



# Prairie View

## CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### **OPERATIONAL BY-LAWS OF PRAIRIE VIEW CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

*Proposed: December 2018*

*Previous Version Dated December 13, 2015*

**OBJECTIVE:**

The name of this church shall be Prairie View Christian Church, Incorporated (hereafter “church”). These by-laws are set forth and hereby defined for the purpose of aiding the governing bodies of the church to conduct business and organize the church.

**LOCATION:**

Fishers, Indiana

## **1 PVCC’S MISSION:**

PVCC exists to make devoted, maturing, and multiplying followers of Jesus.

- 1.1 *Devoted*: Fulfilling Jesus’ commandments to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).
- 1.2 *Maturing*: Fulfilling Jesus’ commandments (described in 1.1) and helping believers to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13).
- 1.3 *Multiplying*: Fulfilling the Great Commission to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20a)

## **2 PVCC’S VISION AND VALUES**

2.1 PVCC’s Vision (how we seek to accomplish our Mission):

- 2.1.1 Teaching the Bible
- 2.1.2 Living in Unity
- 2.1.3 Loving our Neighbor
- 2.1.4 Equipping one another for Ministry
- 2.1.5 Sharing our Hope

2.2 PVCC’s Values (what matters to us)

Historically, PVCC has been committed to several key practices: evangelism, community, worship, discipleship, and ministry. We are committed to these practices to this day, and believe our values reflect that.

- 2.2.1 We seek to honor God in all we do
- 2.2.2 The Bible is our authority for teaching and practice
- 2.2.3 All people are valuable in God’s eyes
- 2.2.4 We will be good stewards of all our resources
- 2.2.5 We expect both numerical and spiritual growth

### **3 MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 *Becoming a Member* - Potential members must comply with the following requirements in order to be eligible for membership in the church.

- 3.1.1 Believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior, repent of all sin, and confess Him before us.
- 3.1.2 Be buried with Him in believer's Baptism, which we practice by immersion.
- 3.1.3 Express a desire to become members before the congregation.
- 3.1.4 Attend the membership gathering and sign the membership covenant.

3.2 *Sustaining Membership* – Active members sustain their membership by abiding by the membership covenant, which is especially crucial in the following areas:

- 3.2.1 *Maintain an active participation in the life of church.* Church leaders - Elders, with the assistance of the staff - may conduct a periodic review of the membership rolls, and issue a general communiqué requesting a positive response from all members wishing to sustain their active membership. A positive response to this review and its follow-up process is required to sustain membership.
- 3.2.2 *Positive response* to shepherding by the Elders, either through ordinary methods (Acts 20, Hebrews 13) or through formal church discipline (primarily Matthew 18), hopefully resulting in restoration (if applicable).

3.3 *Membership Interruption or Dissolution*

- 3.3.1 *Voluntary and/or mutual*, by relocation out of the region or by transferring membership to another church. This may be a temporary interruption for a non-permanent absence (education, vocation, seasonal), or a permanent dissolution.
- 3.3.2 *Involuntary* – the Elders determine a Member is not in good fellowship with the church:
  - 3.3.2.1 *Lack of active participation in the life of the church*, as described in Section 3.2.1.
  - 3.3.2.2 *Inadequate compliance with any stage of the church discipline process*, as described in Section 3.2.2 and conducted by the Elders.
  - 3.3.2.3 This involuntary change in membership status may be a temporary interruption while the Elders pursue a fruitful resolution, or a permanent dissolution. At any stage, the privileges of Membership may be suspended at the discretion of the Elders.

## **4 LEADERSHIP**

The leadership of the church is responsible for implementing these by-laws and maintaining the necessary qualification for the respective duties.

