

Bylaws
Spencer Christian Church
Fisherville, KY

Preamble

Spencer Christian Church endeavors to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as described and established by the New Testament. The purpose of these bylaws is to help us carry out the life of this Church in a biblical and orderly manner. The ultimate authority for the Church's organization, governance and operation is the Bible. When a conflict or ambiguity exists concerning these bylaws, deference is to be given to Scripture for resolution.

Article I: Name and Principal Office

The name of the corporation is Spencer Christian Church. This corporation will be further referred to in the bylaws as the "Church." The Church maintains its principal office at 5720 Taylorsville Rd, Fisherville, KY 40023.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: General

The New Testament depicts groups of people who, once devoted to Jesus, regularly participated with a specific body of believers (see Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26). In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to such a local body as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, the Church recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership in this Church will consist of all persons who have met the following qualifications for membership.

Section 2: Qualifications of Membership

Any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and Lord, repented of sin, has been baptized by immersion, and is willing to commit himself or herself as a committed member of this local body of believers may become a member by expressing such a desire to an elder or minister.

Section 3: Responsibilities of Membership

The responsibilities of members are described by, but not limited to, the following: spiritual growth, helping others follow Jesus more closely ("making disciples"), practicing the many "one anothers" of the New Testament ("love one another," "serve one another," "submit to one another," "share each others' burdens," "motivate one another to acts of love and good work," etc.).

Section 4: Termination of Membership

Membership at Spencer Christian Church may end if a member no longer participates in the life of the Church for more than one year, unless participation is prevented by illness or health concerns. During that time, elders and ministers will make efforts to reach out and encourage reengagement.

Membership may also end if a member moves away without notice, begins attending another church, requests removal or transfer in writing, passes away, or by consensus decision of the elders. Any former member may be reinstated by resuming regular attendance and requesting to rejoin the Church family.

Section 5: Discipline of Members

The purpose of Church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6), protecting believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her back to biblical standards of doctrine and conduct (see Galatians 6:1).

All Church discipline will be handled in accordance with Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10-11; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Hebrews 12:5-11).

Article III: Membership Meetings

Section 1: Location

Meetings of the members will be held at 5720 Taylorsville Rd, Fisherville, KY 40023, or at a location designated by the elders.

Section 2: General Meetings

A general meeting of the members will be held during the fourth quarter of each calendar year on such a date and time as determined by the elders. This general meeting will be the annual membership meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to adopt the general operating budget, to affirm decisions presented by the elders, and to present reports as deemed necessary by the elders.

Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the elders by giving a two week notice to the members. Church members may, for any purpose, present to the Chairman of the elders a petition calling for a special meeting of the membership. This petition will be signed by no less than 25% of the members of the Church and state the purpose for which the meeting is being called. The chairman will schedule, announce, and conduct the special meeting within 30 days of the receipt of the petition.

Section 4: Notification Requirements of Meetings

Church members will be given prior notification of membership meetings no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. Notification of membership meetings and their agendas will be provided by any one of the following methods: written announcement in any Church publication (i.e., newsletter, etc.); verbal announcement to the congregation in attendance at regular worship services; and/or written notification delivered electronically to members.

Section 5: Quorum

Those members present will constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of any and all business.

Section 6: Affirmations

Spencer Christian Church is governed according to the New Testament pattern, where elders provide spiritual oversight and the congregation expresses unity through affirmation rather than by democratic vote. Affirmation is the process by which the congregation expresses its unity and confidence in the spiritual discernment of the elders under the headship of Christ.

Affirmation allows the members to exercise their voice in matters of significant direction or decision for the Church. When the church affirmation is required, a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of affirmations submitted is required for the elders to proceed with a decision, serving as a safeguard to ensure that the Church moves forward only when there is clear and substantial unity among its members. Only members who are physically present may voice affirmation - no proxy affirmations will be allowed.

Member affirmation will be requested for the following: the presenting of the next annual general operating budget; the amending of the bylaws; the affirmation of elders, deacons, trustees, and the hiring of a senior minister. Affirmations will take place immediately following the regular worship services on the weekend following a membership meeting.

Section 7: Meeting Procedures

The elders will conduct all Church membership meetings. Official minutes will be taken and filed in the permanent records of the Church by the Recording Secretary of the Church.

