

The By-Laws of
Greenbelt Community Church
(An Evangelical Free Church)
Clive, Iowa

Article 1 Church Government

A. Greenbelt Community Church chooses to be Elder-led and Congregational in its government. Elder -led Congregationalism is defined to mean:

1. It is a mixed government—part monarchy (rule of the one), part oligarchy (rule of the few), part democracy (rule of the many). Jesus is King through his Word; the elders/pastors lead; and the congregation guides on certain crucial matters.”
2. Greenbelt Community Church has the right to determine its own mission and decisions under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of God’s Word.
3. The eldership in unity with the membership voice their decisions through the appropriate majority vote (as defined in these By-Laws).
4. The responsibility for church government belongs to the entire membership and each member is encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. Each member should participate with spiritual maturity and with a desire to build up the body of Christ.

B. Congregationalism is further defined to mean:

1. That ministry is the responsibility of all believers. While government is restricted to the members of Greenbelt Community Church, congregationalism invites believers, because they have been gifted by the Holy Spirit, to participate in ministry. All believers who regularly participate in the life of this local church are encouraged to find a place of service and are welcomed as co-laborers for our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. That recognized spiritually gifted leaders are a part of God’s plan for the local church. Carrying out specific directions and ministries is delegated to specific officers and leaders in the church. Authority is vested by the congregation electing these individuals or groups to operate under the guidelines established by the congregation. Honor is shown to those serving in a specific leadership or ministry role by not unduly interfering in the fulfillment of their position. These servants also understand the responsibility and accountability that has been given to them. Mutual submission, love and respect must govern all of the structural relationships of authority within the church. If there is a question about any decision or action of an individual or group, the congregation can review the issue and may affirm or overrule the decisions at a duly called congregational meeting.
3. That the church recognizes the need for interdependence with the churches and government structures of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The authority of the congregation is not an excuse for isolation. Rather, it is an encouragement to mutually give and receive help for the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Article 2 Membership Procedures

A. Membership Defined.

Membership is be granted to anyone who has given testimony to his/her faith in Jesus Christ and who desires to actively support the ministry of Greenbelt Community Church. This active support includes affirming the EFCA Statement of Faith; the mission, vision and values of Greenbelt Community Church and actively praying for, giving to and participating in Greenbelt Community Church.

B. Application Procedures

1. Those professing faith in Jesus Christ and desiring membership will request a meeting with the pastor or an elder where a membership packet is reviewed, a testimony of faith in the gospel is shared, and the membership covenant is signed. This applicant is then presented for consideration by the Board of Elders.
3. The Board of Elders will publish a list of potential new members for the congregation to review. The congregation will be asked to voice any reservations about a potential new member privately to an Elder. If there are reservations, the Board of Elders will take this into consideration before making a final decision on membership. The Board of Elders will determine new members and announce the new members as the first item of business at the next congregational business meeting.
4. Believer's baptism is encouraged as an outward symbol of obedience to Jesus Christ. However, it is not a requirement for membership.

C. Membership Privileges

1. A member who is 18 years of age or older has voting privileges at all congregational meetings.
2. A member who is 18 years of age or older may be elected to any office for which he/she meet the Biblical qualifications.

D. Termination Procedures

1. The Board of Elders will grant a letter of transfer upon receiving a written request from that member.
2. The Board of Elders will drop a person's name from the membership list upon receiving a written request from that member.
3. A person's membership may be terminated for discipline reasons according to Article 4 of these By-Laws.
4. A person whose membership has been terminated must complete the application procedures of Article 2, Section B for reinstatement.
5. A member who has not had contact with the church for one year may be removed from the membership list by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will make a final attempt to communicate with the member before the action is final.
6. The Board of Elders will communicate all membership activity defined above to the congregation as a first item of business at the next congregational business meeting (in tandem with any affirmation votes on new members).
7. No present or former member has any right or claim to any church property.