### 4.1 Elders

- 4.1.1 Description: The Elders shall have the authority to make decision and establish policy (including proposing changes to the By-Laws, subject to a member vote - see Section 7.1). They are to provide overall direction and spiritual guidance for the church as described in Acts 20:17-35, John 21:15- 17, and 1 Timothy 5:17-22.
- 4.1.2 Duties: Directing the affairs of the church, reviewing reports, resolving disputes, ordaining, teaching, preaching, being an example to the flock, encouraging others, refuting opposition to sound doctrine, providing spiritual nourishment and protection, taking care of God’s Church, being hospitable, praying over and anointing the sick, and providing discipline and restoration within the Church.
- 4.1.3 Length of Term: Each Elder shall serve a two-year renewable term. At present, Elder terms begin July 1<sup>st</sup> and end June 30<sup>th</sup>. If necessary, the Elders may make mid-term nominations, according to Section 4.1.8. Mid-term appointees shall serve only until the next general review (Section 4.1.9).
- 4.1.4 An Elder may be removed from office following a two-week written notice from the Elders and a two-thirds (66%) confirmation vote from the congregation.
- 4.1.5 Qualification: Each Elder shall possess the qualities described in 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-5. Elders must demonstrate and maintain the responsibility toward family and community, as well as the spiritual well being of the congregation. Only active members may serve as Elders.
- 4.1.6 Training: Current Elders or Prairie View staff will be responsible for training prospective elders. Training shall consist of whatever means the Elders deem valuable including scripture reading and personal study.
- 4.1.7 Officers: The Elders shall serve as elected officers of the church. The Elders shall elect a chairman who will also serve as the president of the church. The Elders will appoint a secretary and treasurer. The selected officers will serve as the legal

representatives of the church and must execute all legal documents on behalf of the church. The elders may revoke and reassign those appointments at any time.

4.1.8 Selection of new Elders:

4.1.8.1 The current Elders will interview all nominees and their wives (if married) before the elder candidate is presented to the congregation for approval.

4.1.8.2 Nominees must receive a two-thirds majority vote by members for election.

The majority of the Elders shall consist of non-staff individuals.

4.1.9 Oversight and Accountability for existing Elders: Each elder whose term is expiring will be reviewed by staff and other elders. Those approved for renewal will be brought before the congregation for a two-thirds majority vote of confidence.

4.2 Administration Team

4.2.1 Duties: The Administration Team shall oversee the business, financial, and legal matters of the church. The team shall be appointed by the Elders and shall report directly to the Elders.

4.2.2 Terms: The members of this team will serve a one-year term that follows the church fiscal year. Appointments to additional terms are possible and will be made at the discretion of the Elders.

4.2.3 Qualification: Administration Team members must be members of the church in good standing.

4.2.4 Selection: Administration Team members will be announced to the congregation at a congregational meeting.

4.2.5 Training: Training will be conducted at the discretion of the Elders.

4.3 Ministry Team Leaders

4.3.1 Duties: Ministry Team Leaders will be responsible for leading such programs as defined by the staff and Elders. Leaders will fulfill the needs of a specific ministry of the church.

4.3.2 Terms: One-year renewable term.

4.3.3 Qualifications: Membership of the church and demonstrated a passion for and giftedness in the specific area of ministry.

4.3.4 Selection: The Elders, in coordination with the staff, will appoint all Ministry Team leaders.

#### 4.4 Senior Minister:

4.4.1 Description: Responsible for leading the congregation towards a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, while reaching out and helping others to reach out to those not already in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Leading the congregation toward the fulfillment of the purpose of the church.

4.4.2 Duties: Duties include, but are not limited to, leadership, preaching, nurturing and counseling, evangelism, administration, education and maintaining high standards in personal life. The Senior Minister is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Elder team.

4.4.3 Qualification: The Senior Minister must possess the same qualifications as an Elder.

4.4.4 Hiring: A Search Team will be designated by the Elders to find qualified candidates. Once the elders select a candidate, the congregation will receive a written notice not less than two-weeks before a congregational vote. The candidate must receive seventy-five percent positive vote by all members to be affirmed.

4.4.5 Termination: The Senior Minister is an “at will” employee, and may be terminated at the discretion of the Elders.

4.4.6 Benefits and Compensation: Total staff compensation and benefits will be outlined by the administration team, then approved by the Elders and included in the annual budget for a congregational vote.

