



ElmCreek
Community Church

Constitution and Bylaws

As adopted on 01/08/2023

ELMCREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH
Constitution and Bylaws

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Article 1 Name

The name of this organization shall be “ElmCreek Community Church,” located in Maple Grove, Minnesota; incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Article 2 Identity Statement

Purpose: The purpose of ElmCreek Community Church shall be:

“TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN”

Priorities: We will accomplish this purpose by making the following objectives our primary priorities:

- **Worship:** declaring God’s power and greatness by exalting Christ as Lord, declaring Him holy and worthy. (Ps. 95:1-9)
- **Evangelize:** reaching out to others for Christ through our words and actions, declaring Him Lord and Savior. (2 Cor. 5:16-21)
- **Love:** empowered by the Holy Spirit who enables us to first love God and then accept, care for, and support others without fear, because God first loved us. (Mt. 22:36-40; 1 Jn. 4:19)
- **Disciple:** training and instructing Christians in their understanding of, and obedience to, the teachings of Christ which are given to us in the Bible, the word of God. (1 Pet. 2:9, 4:8; Mt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2)

Article 3 Conference Affiliation

- A. We believe that it is important for Christians to be unified. One way to do this is by forming associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship, and a more effective fulfillment of Christ’s commission. (Acts 15; 1 Cor. 6:1-3)
- B. ElmCreek Community Church is affiliated with the North American Baptist Conference (NAB) and the Minnesota Association of NAB churches.

Article 4 Statement of Faith

- A. **THE WORD OF GOD.** We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as a revelation of God’s will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21, Jn. 17:17)
- B. **THE GODHEAD.** We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God, sharing the same nature and attributes. (Gen. 1:26; 1 Peter 1:2; Mt. 3:16-17; 28:19)
 - a. **The Father** reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe. He hears and answers prayer, He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior. (1 Chron. 29:11-13; Mt. 7:11; 1 Jn. 4:9-10; Jn. 3:16; Gal. 4:4-6; Acts 16:31)
 - b. **The Son** became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and

born of the virgin Mary. Being fully God and fully man, he revealed God to us through His sinless life, miracles, and teaching. We also believe in His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, visible, return from heaven. (Mt. 1:18, 23; Lk. 24:1-8; Jn. 1:1, 14; Acts 1:11; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:24-25; 1 Jn. 2; Rev. 19, 20.)

- c. **The Holy Spirit** is a person and is fully God. He inspired certain men to write the scriptures. He regenerates, baptizes into the Body of Christ, indwells every believer, guides and empowers believers. He gives gifts to all believers to be used in ministry so that the church functions properly. (Mt. 28:19; Jn. 3:5; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19; 1 Cor. 12:4-13; Eph. 3:16; 4:11-16)
- C. **MANKIND.** We believe God created humanity, male and female, in His own image and free from sin. People were created to have fellowship with God and to be steward ~~over~~ His creation. As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect. However, through the temptation of Satan, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation. Because of this disobedience, all people are born with a sinful nature and need to be reconciled to God. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7-3:19; Ps. 139:13-17; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-21; 6:23)
- D. **SALVATION.** We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, was purchased by Christ on the cross, and is received by each person through faith apart from any human merit, works, or ritual. Salvation results in righteous living, good works, and proper social concern. (Jn. 1:12; 3:3-7; 5:24; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:5)
- E. **THE CHURCH.** We believe that the church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head. The true church is composed of all persons, who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have been baptized upon a credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for Worship, Evangelism, Love in Action, and Discipleship. The ordinances of the local church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. Each church is a self-governing body under the Lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility. (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2:41-47; 13:1-3; Eph. 5:21; Col. 1:18; Heb. 10:24-25)
- F. **CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.** We believe that the supreme task of every believer is to glorify God in their life. The believer should live blamelessly before the world, be a faithful steward of their possessions, and seek to realize for him or herself the full stature of maturity in Christ. (1 Cor. 10:3 1; Col 1:28; 1 Tim. 6:6-9; 1 Pet. 1:14-15)
- G. **THE FAMILY.** We affirm the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman and of the traditional family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability. (Gen. 2:21-25; Eph. 6:1-4)
- H. **LAST THINGS.** We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the lost, the

eternal conscious existence of all people either in heaven or hell, and in divine judgments, rewards, and punishments. (Jn. 5:29; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 15:51-58; 2 Cor. 5:6-10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Jn. 8; Rev. 19, 20)

Article 5 Government

A. Form.

- a. ElmCreek Community Church recognizes Jesus Christ as the head of His Church and of this local body. We will respond to His direction through the use of a congregational form of government. Therefore, this local church is autonomous to determine its own identity. The membership, however, invests the elected Servant Leadership Team with the responsibility of leadership in order to achieve the objectives of this church. Unless otherwise stated, all areas of authority and administrative responsibility shall rest in the hands of the elected Servant Leadership Team and the appointed Ministry Teams. (1 Tim. 3:1-13)

