

Bethany Assembly of God

Constitution and Bylaws



CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	1
CONSTITUTION	1
ARTICLE I - NAME AND LOCATION	1
ARTICLE II - PURPOSE	1
ARTICLE III - PREROGATIVES	2
ARTICLE IV - AFFILIATION	2
ARTICLE V - TENETS OF FAITH	2
1.THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED	2
2.ONE TRUE GOD	2
3.THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST	3
4.THE FALL OF MAN	3
5.THE SALVATION OF MAN	3
6.THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH	3
7.THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST	4
8.THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST	4
9.SANCTIFICATION	4
10.THE CHURCH	4
11.THE MINISTRY	4
13.THE BLESSED HOPE	5
14.THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST	5
15.THE FINAL JUDGMENT	5
16.THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH	5
ARTICLE VI - ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES	5
ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS	5
ARTICLE VIII - MEMBERSHIP	5

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS	6
ARTICLE X - FINANCES	6
ARTICLE XI - PROPERTY	6
ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS	7
BYLAWS	8
ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP	8
ARTICLE II - GOVERNMENT	11
ARTICLE III - ELECTIONS	13
ARTICLE IV - VACANCIES	14
ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS	15
ARTICLE VI - FINANCES	15
ARTICLE VII - ORDER OF BUSINESS	16
ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS	16
CHANGE RECORD	17

Preamble

WHEREAS, it is the express purpose of God, our Heavenly Father, to call out of the world a people who shall constitute the body or church of our Lord Jesus Christ, built and established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; and,

WHEREAS, God having ordained that this universal church should find its expression in and through local churches, enjoining them to assemble together for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God, and for the work of the ministry, and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for in the New Testament; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that we whose names appear on the Assembly roster as of this date do recognize ourselves as a local Assembly, and do affirm ourselves to be in cooperative fellowship with the General Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri, and an active member of the Southern New England Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, and do hereby adopt the following articles of church order this month of April, in the year of our Lord 2008, these to supplement the articles of incorporation and to supersede any and all other rules of church order.

Constitution

Article I - Name and Location

The name of this church shall be Bethany Assembly of God. The street address of the principal location of this church shall be: 580 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts, 01001. The mailing address of this church shall be: P.O. Box 422, Agawam, Massachusetts, 01001.

Article II - Purpose

Section 1. To establish and maintain a place of worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son, through the Holy Spirit, and for the promotion of Christian fellowship and edification.

Section 2. To obey in our capacity the Great Commission, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8; 8:4.

Article III - Prerogatives

Section 1. This Assembly shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:3,13.

Section 2. To have a membership which is determined by the local Assembly and to discipline its members according to the scriptures and the stated standard of membership as so cited in the Bylaws.

Section 3. To choose or call its Pastor, elect its officers, and transact all other business pertaining to its life and conduct as a local church.

Section 4. To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be deemed necessary for the propagation of the gospel, and for the work of the local Assembly.

Section 5. To purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as Trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes, all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.

Article IV - Affiliation

While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs, this Assembly shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with Assemblies of like precious faith associated in the Southern New England District of the Assemblies of God with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri, and shall share in the privileges and responsibilities of that affiliation.

Article V - Tenets of Faith

This Assembly shall accept the Holy Scriptures as the revealed Will of God, the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths approved by the General Council of the Assemblies of God as follows:

1. THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:21).

2. ONE TRUE GOD

The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent “I AM,” the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of

relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

3. THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

- (a) His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35)
- (b) His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:22)
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38)
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21)
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:4)
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3)

4. THE FALL OF MAN

Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

5. THE SALVATION OF MAN

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

- (a) Conditions to salvation - Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).
- (b) Evidences of salvation - The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

6. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- (a) Baptism in Water - The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4).
- (b) Holy Communion - The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements - bread and the fruit of the vine - is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:4), a memorial of His suffering and death (I Corinthians 11:26), and a prophecy of His second coming (I Corinthians 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers "Till He come!"

7. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; I Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

8. THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

9. SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-13; Romans 8:1-2, 13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12, 13; I Peter 1:5).

10. THE CHURCH

The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which is written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

11. THE MINISTRY

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for a twofold purpose: (1) The evangelizing of the world, and (2) The edifying of the Body of Christ (Mark 16:15-20; Ephesians 4:11-13).

12. DIVINE HEALING

Divine Healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:14-16).

13. THE BLESSED HOPE

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope for the Church (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51-52).

14. THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27, 30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-22; Zephaniah 3:19-20; Romans 11:26-27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 72:3-8; Micah 4:3-4).

15. THE FINAL JUDGMENT

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

16. THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

“We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:22).

Article VI - Ordinances and Practices

The ordinance of the Lord’s supper and baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost shall be observed at stated times and whenever requested. The scriptural practice of anointing the sick with oil for healing and the dedication of children shall be observed at stated times and whenever requested. (I Corinthian 11:23-25; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; James 5:14; Matthew 19:13-15)

Article VII - Officers

The officers of the church shall be: the Pastor, three Deaconesses, three or more Deacons, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Trustees, to total fourteen members. These Officers shall constitute the Church Board.

Article VIII - Membership

Individuals shall be eligible for membership in this Assembly who give evidence of a personal living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who voluntarily subscribe to its tenets of faith and agree to be governed by its Constitution and Bylaws as herein set forth.

Article IX - Meetings

Section 1. Meetings for public worship shall be held each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Senior Pastor and the Pastoral Staff.

Section 2. There shall be an annual business meeting of the Assembly held on the fourth Wednesday of April at which time the annual reports of the Pastors, the financial report, the officers shall be elected and the business of the Assembly transacted. Notice of the annual business meeting shall be given on the two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 3. Special business meetings of the Assembly may be called when necessary, by the Senior Pastor, or by the majority of the Church Board, after *proper notice* has been given by the Pastor, or by the Secretary of the Assembly. Notice of the special business meeting shall be given on the two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. Should the Senior Pastor become incapacitated and is determined by the Church Board to be unable to continue, the District Superintendent should be notified and his advice sought.

Section 4. Right of initiative: Special business meetings may also be called by petition having been signed by not less than one-fourth of the membership of the Assembly, the petition to be placed in the hands of the Pastor or the Corporate Secretary and announcement made on the two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum: No record of any annual or special business meeting of the Assembly shall be made unless one-third or more of the voting members shall be present to constitute a quorum. In the event that two duly called meetings of the Assembly fail to produce a quorum, the Church Board shall be empowered to act upon the matter in question.

Section 6. Board Meetings: The Pastor shall call such meetings once every month unless otherwise agreed upon by a majority of the board. A majority of the Church Board must be present to constitute a quorum. The board may request a special meeting if such request is made to the Pastor by a majority of the Church Board.

Article X - Finances

The Assembly shall be financed according to the scriptural method by the tithes and offering of the members and friends of the organization. (Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:4-9)

Article XI - Property

Section 1. All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the name of the Assembly.

Section 2. No real or chattel property of the Assembly shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated, without the same having been authorized by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at a regular business meeting or special business meeting of the Assembly which has been duly called for the consideration of the proposal.

Section 3. The debt on any real or chattel property of the Assembly which is mortgaged or otherwise alienated shall not be increased without the authorization by a majority vote of the membership at a regular or special business meeting duly called for this consideration.

Section 4. The Secretary of the Assembly shall certify that such conveyance, lease, or mortgage has been duly authorized by vote of the membership. Such certificates shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

Section 5. In the event the church membership is ever divided because of doctrinal differences, the entire real and mortgaged properties including all assets in whole and audited liabilities shall revert to the church members holding to the tenets of faith as stated in the Constitution as of April, 2008. In the event that the membership herein mentioned ceases to function as a church body, all liabilities, assets and properties real or mortgaged shall revert to the Southern New England District of the Assemblies of God, a Corporation, which shall then have full authority to use or liquidate in part or in whole at its sole discretion in the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.