Article 3 Leadership

A. Leadership Structures

1. Church Officers

- a. Essential church officers will include Chairman and Treasurer. Additional roles such as Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Financial Secretary will be filled as needed.
- b. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be voting members of the Elder Board. They must meet the qualifications of Elder as defined in Article 3, Section C of these By-Laws. They will also serve as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Elder Board.
- c. The Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer will be responsible to the Board of Elders and will meet with the Board of Elders at the Board's request. Members of the Elder Board may be elected to these offices.

2. Board of Elders

- a. The spiritual oversight and the business operations of the church are the responsibility of the Board of Elders.
- b. The Board of Elders will meet at least monthly to organize and carry out these responsibilities.
- c. The Board of Elders will be composed of the Pastor and a minimum of two to no more than six other qualified men elected by the membership. The required qualifications are listed in Article 3, Section C of these By-Laws.
- d. Elders service commitment is for one year. Consecutive years of service, however, will not be limited.
- e. The Nomination Team will prepare a list of men (initially two to six men and thereafter the number required to maintain an adequate number of Elders plus the Pastor) to serve as the Elders of the congregation. This list will be presented to the membership for each elder affirmation at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. A 75% majority vote is required for Elder affirmation.
- f. The Elders will choose the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and an Elder Board Secretary (not the church Secretary) at their first meeting following the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. The Pastor cannot serve as the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.
- g. The Chairman will work in cooperation with the Pastor to set the agendas and lead the Board of Elders meetings. He will also serve as Moderator of the Congregational Business Meetings and set the agenda (in agreement with the Board of Elders) for these meetings.
- h. The Vice-Chairman will assist the Chairman as needed and in the event that the Chairman is unable to complete his term, the Vice-Chairman will assume the role of Chairman and serve in that capacity until the new election of Chairman following the next Annual Congregational Business Meeting.
- i. The Secretary of the Board of Elders will be responsible to keep minutes of every meeting of the Board of Elders.
- j. If at least two Elder positions become vacant, the nomination process will begin and elections will be held at a specially called Congregational Business Meeting to complete the open terms.

3. Ministry Teams and Ministry Team Leaders

- a. Ministry Teams will be created by the Board of Elders to develop and carry out specific ministries that fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
- b. Each Ministry Team will continue their ministry existence until the Elder Board believes the Ministry Team should be discontinued.
- c. The Ministry Teams are accountable to the Board of Elders.
- d. Once a Ministry Team is established, a leader will be chosen by the Board of Elders from the membership.
 - (1) These leaders are fulfilling the ministry role described as deacon or deaconess in I Timothy 3:8-13. They may be a man or woman and must meet the biblical qualifications of a deacon or deaconess.
 - (2) These leaders are accountable to the Board of Elders.
 - (3) Team leaders will be reviewed annually by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will recommend either continued leadership by that individual or nominate a new leader. The Board's recommendations will be announced at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.
- f. Team members are selected by the team leader and must be affirmed by the Board of Elders.
 - (1) Their service commitment is for one year. Consecutive years of service, however, will not be limited.
 - (2) Team members may not be required to be members of the church but team members involved in leadership or instruction must be believers who exhibit godly character and are submissive to the church leadership.

4. Other Leadership and Ministry Structures

- a. Other task forces, committees or teams may be required for a limited time. These will be established by the Board of Elders as needed.
- b. The Board of Elders will define, the purpose, time of existence, chairperson and the people who will serve on the task force, committee or team.