B. Determinative Responsibilities of Congregation

- a. Upon the recommendation of the Servant Leadership Team, the vote of the membership shall determine the following areas:
 - i. The calling and dismissal of the Senior Pastor.
 - ii. The purchase or sale of any land or property.
 - iii. Constitution and By-Laws revision.
 - iv. The election of Servant Leadership Team members.
 - v. The calling or the dismissal of an Associate Pastor
 - vi. The approval of the church budget and any non-budgeted increases in excess of 10% of the approved budget per year.
- b. A quorum shall be 20% of the active voting membership with a three-fourths affirmative vote to act on all these areas. Members who will be absent may vote by absentee ballot, provided such ballot is received by a member of the Servant Leadership Team prior to the meeting.
- c. All other areas of authority and administrative responsibility shall rest in the hands of the Servant Leadership Team.
- d. Every effort will be made through careful explanation and prayer to have the whole body of believers in one accord as decisions are made. In the case of a vote other than unanimous all members will support in attitude and actions the decision of the majority as an expression of Christian love, mutual support, and submission to fellow members of Christ's body, in deference to one another (1 Cor. 12:12-26; Eph. 4:1-16). Departure from this principle, causing disunity in the body, may be cause for disciplinary action which may include dismissal from an elected or appointed office, if applicable, or from the church body and its membership. The purpose of this guideline is to enable the entire church body to proceed with faithfulness and unity to the cause of Christ.

Article 6 Membership/Partnership

A. Membership requirements.

Those who desire to become members of the church shall have met the following

requirements:

- a. Trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- b. Agree with the statement of faith.
- c. Complete the membership class and turn in a Membership Covenant form.
- d. Complete an interview by two members of the Servant Leadership Team.
- e. Be baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ.

B. Membership Responsibilities.

The members of the church shall be willing to assume the responsibilities of membership. They shall strive to, among other things:

- a. Progress in obedience to Christ (Jn. 14:15).
- b. Worship in-person weekly with the church family (Ps. 150:1; Eph. 5:19-20, Heb. 10:24-25).
- c. Participate regularly in communion (1 Cor. 11:17-26).
- d. Serve faithfully in ministry (1 Pet. 4:10).
- e. Support financially the church ministry (2 Cor. 9:6-15).
- f. Influence their network of friends, relatives, and associates to become Christ's disciples (Mt. 28:18-20).
- g. Be responsive to and supportive of the church leadership (Heb. 13:1,7).

C. Receiving Members.

Anyone desiring membership shall meet the requirements of membership and make a commitment to assume the responsibilities of membership. Upon approval by the Servant Leadership Team, the applicant shall be received as a member with full privileges and responsibilities.

D. Removing Members.

Members may be removed from the membership roll ~~or placed on inactive membership status~~ by majority vote of the Servant Leadership Team under the following conditions:

- a. Transferring to another church.
- b. Assuming a new permanent residence out of the area.
- c. Requesting to be released from membership.
- d. Failing to attend the services and or failing to provide financial support of the church for a period of three months or more.
- e. Not responding to church discipline.
- f. Going home to be with the Lord.

E. Reconciliation, Restoration and Discipline of Members.

The guiding principles outlined by Christ in Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1-2 shall be encouraged in all cases when a member observes sin in the life of another member. The goal of the church body is the repentance and restoration of individuals and reconciliation of relationships.

- a. When such sin is personally observed, the member should first prayerfully engage in self-examination.

- b. The member should then meet privately (one to one) with the other member, as soon as possible to seek to understand their observations and, if necessary, to lovingly and gently confront the other member.
- c. If the member refuses to listen, then one or two uninvolved members shall be taken along to attempt to restore the sinning member. At least one of these members should be a church leader, such as a ~~core group leader~~, the responsible ministry leader or Servant Leadership Team member. Our desire is to keep the process of restoration in as limited a circle as possible, and to provide good counsel to those involved. All parties concerned shall express a spirit of gentleness and a desire to bear the burdens of the sinning member (Gal. 6:1-2).
- d. If the member refuses to listen to the two or three, a member of the Servant Leadership Team should be informed concerning the sin. The Servant Leadership Team must then call a confidential meeting and request in writing that the troubled member be present along with all parties involved.
- e. If the member fails to appear before the Servant Leadership Team or to heed their counsel, the Servant Leadership Team shall determine the actions to be taken, which may include removal from membership and/or fellowship with the church body (Mt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-14).
- f. The Servant Leadership Team shall determine whether the counsel has been properly heeded and whether the member is to be restored to fellowship or dismissed from membership. If it is the belief of the Servant Leadership Team that the member should be released from membership, the Servant Leadership Team shall then inform the congregation.
- g. A dismissed member may request reinstatement of membership and/or fellowship upon repentance and reconciliation. The request for reinstatement is effective upon approval of the Servant Leadership Team.