Article XII - Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Assembly who are in attendance at any annual or special business meeting called for that purpose, provided that notice of such meeting shall have been made at all services on at least two Sundays preceding the time for such meeting. Furthermore, such proposed changes in the constitution shall be made available at least two Sundays prior to the meeting or mailed to voting members upon their requests.

Bylaws

Article I - Membership

Section 1. The standard of membership of this Assembly shall be:

- (a) Any person eighteen years of age or older professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of regeneration, and accepting the tenets of faith as set forth in the Constitution shall be eligible to apply for membership in our Assembly.
- (b) All members shall:
 - 1. Confess Christ through baptism by immersion (Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15; Acts 8:36-38).
 - 2. Faithfully attend church services (Hebrews 10:25).
 - 3. Support the total church program at home and abroad in prayer, service, and witness according to their God-given talents and abilities (II Corinthians 4:2).
 - 4. Live a Christian life consistent with the Word of God, striving to glorify the Lord in spirit, soul, and body, bearing in mind that we are the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men (Romans 6:4; 13:13-14; I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; II Corinthians 3:2; Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1-15; I John 1:6-7).
 - 5. Share their Christian testimony by word and life with others on a person-to-person basis (Acts 1:8).
 - 6. Support the work of the church by the method of tithing (giving a tenth of their income) and offerings (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23).

Section 2. Voting Members

- (a) All active members as defined in Article I, Section 7, shall constitute the voting membership of the Assembly.

Section 3. Reception of Members

- (a) Persons desiring to become members of the Assembly shall attend the required membership courses and complete a membership application form, which shall be submitted to the Spiritual Life Committee. Following an interview with the Spiritual Life Committee, those who meet the qualifications for membership and are recommended by the Spiritual Life Committee shall have their names submitted to the Church Board for ratification. They shall be welcomed into the membership of the Assembly at an appropriate service and their names shall be inscribed in the Assembly roster book.

- (b) Members in good standing in other Assemblies of God churches may be received into membership of Bethany by a letter of transfer and meeting with the Spiritual Life Committee.
- (c) Those meeting the standard for membership should be encouraged to become members of Bethany.

Section 4. Discipline of a Member

- (a) There shall be a Discipline Committee consisting of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons. They shall have sole authority in determining deviations from the statement of faith and violations of the standards of membership. If a Pastor or a Deacon is the subject of a disciplinary action, they shall not sit as a member of the Discipline Committee. The Pastors and Deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.

1. REASONS FOR DISCIPLINE

- a. Violation of the standards of membership
- b. Departure from tenets of faith
- c. Sowing discord
- d. Willful absence

2. PROCEDURES:

The procedures provided in this section are based on Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 5:14; II Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15; I Timothy 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

- (b) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When members become aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, they are to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore the member. They should first examine themselves and with a spirit of humility seek restoration. Matthew 18:15-17
- (c) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration. Matthew 18:15-17
- (d) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (b) and (c) have been taken, the Discipline Committee shall hear the complaint.
- (e) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (b), (c), and (d) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a two-thirds vote of the Board of Deacons.

- (f) We recognize that there are among us members who became entangled in their marriage relations in their former lives of sin. I Corinthians 7:17 teaches: "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." We recommend that these cases be left in the hands of the Lord and that they walk in the light as God lets it shine on their souls; however, members who are contemplating divorce should seek immediate biblical guidance (as referred in Matthew 5:31-32 & I Corinthians 7) from a member of the pastoral staff. Marriage is a sacred and permanent covenant and therefore any contemplation of divorce should proceed only with biblical guidance and review of the Spiritual Life Committee.