Article IV: Statement of Biblical Truths Regarding Marriage

God created the first marriage as a sacred covenant relationship between one man and one woman for the purposes of procreation, companionship, and dominion over creation, in keeping with the covenant relationship God himself established with his own creation (Genesis 2:15-24; Romans 1:16-32).

Jesus blessed a marriage celebration between a man and a woman with His presence and His first public miracle, thereby affirming the traditional definition of marriage as a cornerstone of every culture and community (John 2:1-11). He taught of the importance of marriage as a part of His "Sermon on the Mount", by stating, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh." (Matthew 19:5).

The Apostle Paul also upholds marriage as the union between one man and one woman in his instruction to husbands and wives (1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Ephesians 5:22-33).

Society historically has embraced this traditional definition of marriage, eschewing all other unions as unnatural, inappropriate, and anti-social, and has advocated the family unit of husband and wife and their children as the chief building block of society (Leviticus 18:22-30; Psalm 127:3-5; Romans 1:16-32; Hebrews 13:4). The marriage union of same sex individuals is in direct violation of God's Holy Bible and therefore deemed sinful.

Spencer Christian Church defines marriage by its biblical definition and not by a man-made standard. Marriage is the union between one biological man and one biological woman. This Church intentionally adheres to the highest standards for marriage, namely biblical standards, and that other legal definitions and court actions are secondary to biblical mandate.

Spencer Christian Church affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this Church and any related celebrations or activities allowed in its facilities shall be for unions that meet the standards named in this Church's Bylaws, and further, that Church ministers and staff only officiate marriage ceremonies in keeping with this Church's adopted biblical definition of marriage.

Spencer Christian Church affirms that God creates each person as male or female. We affirm the Biblical truth that each person's biological gender is an intrinsic, immutable aspect of his or her nature and identity (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; 21-22; Psalm 139:13-18). This Church intentionally refers to "man" as a biological male and "woman" as a biological female when it comes to Bible teaching and preaching as well as affirming roles of leadership and service.

Article V: Elders

Section 1: General Scope

The Church seeks to be a New Testament Church committed to the teachings of the Bible as outlined by our statement of faith. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church. The pastoral and administrative structure for a New Testament Church is to utilize a plurality structure of leaders, consisting of, but not limited to, elders, deacons, professional staff, lay leaders, etc. The elders are accountable before God for the ultimate oversight of the Church.

Section 2: Duties

The elders will oversee, lead, shepherd, and care for the spiritual condition of the Church as set forth in the Bible. According to scriptural example, the elders' primary responsibilities in an elder governance leadership model are: **Prayer** (Acts 6:2); **Preaching** (Acts 6:2; "ministry of the word"); **Policy** creation and oversight (Acts 15:22, 28-29); **Pastoral care** (Acts 20:28); and **Protection** (Acts 20:28-31).

Section 3: Qualifications

Any man who is an active member of the Church and has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period of time and meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17), is eligible to serve as an elder.

Section 4: Selection

While there is no established biblical mandate for a minimum number of elders, those elders currently serving will determine the appropriate number of elders to serve at the Church based upon the number of spiritually qualified individuals. When deemed necessary to have additional elders, currently serving elders will recruit, orient, equip and integrate new elders into the eldership through a deliberate vetting process. Any man selected by the consensus of the elders to serve as an elder must be affirmed by the members of the congregation according to ARTICLE III, Section 6.

Section 5: Service Commitment

While each elder will be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to annual review by their peers and reaffirmation by the Church members, the commitment of service will be for an indefinite period of time, assuming the elder continues in his desire to serve and continues to exhibit the character and qualifications of an elder. Sabbaticals may be granted, and occasionally encouraged, when elders experience stresses or other life circumstances that would hinder their effective service as an elder.

Section 6: Organization of The Elders

The elders will meet as a collective group as often as necessary, and minutes will be recorded. The elders will appoint annually, from their own number, men who serve in the following roles: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Recording Secretary. An elder may be designated by consensus of the elders to serve as needed on ministry teams (see Bylaws, Article VII: Ministry Teams for further information).

Section 7: Decision Making by Consensus: The elders of Spencer Christian Church seek to make decisions in a manner consistent with the unity and humility commanded in Scripture (Philippians 2:1-4; Acts 15:28). Elders will strive for unanimity, believing that spiritual unity best reflects the mind of Christ. When complete unanimity cannot be achieved after prayer and discussion, the elders may proceed with majority agreement, provided that no elder believes the decision to be contrary to Scripture.

