elders shall assume responsibilities as listed above in Article III, Section 7 but also carefully adhere to Article III, Section 8, 9, 10, 11; Article IV, Section 1; Article V, Section 7; Article VI, Sections 4, 5.