Members of the congregation who were divorced prior to becoming a member and desire to remarry shall also seek pastoral counseling before proceeding to remarry.

Any member who shall divorce their spouse and/or remarry without following the above guidelines (biblical guidance and Pastoral/Spiritual Life Committee counsel) shall forfeit their membership in the Assembly.

- (g) No matter may be heard by the Discipline Committee unless the steps outlined in subsections (b) and (c) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.

Section 5. Transfer of Membership

Members not under the disciplinary process of Section 4 may request that a letter of transfer be sent to another church.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

The membership of any individual shall be classified as inactive, with notice, if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding three months. This provision may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the Board of Deacons.

Section 7. Classification of Members

The membership roll shall be divided in four sections as follows:

- (a) Active Members - those who take active part in the services and share financial responsibility of the church.
- (b) Former Active Members - those who are sick, shut-ins, attending Bible School, in military service, etc.
- (c) Inactive Members - those temporarily suspended from membership for reasons stated in Sections 4 (a) and 6. Such persons may be reinstated to active membership by a majority vote of the Spiritual Life Committee.
- (d) Honorary Members - ministers, missionaries, etc.

Article II - Government

Section 1. The Senior Pastor

The Assembly finds its headship under the Lord Jesus Christ in its Pastor, hereafter referred to as Senior Pastor. He should be honored in his sacred office as the spiritual overseer of the Assembly, and shall exercise general superintendency over all its activities. He shall be the president of the corporation and shall be the chairman of all the business meetings of the Assembly, of the Church Board and of the Spiritual Life Committee. He shall be empowered to appoint committees and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and departments. He shall provide for all the services of the Assembly and shall arrange for all special meetings, giving due regard to the Assembly. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the Assembly without his approval.

Section 2. The Church Board

The Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees, which shall include the Corporate Secretary and Corporate Treasurer, shall serve in an advisory capacity by giving assistance to the Senior Pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Assembly. They shall, with the Senior Pastor as the chairman, constitute the Church Board and be responsible for all fiscal matters of the Assembly, in addition to their responsibilities as members of the Trustee or Deacon Board. The government of the Assembly is vested in the Church Board comprised of men and women who serve as the Senior Pastor, Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees. The Church Board shall function in harmony, moving the Assembly toward fulfilling its purpose and mission.

Section 3. The Board of Deacons

- (a) The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of Deacons and Deaconesses.
- (b) The Board of Deacons shall assist the Senior Pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, acknowledging his position as stated in Article II, Section 1. Upon the resignation, dismissal, or death of the Senior Pastor, the Board of Deacons will appoint a pulpit committee.
- (c) Following the annual church business meeting, the Board of Deacons shall assemble and elect a recording secretary for their board from their own number. That elected person shall keep accurate records of all Deacon Board meetings and shall have a legible copy available at the next meeting for approval.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees

- (a) The Trustees shall be responsible for the maintenance and management of all church property, both real and personal. Trustees are to act as a unit under the guidance of the Senior Pastor and subject to the authority of the Church Board. Trustees shall faithfully perform those duties prescribed in each Trustee's portfolio as established by the Senior Pastor and the Church Board.
- (b) Following the annual church business meeting, the Board of Trustees shall assemble and elect a recording secretary for their board from their own number. That elected person shall keep

accurate records of all Trustee board meetings and shall have a legible copy available at the next meeting for approval.

Section 5. The Corporate Secretary

The Corporate Secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Church Board and of the annual and special business meetings of the Assembly, and shall oversee the keeping of a record of the membership in the Assembly roster book, and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of his duties; shall oversee the safekeeping of all legal documents and the Corporate seal. The Secretary's duties shall be executed under the guidance of the Senior Pastor and subject to the authority of the Church Board. The Secretary shall be part of the governing body of the church as stated in Article VII of the Constitution. While certain copies may be kept in the possession of the Corporate Secretary, all original documents that have to do with, or pertain to Bethany Assembly of God, along with the Corporate seal, shall be the property of Bethany and shall be kept in a locked file in the church office. They shall be accessible to the Senior Pastor and other members of the Church Board.