Section 8: Removal of an Elder: If concerns arise regarding an elder's fitness to serve, the remaining elders will prayerfully seek God's guidance through Scripture, counsel, and mutual discernment. An elder may be removed from service by consensus of the remaining elders not under consideration for removal, when it is determined that continued service is no longer in the best spiritual interest of the Church or the individual.

Section 9: Vacancies: If a vacancy occurs among the elders due to death, resignation, removal, an increase in the need for elders, or any other reason, the remaining elders will prayerfully consider how and when to fill the vacancy. A new elder may be appointed through the majority agreement of the remaining elders and will serve until the next scheduled affirmation of elders by the congregation or until a successor is appointed and affirmed.

Article VI: Deacons

Section 1: General Scope

The Church seeks to be a New Testament Church committed to the teachings of the Bible as outlined by our statement of faith. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church. The pastoral and administrative structure for a New Testament Church is to utilize a plurality structure of leaders, consisting of, but not limited to, elders, deacons, professional staff, lay leaders, etc. The deacons are men set aside for service (see Acts 6:1-6).

Section 2: Duties

The deacons are intended to be the servants of the Church and shall help implement the directives of the elders. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical needs for the Church.

Section 3: Qualifications

Any man who is an active member of the Church, has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period, and meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:8-13) is eligible to serve as a deacon.

Section 4: Selection

While there is no established biblical mandate for a minimum number of deacons, those elders currently serving will determine the appropriate number of deacons to serve at the Church based upon the number of spiritually qualified individuals and the needs of the church. When deemed necessary to have additional deacons, currently serving elders will recruit, orient, equip and integrate new deacons into the deaconship through a deliberate vetting process.

Section 5: Service Commitment

While each deacon will be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to annual review by the elders and reaffirmation by the Church members, the commitment of service will be for an indefinite period of time, assuming the deacon continues in his desire to serve and continues to exhibit the character and qualifications of a deacon.

Section 6: Removal of a Deacon

If concerns arise regarding a deacon's fitness to serve, the elders will prayerfully seek God's guidance through Scripture, counsel, and mutual discernment. A deacon may be removed from service by consensus of the elders when it is determined that continued service is no longer in the best spiritual interest of the Church or the individual.

Article VII: Church Leadership

Section 1: General Scope

The following is a description of the various positions of leadership at the Church, which creates a multi-faceted leadership structure and allows us to do ministry in a decent and orderly fashion.

Section 2: Elders

The elders, previously described in Article V, have final authority over all matters at the Church.

Section 3: Senior Minister

DUTIES: The senior minister is responsible to the elders to lead the Church in such a way that the Church functions effectively as a New Testament Church, thereby achieving the stated vision and purpose. The senior minister will provide a clear voice of leadership to the Church and be responsible for communicating the vision, while preaching/teaching the Word of God so that lives can be authentically impacted by Scripture. He is to lead by precept and example, maturing believers through insightful and accurate presentation of the Word. The senior minister will be considered a member of all ministry teams by virtue of his role ("ex officio"). The senior minister may serve as an elder, being accountable for, and a representative of, all staff positions.

QUALIFICATIONS: The senior minister will be a male and will possess the same spiritual qualifications as that of an elder (see Bylaws, Article V: elders, Section 3: Qualifications). The elders may establish further skill requirements (i.e., preaching, teaching, leadership, etc.).

SELECTION: The elders will appoint a team of individuals (i.e., Search Team), comprised of selected elders and other leaders as deemed appropriate. The Search Team will locate a Senior Minister candidate, conduct initial interviews, complete background investigations, and recommend a candidate to the elders for their review and approval. After prayerfully reviewing the candidate, the elders will present the candidate for senior minister to the congregation for their affirmation of support according to the affirmation process described in Article III, Section 6.

Section 4: Officers and Trustees

While Scripture indicates that elders bear the ultimate responsibility for leading the Church, it does allow for the delegation of responsibilities. Therefore, the elders of the Church may specifically delegate responsibilities such as the overseeing the legal, financial, business, and executive matters of the Church to capable and faithful members of the church. Officers and Trustees will be accountable to the elders.