B. Duties

- 1. Elders (Overseers as defined in I Timothy 3;1-7)
 - a. Oversee the business and ministry functions of the church.
 - b. Assist the Pastor in shepherding the congregation.
 - c. Process applications for membership and keep oversight of the membership role to be sure that it is kept up to date.
 - d. Lead the congregation, in cooperation with the leadership of the Pastor, by projecting an annual vision statement and working to achieve the goals and objectives of that vision and the overall mission of the church.
 - e. Apply Biblical discipline in the spirit of Christian love.
 - f. Secure pulpit supply and be sure the worship services of the church are adequately led in the absence of the Pastor.
 - g. Assist the Pastor in leading the congregation to pray and care for one another, as well as developing a heart to reach outward with the message and ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - h. Develop the church's annual budget to be presented at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.
- 2. Chairman

- a. Conduct congregational and Board of Elders meetings in Christian dignity and order.
- b. Be a non-voting liaison to all other boards, teams, task forces and committees.
- c. Hold other leaders accountable for their responsibilities in cooperation with the Pastor.
- d. Arrange for an annual audit for all financial records.
- e. Provide proper communication and interaction with all of the officers and Ministry Team Leaders of the church. This should be done in cooperation with the Pastor.
- 3. Vice-Chairman
 - a. Preside in the absence of the chairman.
 - b. Assist the chairman as needed.
- 4. Church Secretary
 - a. Keep the minutes of Congregational Business Meetings.
 - b. Be responsible for the official correspondence of the church.
 - c. Keep track of all-important records of the church.
 - d. Keep a current list of the membership in consultation with the Board of Elders.
- 5. Financial Secretary (Duties may transferred to the Treasurer.)
 - a. Count all monies received. At least one additional person who is trustworthy in finances will assist as a witness for accurate records.
 - b. Keep a record of all monies with proper identification in these records.
 - c. Provide proper records to donors to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service.
 - d. Provide monthly financial reports of income to the Board of Elders (and as needed to other Ministry Teams).
 - e. Provide financial reports of income to the congregation for the Congregational Business Meetings and at other times when instructed by the Board of Elders.
- 6. Treasurer (Duties may transferred to the Financial Secretary.)
 - a. Disperse the funds as directed by the annual budget and the Board of Elders.
 - b. Keep proper records and receipts for church expenditures.
 - c. Provide proper records to the Internal Revenue Service (especially for hired employees of the church).
 - d. Provide monthly financial reports of disbursements to the Board of Elders.
 - e. Provide financial reports of disbursements to the congregation for the Congregational Business Meetings or as instructed by the Board of Elders.

C. Qualifications

- 1. The Elders will be godly men in accordance with the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 2. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will have the ability to lead, conduct, coordinate and delegate.
- 3. The Secretary will have an aptitude for keeping minutes, maintaining records and doing correspondence.
- 4. The Financial Secretary and Treasurer will have the ability to confidentially manage finances.

5. The Ministry Team Leaders will be godly people in accordance with the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-14. They may be a man or woman and must show an aptitude for leading and organizing the specific area of ministry, as well as a passion for that ministry.

6. If an elected leader becomes unqualified, the Board of Elders will ask for that person's resignation. If that person does not resign, he/she will be temporarily suspended by the Board of Elders until that leader is permanently removed or restored by a simple majority (51%) vote of the members voting at a congregational meeting. Removal from leadership does not automatically revoke one's membership.

Article 4 Discipline

A. Discipline is necessary to keep the integrity and purity of the Body of Jesus Christ; help the Body and an individual believer move towards righteousness and maturity in Jesus Christ; and to restore a person to faith and fellowship with other believers and Jesus Christ.

B. The Board of Elders will confront a person (or persons) who digresses from Scripture or the church's Constitution; or disrupts the fellowship of the church (including personality disputes) according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-5.

C. A charge against any person will be given in writing with a personal signature and presented to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will look into the matter and confer with the accused and will take appropriate action if they are satisfied the charges are true.

D. No member will be expelled until every effort has been made to reclaim him/her for Christ and the church in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17, II Thessalonians 3:13-15 and Galatians 6:1-2. If these efforts fail, that person will be expelled from the membership by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a congregational meeting.

E. Regular attenders of the church may also be asked to stay away from any or all gatherings of the church if the Board of Elders believes it is necessary for the health of the church and individuals in the church. However, due diligence should be made by the Board of Elders to restore the person and allow them to participate in the gatherings of the church.