Section 6. The Corporate Treasurer

The Corporate Treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing the keeping of itemized accounts of all receipts and disbursements in the appropriate financial ledgers and is responsible for overseeing the compiling of monthly and annual financial statements, including the performance of all clerical work required to keep the financial records of the church current and is also responsible to deposit all funds in the church bank accounts, said banks to be approved by the Church Board. Disbursements of church funds are to be made by check, as authorized by church membership or the Church Board. The Treasurer shall be part of the governing body of the church as stated in Article VII of the Constitution. The Corporate Treasurer and the Senior Pastor shall, when duly authorized by either the membership or Church Board, as required under these bylaws, execute and deliver on behalf of the corporation (church membership) all documents as may be required in the corporation's course of business. All such original documents that have to do with or pertain to Bethany Assembly of God shall be the property of Bethany and shall be kept in a locked file in one of the church offices. They shall be accessible to the Senior Pastor and members of the Church Board to carry out the official business of the Assembly. All duties of the Treasurer shall be executed under the guidance of the Senior Pastor and subject to the authority of the Church Board.

Section 7. The Deaconesses

- (a) There shall be three Deaconesses elected from the church membership. The Deaconesses shall serve the church in a spiritual capacity as requested by and under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

The Deaconesses shall also serve as members of the Nominating Committee as well as the Spiritual Life and Discipline Committees.

Section 8. The Spiritual Life Committee

- (a) The Deacons and Deaconesses, together with the Senior Pastor as chairperson, shall comprise the Spiritual Life Committee. The Spiritual Life Committee shall provide for and promote the spiritual well being of the church. Among their responsibilities the Spiritual Life Committee shall act in the interviewing of new members and approve all marriages within the Assembly.
- (b) They will diligently and with the guidance, help and direction of the Senior Pastor, follow up on those members who become inactive. These names shall be provided by the Senior Pastor.

Article III - Elections

Section 1. The Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period unless otherwise stipulated by the membership at the time of election. The Pulpit Committee, after prayerful inquiry and with judicious counsel, full consideration being given to the leading of the Holy Spirit, shall select an available, scripturally qualified, ordained Assemblies of God minister as nominee to the office of Senior Pastor, and shall present his name for the vote of the membership without undue delay. Any member of the Assembly may offer a minister's name for the consideration of the committee. The counsel of the District Superintendent should be sought. Election shall be by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote of all votes cast shall be required to constitute an election.

Section 2. Qualifications of the Church Board and Deaconesses

- (a) Deacons and Deaconesses shall be men and women who have demonstrated spiritual maturity and would be an asset to their office. It is required that they be filled with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4 and 6:3, and adept at working around the altar and in visitation. It is recommended that Deacons and Deaconesses be at least thirty-five years of age and shall have been members of the Assembly for at least two years. If they are married, they shall not have a previous marriage partner living, nor shall their spouse. No person is eligible to become a Deacon or Deaconess if his or her spouse is serving as a Deacon or Deaconess.
- (b) Trustees shall be at least twenty-five years of age and be filled with the Holy Spirit, or shall be earnestly seeking to be filled, and shall have been members of the Assembly for at least two years. All members of the Church Board shall be marked by spiritual maturity, proven leadership ability, faithfulness in all things and a life that is exemplary of our standards of membership. Members are expected to actively participate in altar services.
- (c) Church Board members and Deaconesses shall be elected by a plurality vote of the members attending the annual business meeting to a term of three years. The Senior Pastor shall appoint the members of the Board to the offices set forth in Article II Sections 2 through 6 of these By-Laws, subject to the ratification of the Church Board, shall be for annual terms and shall be made in accordance with the qualifications set forth above. After Church Board members have

served a term or any portion of a term, they are not eligible for any office until they have been out of office for one year.