Section 5: Ministry Teams

Ministry Teams perform duties related to specific ministry tasks (i.e. outreach/benevolence team, missions team, worship/music team, etc.). These teams have been delegated the responsibility and authority to do their ministry within the confines of their operating budget and church policies. Each team is responsible to meet regularly, and they will be accountable to either a staff member or another individual appointed by the elders.

Each team may create a ministry description outlining the role and responsibilities of the team. Every ministry organization within the Church will be an integral part of the Church and not an entity in itself. The elders will have ultimate oversight of all ministry organizations/teams connected with the Church; auxiliary ministry teams (i.e. school, day care center, etc.) remain within this structure.

Article VIII: Indemnification

Section 1: General Scope

The Church will indemnify any agent (i.e., elders or officers) made a party to any action, suit, or proceeding by reason of the fact that they are or were elders or officers of the Church, against all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and necessarily incurred by them in connection within any appeal therein, except in relation to matters as to which it will be adjudged in such action, suit, or proceeding that such person is liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of their responsibilities. Such right of indemnification will not be exclusive of any other rights to which such person may be entitled apart from the provisions of this article.

Section 2: Required Standard of Conduct

The agent (i.e., person) seeking indemnification will be found by the elders that they acted in good faith, in a manner they believed to be in the best interest of the Church, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use in similar circumstance. In the case of a criminal proceeding, the person will have had no reasonable cause to believe that their conduct was unlawful.

Section 3: Insurance

The elders may authorize the Church to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any agent (that is, any person acting on behalf of the Church). This insurance may cover liabilities asserted against or incurred by the agent in that capacity, or because of their role with the Church, even if the Church itself would not have the power to indemnify the agent. However, the Church may not purchase or maintain insurance to indemnify any agent for violations of State or Federal law.

Article IX: Fiscal Operations

Section 1: General Scope

The Church will maintain adequate and accurate books and records of accounts (i.e., financial records); minutes of elders' meetings, and membership meetings; records of membership including names, addresses and contribution records of individuals. All such records will be kept at its principal place of business and the safekeeping of the records will be the responsibility of the Recording Secretary of the Eldership.

Section 2: Organizational, Policy and Procedural Manuals

These manuals have been prepared as a guide to all who serve in leadership positions at the Church. Their purpose is to aid in effectively fulfilling of the purpose of the Church, providing guidelines about the Church's organizational structure and ministry operations. Policy statements guide and protect, and the elders reserve the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any of the policy manual's information, with or without notice, as deemed necessary.

Section 3: Inspection of Records, Reports and Documentation

An active member may, at any reasonable time, inspect records, reports, and documentation of the church except for personnel salaries and records, contribution records, elder meeting minutes, and counseling records.

Section 4: Asset and Debt Management

The elders are responsible for managing the funds and property of Spencer Christian Church. Any decision to purchase or sell Church property must first be approved by the elders and then affirmed by the congregation. The elders have the sole authority to enter the Church into any form of debt. If indebtedness is to be secured by the church's real property, a membership meeting will be held to seek congregational affirmation before proceeding.

Section 5: Fiscal Review

The fiscal operation of the Church will be subject to review as deemed necessary by the elders, including but not limited to an annual compilation, review, or audit by a Certified Public Accountant, in order to ensure sound financial stewardship and accountability.

Section 6: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church is January 1 – December 31.

Article X: Purpose and Requirements to be exempt as an Organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

Section 1:

The organization is organized exclusively for charitable, educational purposes, including for such purposes the making of distributions to organizations that qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the corresponding section of any future tax code.

Section 2:

No part of the net earnings of the organization will inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization will 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 the purpose clause hereof.

Section 3:

No part of the activities of the organization will be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization will not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 4:

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the organization will not carry on any other activities not to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 5:

Upon dissolution of the organization, assets will be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or will be distributed to the federal government or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of will be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purpose or to such organizations, as said Court will determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Article XI: Amendments

These bylaws, or any provision of them, may be altered, amended, or repealed; and new bylaws may be adopted at any time by the elders. All proposed amendments will be made available to the congregation for review no less than two weeks prior to a membership meeting. Affirmation of any amendment to these bylaws will follow the same process outlined in Article III, Section 6: Affirmations.

Article XII: Adoption

These By-Laws shall be in full force and effect immediately upon their adoption by the Elders of Spencer Christian Church, in a meeting duly called for said purpose.

Adopted this _____ day of _____ 20____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____