Prairie View
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

OPERATIONAL BY-LAWS OF PRAIRIE VIEW CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Approved by Congregational Vote -- December 22, 2024

Updates the December 16, 2018 edition

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, Vision, and Values:

1.1 **Mission**: PVCC exists to make devoted, maturing, and multiplying followers of Jesus.

1.1.1 *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).

1.1.2 *Maturing*: Fulfilling Jesus' commandments (described in 1.1.1) 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).

1.1.3 *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).

1.2 **Vision:** How we seek to accomplish our Mission

1.2.1 Teaching the Bible
1.2.2 Living in Unity
1.2.3 Loving our Neighbor
1.2.4 Equipping one another for Ministry
1.2.5 Sharing our Hope

1.3 **Values**: What matters to us

1.3.1 We seek to honor God in all we do
1.3.2 The Bible is our authority for teaching and practice
1.3.3 All people are valuable in God's eyes
1.3.4 We will be good stewards of all our resources
1.3.5 We pursue and pray for both numerical and spiritual growth

2 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 *The Membership Covenant* – The Membership Covenant governs Membership. The Membership Covenant is a critical organizational and pastoral tool. The Congregation holds meaningful authority and responsibility at PVCC, so it is important to the life of this body that Members of the Congregation be identifiable and mutually accountable.

2.1.1 The Membership Covenant describes the Purposes, Responsibilities, and Requirements of Membership, including a series of commitments, a discussion of Baptism, and the signature line.

2.1.2 The Elders are responsible for administering and implementing the Membership Covenant.

2.1.3 Amendments: The Elders shall submit material changes to the Membership Covenant to the Congregation for amendment, subject to the voting procedures described in Section 5.

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

2.2.1 Believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior and repent of all known sin.
2.2.2 Confess Him before the Congregation.
2.2.3 Be buried with Him in believer's Baptism, which we practice by immersion.
2.2.4 Attend a Membership gathering (both informational and a personal discussion with an Elder).
2.2.5 Sign the Membership Covenant.

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

2.3.1 *Maintain an active participation in the life of church.* To the extent a Member is able, we affirm the Hebrews 10 exhortation to gather together weekly as a church. The Elders, with the assistance of the staff, shall conduct a periodic review of the Membership to resolve repeated unexplained absences from the worship service. A positive response to this

review and its follow-up process is required to sustain membership.

2.3.2 *Positive response* to shepherding by the Elders, either through ordinary methods (Acts 20, Hebrews 13) or through the informal (and if necessary, formal) stages of church discipline (primarily Matthew 18). The purpose and intent of all corrective formal church discipline, as far as it depends on PVCC, is always restoration to full fellowship (if applicable).

2.4 *Limited Membership and/or Dissolution*

2.4.1 *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 (seasonal, institutional, vocational, educational, military) or a permanent dissolution.

2.4.2 *Involuntary* – the Elders determine a Member is not in good fellowship with the church:

2.4.2.1 *Lack of active participation in the life of the church*, as described in Section 2.3.1 (above).

2.4.2.2 *Inadequate or resolute non-compliance withbthe church discipline process*, as described in Section 2.3.2 and conducted by the Elders.

2.4.2.3 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. This may include voting, volunteering, and/or serving in leadership roles.

2.4.2.4 The Elders have the responsibility of informing the Member that their Membership is Limited or Dissolved. The Elders shall use their best judgment to determine communication with the Congregation, if any.

3 LEADERSHIP

The Elders and Ministers of the Church are responsible for applying, interpreting, implementing, and upholding these By-Laws and maintaining the necessary qualifications for the respective duties.

3.1 Elders

3.1.1 *Description*: The Elders shall have the authority to make decisions and establish policy (including proposing changes to the By-Laws and Membership Covenant, subject to a Member vote - see Section 5.2). 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.

3.1.2 *Duties*: The Elders accept ultimate responsibility for all PVCC activity. This includes but is not limited to: directing the affairs of the church, administering Membership, 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, providing discipline and restoration within the Church, and whatever else necessary to fulfill their calling according to the Biblical model of "shepherd." The Elder Team forms the legal body of authority in the church, including for purposes of authorizing Resolutions (such as for the Housing Allowance).

3.1.3 *Length of Term*: Each Elder shall serve a two-year renewable term. Elder terms shall begin July 1st and end June 30th. If necessary, the Elders may make mid-term nominations, according to Section 3.1.8. Mid-term appointees shall serve only until the next general review (Section 3.1.10).

3.1.4 *Removal:* An Elder may be removed from office following a two-week notice from the Elder Team and a three-quarter (75%) confirmation vote from the Congregation, per Section 5.2.

3.1.5 *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.

3.1.6 *Training*: Current Elders or Ministers will be responsible for training prospective elders. Training shall consist of whatever means the Elders deem valuable, including scripture reading and personal study. The Elder Development Program shall be customized to each potential prospect.