Section 3. Nominations

The language in the Constitution and Bylaws shall not be gender specific where board members are concerned, and the qualifications of Deacons as well as trustees clearly reflect godly men and women in leadership.

- a. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Senior Pastor who shall serve as chairman, three Deacons, three members of the Board of Trustees elected by the Board of Trustees, and the three Deaconesses. Each of the three groups chosen; i.e. Deacons, Trustees, and Deaconesses, shall choose one additional member of the Nominating Committee from the church membership, providing three members of the congregation at large, allowing a total of thirteen members of the nominating committee. They are to submit a number of nominees equal to the number of vacancies, plus at least one, e.g., if there are three vacancies, the nominating committee shall submit at least four qualified nominees.
- b. **DUTIES:** The committee's nominations are to be listed in the Sunday Bulletin two Sundays prior to the annual business meeting. **NOMINATIONS BY THE CHURCH BODY:** Any voting member of the Assembly has the right to nominate in writing a person(s) to fill a vacancy. A nominating ballot will be made available for that purpose on the first Sunday in December preceding an annual meeting. The Nominating Committee will interview each nominee who desires to serve. If all qualifications set forth in the Bylaws are met, their names shall be placed on the voting ballot.
- c. If a member of the Nominating Committee is nominated, they shall be interviewed by the Church Board. The Church Board shall determine if the person is qualified for the office and whether their name is allowed to stand.

Article IV - Vacancies

A. The Senior Pastor

1. If the Senior Pastor has been called for a definite period of time, the tenure of office shall terminate at the end of his term of service. If the congregation so desired, it would then be necessary by another two-thirds vote of the members of the congregation to cast ballots to determine his re-election. The election shall be by secret ballot if a quorum is represented to be present at a duly called meeting.
2. In the event a Senior Pastor has serious charges preferred against him or his ministry has ceased to be effective or no provision has been made for the termination of his ministry, power is vested in the Church Board to ask, by a two-thirds vote, for the resignation of the Senior Pastor at any time. If the Senior Pastor refuses to resign, the Senior Pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Church Board has been confirmed or denied through a secret

ballot by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting of the membership called for that purpose, notice of such meeting having been given on the two Sundays prior. Such meeting shall be presided over by the District Officiary. In the case of a Senior Pastor's removal from office, a report of such action shall be made to the district office.

3. When a vacancy in the Senior Pastorate occurs, speakers shall be arranged for by the Board of Deacons until a Pastor shall be chosen as prescribed in Section I.

B. Board Members

1. Any position may be declared vacant by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Board at any regular or special board meeting. Grounds for such action shall be:
 - a. Unscriptural conduct
 - b. Doctrinal departure from the tenets of faith
 - c. Incompetence in office
 - d. Failure to abide by the qualifications set forth in Article III, Section 2(a).
2. Any Board Member or Deaconess under charges shall have the opportunity for a fair and impartial hearing of their case before the membership if they so desire. The Church Board is empowered to fill by appointment any irregular vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

C. Vacancies on the ministerial staff shall be filled with qualified persons recommended by the Senior Pastor and approved by a two-thirds majority of the Church Board. The term of service of a person on the ministerial staff may be terminated by their resignation or a two-thirds vote of the Church Board upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor at which time just cause would be given.

Article V - Departments

There shall be recognized departments of the church. These departments shall come under the oversight and authority of the Senior Pastor the department directors, in consultation with the Church Board. Their purpose and function shall be to develop ministries, people and opportunities of service within the church body.

Article VI - Finances

Section 1. The Church Board shall have general oversight in all financial matters of each department of the Assembly. All records of each department shall be subject to an audit.

Section 2. The Church Board shall annually review and determine all salaries and allowances.

Section 3. Through the Bethany missionary fellowship, this Assembly shall participate in missionary support by offerings to the World Missions Department of the General Council of the Assemblies of God,

Springfield, Missouri, and by offerings to missionary endeavors authorized by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Church Board.