Article 5 Congregational Business Meetings

A. Congregational Business Meetings will be scheduled once a year on a date set by the Elder Board.

1. This yearly meeting will be the meeting where Elders and Officers are elected and the annual budget for the coming fiscal year is approved. The fiscal year is the calendar year.

2. The newly elected Elders and Officers will begin their terms on the following January first.

3. Annual reports for the current year will be presented from Elders, Officers and Ministry Teams. An annual vision statement from the Elders and Pastor will be presented to the congregation at this meeting.

B. Special Congregational Business Meetings will be called at the request of the Pastor, Chairman, the Board of Elders or when five eligible members representing different households submit a written request to the Board of Elders requesting a meeting.

1. The Special Congregational Business Meeting will be announced with its purpose(s) at two consecutive Sunday worship services or by written notice to the membership and then announced at one Sunday worship service.
2. Official actions of the Special Congregational Business Meeting will be limited to the stated purpose(s) and any action specifically allowed by these By-Laws at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting.

C. All Congregational Business Meetings will be conducted in a Christlike spirit and according to Scriptural principles. *Robert's Rules of Order* will be the standard for the parliamentary procedures at all Congregational Business Meetings.

Article 6 Pastor, Pastoral Staff and Non-Pastoral Ministry Staff

A. Duties

1. The Pastor will perform all the Scriptural duties of the office under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These duties will include:
 - a. Preaching at the stated services of the church.
 - b. Visiting members of the congregation as needed (especially the sick and the elderly).
 - c. Administering the ordinances.
 - d. Leading the congregation to care for the spiritual welfare of others (in cooperation with the Board of Elders).
 - e. Discipling the leadership.
 - f. Keeping the congregation focused on its mission as stated in the Constitution and project an annual vision statement (in cooperation with the Board of Elders) which fulfills that mission.
2. He will be a voting member of the Board of Elders and an ex-officio member of all Ministry Teams, task forces or committees.
3. He will not qualify for any other elected or appointed office (except he may serve as Secretary of the Board of Elders).
4. He will be accountable to the Board of Elders.

B. Qualifications

1. The qualifications for Pastor will be those found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
2. He will exhibit the spiritual gift of the pastor/teacher (Ephesians 4:11-12).
3. He will hold to the EFCA Statement of Faith without mental reservation.
4. At the time of candidating, he should state in writing any differences of opinion he has with the Constitution and By-Laws.
5. He should be credentialed by the Evangelical Free Church of America or actively pursuing a credential with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

C. Calling a Pastor

1. The Pastoral Search Team will be composed of five church members and the church Chairman will serve as an ex-officio member. The Team should have at least one Elder but not more than two Elders. The Board of Elders will openly seek nominations from the church membership to serve on this Team. The Board of Elders will present the proposed Team to the congregation for affirmation. The Board of Elders will select the Chairperson of the Pastoral Search Team.
2. Their duties will be (without unnecessary delay) to seek advice from the District Superintendent, investigate, interview and invite to candidate a man of good report who meets the qualifications stated in 6B above.
3. After the process of narrowing the potential candidates to one, the Pastoral Search Team will recommend this candidate to the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders accepts the recommendation then the Pastoral Search Team will introduce the candidate to the church, arrange a time to candidate and then give their recommendation to the congregation at a Congregational Business Meeting. At this time, a call to become the Pastor may be extended to the candidate by a 75% majority ballot vote of the members voting at that Congregational Business Meeting.
4. A candidate will be eliminated before another is invited to candidate.
5. A candidate will be expected to accept or reject a call within 2 weeks.
6. Questions about job description, salary and other hiring or call issues will be determined by the Board of Elders.