3.1.7 *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. Additionally, the Elders will appoint a Corporate Secretary and a Treasurer. The Chairman and Secretary shall be Elders, but the Treasurer need only be an Active Member. The selected Officers serve as the legal representatives of the church and may execute any legal documents on behalf of the church. The Elders may revoke and reassign those appointments at any time.

3.1.8 *Selection of new Elders*: The current Elders will interview all nominees and their wives (if married) before the Elder candidate is presented to the Congregation for approval. Nominees must receive a three-quarters (75%) vote by Members for election, per Section 5.2.

3.1.9 *Staff Elders:* The majority of the Elders shall consist of non-staff individuals. To preserve the authority of the Senior Minister over his staff, any staff Ministers who are nominated and affirmed as Elders will be non-voting Elders with terms of 2 years.

3.1.10 *Oversight and Accountability for existing Elders*: Each Elder whose term is expiring will be reviewed by the other Elders. Those approved for renewal will be brought before the Congregation for a three-quarters (75%) vote of confidence. The Elder Team shall determine its review method.

3.2 Administration Team

3.2.1 *Duties*: The Administration Team shall oversee the business, financial, and legal matters of the church on behalf of the Elders. The team shall be appointed by the Elders and shall report directly to the Elders. Their authority and responsibilities are delegated to them by the Elders, who maintain ultimate responsibility for the Church.

3.2.2 *Terms*: The members of this team will serve at the discretion of the Elders, who shall periodically review their appointments.

3.2.3 *Qualification*: Administration Team members must be Active Members of the Church.

3.2.4 *Selection*: The Administration Team Chair shall be selected by the Elders. Administration Team members will be announced to the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting (see Section 5).

3.2.5 *Training*: Training will be conducted at the discretion of the Elders.

3.3 Ministry Team Leaders

3.3.1 *Duties*: Ministry Team Leaders will be responsible for leading such programs as defined by the Elders and Ministers. Leaders will fulfill the needs of a specific ministry of the church. Leaders shall also coordinate their activities with the Administration Team, especially Budgets, reimbursements, and cash handling.

3.3.2 *Terms*: Ministry Team Leaders will serve at the discretion of the Elders.

3.3.3 *Qualifications*: Active Membership of the Church and a demonstrated passion for and giftedness in the specific area of ministry.

3.3.4 *Selection*: The Elders, in coordination with the Ministers, will appoint all Ministry Team Leaders.

3.4 Senior Minister

3.4.1 *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 Mission, Vision, and Values of the church.

3.4.2 *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.

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

3.4.4 *Hiring*: A Search Team will be designated by the Elders to find qualified candidates. Once the Elders select a candidate, the Congregation will receive notice not less than two weeks before a Congregational Vote. The candidate must receive seventy-five percent (75%) positive vote by Active Members casting votes to be affirmed, per Section 5.2.

3.4.5 *Termination*: The Senior Minister is an "at will" employee and may be terminated at the discretion of the Elders.

3.4.6 *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.

3.4.7 *Ministerial and Support Staff:* The Senior Minister has the responsibility for determining the make up of his staff, with final approval coming from the Elders.

4 ELDER MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes shall be taken at all official Elder meetings (i.e., not Sunday prayer meetings).

4.1.1 Scheduled at the discretion of the Elders.
4.1.2 The agenda should include the location and purpose of the meeting.
4.1.3 A majority of Elders constitutes a quorum.

4.2 Voting

4.2.1 The Chairman of the Elders shall preside at the meetings. In the event of a foreknown absence, the Chairman shall designate a substitute. Otherwise, the Elders shall designate a Chairman.

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

4.2.3 However the Elder discussions transpire, we believe it necessary to put aside personal feelings or agendas and support wholeheartedly the voting decisions from the majority of Elders. While we prize consensus, collegiality, and agreement, decisions within the Eldership will be made by the majority of the Elders present.

5 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

5.1 Annual and special meetings of the Congregation.

5.1.1 Annual meetings

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

5.1.1.2 The agenda should include, but is not limited to, the approval of the Budget and any other business. The selection of Elders occurs in the early summer and need not be conducted at a Congregational Meeting.

5.2 Voting

5.2.1 Each Active Member, as defined in Section 2, has one vote. Only Members 18 years of age or over will be eligible to vote.

5.2.2 All votes require 75% (three quarters) of Active Members casting a vote to pass.

5.2.3 The voting body shall be counted according to the number of votes submitted by Active Members. Votes may be organized in person or online. Voting is "as secret as possible" – only selected members of the Elder, Administration, or IT Teams as needed to verify eligibility and tabulate results are to see any ballots. Privacy and confidentiality are assumed but not guaranteed. If the ballot has an option for follow-up, the matter will be referred to the Chairman of the Elders.

5.2.4 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.

6 AMENDMENTS

6.1 A three-quarters (75%) majority vote of ~~all~~ Active Members is required to pass an amendment to this set of By-Laws.

6.2 Amendments shall be put forward to the Congregation by the Elders, and are subject to the two weeks' official business notice requirement of Section 5.

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 (1.3.3) 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.