Section 4. The Church Board shall have authority to consider and respond to requests for financial assistance. They will consider requests for help, which may exceed the benevolence budget or be outside of the purview of the benevolence department.

Article VII - Order of Business

Business meetings shall be governed by the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as outlined in Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised and should be conducted in the Spirit of Christ and with the help of brotherly counsel. The regular order of business for the annual meeting of the membership shall be as follows:

1. Devotional
2. Reading of Minutes
3. Election of Officers
4. Unfinished Business
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

Article VIII - Amendments

The Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the Assembly by a majority vote of the membership present, provided a quorum has been established and is still present for all voting. All proposed Bylaws amendments shall be submitted to the church office three weeks prior to the regular or special business meeting, allowing time for them to be printed, collated and distributed to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the business meeting.

Change Record

- Preamble, Paragraph iii, April, in the year of our Lord 2008.
- Article III, Section 2, Paragraph (c) by congregational vote on April 30, 2008 during annual Business Meeting.
- Article XI, Section 5, Constitution as of April, 2008.
- Article VII, Officers as of 4-24-2013.
- Article IX, Section 2, Meetings, Constitutional change to one annual business meeting (combining the February Financial Report Meeting and April Annual Business Meeting) to be held on the fourth Wednesday of April by congregational vote at a special business meeting held on 11-30-2014.
- **Women in Leadership**, presented to Annual Business Meeting on April 26, 2017. Accepted without discussion by 2/3rds majority vote.
 - Constitution change:
 - Article VII – Officers
 1. Added the following: “three deaconesses”
 - Bylaws changes:
 - Article II – Government
 1. Section 2. The Church Board
Added the following:
“men and women who serve,” and “Deaconesses”.
 2. Section 3. The Board of Deacons
Added the following:
“(a) The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of Deacons and Deaconesses”
 3. Section 7. The Deaconesses
Deleted the last line of paragraph (a), “They may also be called to meet with the Deacon board at the request of the Senior Pastor, and in such instances they shall have voting privileges.”
 - Article III – Elections
 1. Section 2. Qualifications of the Church Board and Deaconesses
Changed the following:
“(c)...set forth in Article II Sections 2 – 6 of these Bylaws...” (changed the reference from section 7 to section 6)
 2. Section 3 – Nominations
Added the following (see bold/capitalized words):
“The language in the Constitution and Bylaws shall **NOT** be gender specific where Board members are concerned, and the Qualification of Deacons as well as Trustees clearly reflect godly men **AND WOMEN** in leadership.”
- April 25, 2018 Business Meeting Changes.
 - The Constitution Preamble was updated to reflect the change in name of the Southern New England District to Southern New England Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God.
 - Constitution: Article VII – Officers
 - Added the phrase “to total fourteen members” in the first sentence for clarification of the number on the board.
 - Bylaws: Article I – Membership, Section 4 Discipline of a Member

- (a) now reads: There shall be a Discipline Committee consisting of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons. (This reflects the fact Deaconesses are now part of the Board of Deacons.)
- Bylaws: Article I – Membership, Section 7 Classification of Members
 - (c) updated the sentence to include section 6 in the first sentence. “...for reasons stated in Section 4 (a) and 6.”
- Bylaws: Article III – Elections, Section 3 Nominations
 - (b) Duties: Removed information re bulletin board and Sunday night services to accurately reflect our current service schedule. New sentence reads as follows: “The committee’s nominations are to be listed in the Sunday Bulletin two Sundays prior to the annual business meeting.”
- Bylaws: Article IV – Vacancies
 - (B) Removed reference to Deaconesses for consistency in reference to Bylaws Article II Section 3 (a), to read as follows: “Board Members”.
- Bylaws: Article III – Elections, Section 2 Qualifications of the Church Board
 - (c) changed election from “majority” to “plurality” vote of the members present at a business meeting.