D. Termination

1. The Pastor will serve until he resigns or is dismissed by the congregation. Thirty days will be considered proper notice from the Pastor or the Board of Elders, unless both parties mutually agree to a different period of time.
2. If a Pastor should depart from the Word of God in conduct or doctrine as defined in this Constitution or By-Laws or if he has lost the confidence of the congregation, he will be counseled in love by the Board of Elders. Should this not have the desired result, he may be dismissed by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a Congregational Business Meeting. Any severance pay will be determined by the Board of Elders.
3. Heresy and conduct unbecoming a Pastor are grounds for immediate removal from pastoral responsibilities by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will then recommend dismissal at a Congregational Business Meeting. The Pastor may be dismissed by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a Congregational Business Meeting. Any severance pay will be determined by the Board of Elders.

E. Membership

The Pastor and his wife become members at the time that they begin their ministry with the church.

F. Additional Pastoral Staff

1. The need for additional pastoral staff will be determined by the Board of Elders (in cooperation with the Pastor).
2. The search process will be conducted in the same manner as stated in Article 6, Section C above. The Pastor will be included as an ex-officio member of the Pastoral Search Team.

3. Staff titles and job descriptions will be determined by the Board of Elders before the Pastoral Search Team begins its work.
4. The Board of Elders will determine at the time of hiring whether the pastoral position will carry the privilege and responsibility of serving as an Elder on the Board of Elders and/or whether this person will serve as a Ministry Team Leader or as a part of a Ministry Team.

G. Non-Pastoral Staff

1. The need for non-pastoral staff will be determined by the Board of Elders (in cooperation with the Pastor).
2. The hiring of these staff members will be by the Board of Elders (with assistance by a Ministry Team, task force, or committee as needed).
3. The job description, pay or salary and other hiring issues will be determined by the Board of Elders.

Article 7 Voting and Elections

A. Procedure

1. All members, 18 years of age and older, and present at the congregational meeting will be eligible to vote. The exception would be a member under discipline and not eligible to vote.
2. The quorum for all Congregational Business Meetings will be those members present, but not less than six members. If less than six members are present then another Congregational Business Meeting will be scheduled.
3. Unless otherwise specified, all votes require a 51% majority vote of the members voting.
4. Election of individual Elders will be by written ballot.
5. All Elders will be affirmed by a 75% majority vote of the membership voting at a Congregational Business Meeting.
6. Church officers will be assigned by the board of elected elders.

B. Selection

1. The congregation recommends qualified men through a written recommendation form.
2. The Elders identify nominees from the list of recommended men.
3. Upon mutual agreement, the nominee undergoes a period of self-examination, as well as an examination by the current Elders, regarding his suitability for the position, according to the scriptural criteria.
4. If the nominee and the Elders agree on the nominee's suitability for the position, the Elders publicly announce the man's nomination and seek input from members of the church body. We allot 30 days in which members can speak personally with the nominee. If a member is aware of any disqualifying characteristics and the matter remains unresolved, the Elder, the nominee, or the member should approach the Elders and request that the nominee's name be withdrawn from consideration.
5. Following this period of public and private examination, the Elders vote on the nominee. A two-thirds majority vote of the Elders is required to proceed.

6. Upon approval, the Elders bring the nominee before the congregation as a candidate for election. A two-thirds majority vote of the congregation is required to confirm the Elder.

C. Appointments

1. The Board of Elders may appoint someone to temporarily fill a vacant office until the next Annual Congregational Meeting.

Article 8 Definition of Marriage

Marriage is instituted by God. This church defines marriage as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage found in this Article.

Article Definition of Legitimate Sexual Relations

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as "porneia"- πορνεία), including but not limited to adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality and pedophilia, are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior and the creation and / or distribution and / or viewing of pornography are incompatible with the biblical witness.

Article 9 Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws must be approved by the Board of Elders or submitted by five members from different households to the Board of Elders who will be required to present the amendment at a Congregational Business Meeting. The Board of Elders will inform the members in writing at least two weeks before a Congregational Business Meeting and the announcement will also be made at the church worship services one week before the Congregational Business Meeting. At the Congregational Business Meeting the amendment will be discussed and may be passed as written by a 75% majority vote of the members voting.