4.4.7 The Senior Minister has the responsibility for determining the make up of his staff, with final approval coming from the Elders.

## **5 ELDER MEETING**

5.1 Minutes shall be taken at all regular and special Elder meetings.

### 5.1.1 Meetings

5.1.1.1 Scheduled at the discretion of the Elders.

5.1.1.2 The agenda should include the location and purpose of the meeting.

5.1.1.3 A majority of Elders constitutes a quorum.

### 5.2 Voting

5.2.1 Chairman of the Elders shall preside at the meetings, or in that person's absence, the Elders shall designate a chairman.

5.2.2 Each Elder has one vote, but may abstain from voting at the individual's discretion.

5.2.3 We realize that not all elders may come to same conclusion on a particular voting decision; however, as spiritual leaders in God's church, we believe it necessary to put aside personal feelings, or agendas, and support wholeheartedly the voting decisions from the overwhelming majority of elders present. (Decisions within the eldership will be made by an overwhelming majority of the elders present.)

## **6 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

6.1 Annual and special meetings of the congregation.

### 6.1.1 Annual meetings

6.1.1.1 Conducted by the chairman of the Elders or a designated representative.

6.1.1.2 The agenda should include, but is not limited to, approval of budget, selection of Elders, and all other business.

6.2 Voting

6.2.1 Each active member, as defined in section 3.1, has one vote.

6.2.2 Members 16 years of age or over will be eligible to vote.

6.2.3 A simple majority (>50%) of members is needed to approve the budget, pass a resolution, or conduct other business not restricted by a specific by-law voting requirement (for example, 2/3 majority to appoint an Elder).

6.2.4 The voting body shall be counted according to the number of votes submitted by active members. Votes may be submitted in person, by absentee vote, or online. For example, a vote requiring 50% approval requires the positive assent of 50% of active members in attendance and/or votes submitted via absentee or on-line. This definition applies to Sections 4.1.4, 4.1.8.2, 4.1.9, 4.4.4, 4.4.6, 6.1.1.2, and 7.1.

6.2.5 No official quorum is required to conduct business at a congregational meeting, but two weeks' notice and announcement from the Elders is required to hold any vote or conduct official business.

**7 AMENDMENTS**

7.1 A two-thirds majority vote of all members is required to pass an amendment to this set of bylaws.

**MARRIAGE ADDENDUM:**

Prairie View Christian Church By-Law Addendum

In the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in the case of *Obergefell vs. Hodges* on June 26, 2015, the fundamental right to marry was guaranteed to same-sex couples. As a result of this decision, and other significant societal confusion concerning the definition and meaning of marriage, the Elders of Prairie View Christian Church propose the following statement of marriage, in light of our interpretation of the Bible and historical Christian teaching. <<Approved and adopted December 13, 2015>>

*The Elders of Prairie View Christian Church believe "marriage" is defined by God alone, as delineated in the Bible. This limits our understanding of marriage to consist of one biological male and one biological female. This is a monogamous, sacrificial, and life-long covenant, entered into humbly and reverently.*

*We believe marriage is the only context in which sexual intimacy that honors God as King, obeys His Word, and affirms His good created order can occur. Thus, we believe any sexual expression that occurs outside of the bounds of marriage is sinful.*

*This does not negate Prairie View Christian Church's core value (2.2.3) that "all people are valuable in God's eyes". PVCC rejects the notion that those guilty of any sexual sin are to be harassed or mistreated in any manner. This is inappropriate in all circumstances, and fails to model the neighbor-love Jesus modeled. We believe Jesus commands all people be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. However, PVCC cannot affirm or condone all worldviews, beliefs, and actions.*

*Thus, in order to preserve the public witness and doctrinal integrity of Prairie View Christian Church as a local church in the larger Body of Christ, the Elders insist that all persons employed by PVCC abide by this understanding of marriage. Consequently, the Elders and Ministers of PVCC will not officiate a wedding ceremony which fails to meet this basic criteria of marriage, nor shall PVCC property or resources be used in such a marriage event.*

*We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.*