Article 7 Leadership

At ElmCreek we desire to reflect the heart of God through all our ministry functions. The purpose of these ministries is to help people to mature in their relationship to Christ and to make Him known to others (Phil. 4:13). Because of this, all ministries are evaluated yearly on the basis of lives changed as a result of this ministry function. If this purpose is not being fulfilled, then the Servant Leadership Team will recommend the discontinuation of that particular ministry program. Our intent is to develop all ministries as the Holy Spirit directs us in response to recognized needs. At ElmCreek our entire organizational structure is developed with the intention to free people for the joy of ministry.

- A. **Senior and Associate Pastors.** It shall be the duty of the pastors to pray, proclaim God's word, ensure that the goals and budget proposals are prepared, and oversee the spiritual health, direction, and ministry of the church. The Senior Pastor is responsible to provide

leadership to the staff, Servant Leadership Team, and congregation so the church's purpose is being accomplished. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-20).

- a. **Qualifications.** Pastors shall meet the character requirements of 1 Tim. 3:1-7, demonstrate one or more gifts of Eph. 4:11-12, and be licensed or ordained for the gospel ministry.
 - b. **Duties.** The job descriptions of all pastors shall be reviewed by the Servant Leadership Team as often as necessary.
 - c. **Selection.** A Search committee shall be appointed by the Servant Leadership Team to interview and select candidates. The best available candidate as determined by the committee shall be presented to the staff and Servant Leadership Team. Upon approval by the Servant Leadership Team, the candidate shall be given a variety of interaction opportunities with members of the congregation, in addition to preaching at one or more of the worship services. The congregation shall then vote at a special business meeting (see Article 10-C) on whether or not to extend a call.
 - d. **Term.** Senior and Associate Pastors shall serve indefinitely; the relationship may be terminated on sixty days written notice. If a written petition requesting a pastor's resignation, signed by at least 40% of the membership, is submitted to a Servant Leadership Team member, then the Servant Leadership Team must review the request and make a recommendation to the congregation at a special business meeting.
 - e. **Removal.** The Servant Leadership Team shall request a special business meeting of the church membership. 75% of the church membership must be present. A 75% non-ballot, public affirmative vote for the pastor's removal is required. No votes in absentia will be accepted.
 - f. **In the absence of a Senior Pastor.** All staff accountability, leadership structures and roles shall fall under the direction of the President of the Servant Leadership Team unless otherwise noted in the constitution or directed by the Servant Leadership Team.
- B. **The Servant Leadership Team.** (Elders, 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-20) The purpose of this team is to provide counsel to the pastors in maintaining the effective and efficient operation of the church. The Servant Leadership Team shall approve the goals and budget, manage the membership roll, and have the authority to act on behalf of the church on all matters not specifically reserved for the members or pastors as stipulated in this Constitution. The Servant Leadership Team shall meet monthly to perform its duties. They are responsible to ensure that all ministries are in agreement with our purpose and goals, provide overall coordination for all ministry teams, give clarity to our vision, and specific direction to accomplish our tasks.
- a. **Qualifications.** A Servant Leadership Team member shall be a member of the church for a period of at least one year prior to election who has demonstrated the

character qualities outlined in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and 5:17-20. Any potential Servant Leadership Team member needs to be fulfilling all the responsibilities of church membership. The primary focus of the Servant Leadership Team will be prayer and the study of God's word as they seek Christ's direction for the church.

- b. **Composition.** The Servant Leadership Team shall consist of no less than three nor more than nine members. The specific number of positions to be filled each year shall be determined by the existing Servant Leadership Team so that a majority of the team shall be elected members. All officers shall be selected from the Servant-Leadership team; the Senior and Associate pastors shall be ex-officio members of the Servant Leadership Team, with voting privileges.
 - c. **Term.** Each elected member of the Servant Leadership Team shall serve for three years. At least one year must elapse before serving another term. Servant Leadership Team members shall be nominated and elected so that approximately one-third of the team shall be elected each year if possible.
 - d. **Selection.** The nominating committee shall present a slate of the qualified men willing to serve in this capacity for congregational approval at the annual meeting. This slate should be posted at least two Sundays prior to the annual meeting. A three-fourths majority of members present and voting will confirm each Servant Leadership Team member.
 - e. **Removal.** A Servant Leadership Team member may resign by giving at least thirty days written notice. Failure to perform required duties shall be treated as a resignation. The Servant Leadership Team may request a formal resignation or recommend that the church remove the person as a team member, with three-fourths majority of members present by public vote to confirm removal of the Servant Leadership Team member.
 - f. **Quorum.** A quorum for all team meetings shall consist of two-thirds of the total membership of the Servant Leadership Team. Unless specified otherwise, a simple majority of team members present and voting shall decide any matter.
 - g. **Evaluations.** The Servant Leadership Team will offer an evaluation of the Senior and Associate Pastor's ministries, leadership, and plans once a year and an evaluation of each ministry team at least once a year. The members of the Servant Leadership Team will be evaluated yearly by the pastors and their ministry team leaders.
- C. **Ministry Teams.** (Deacons, 1 Tim. 3:8-13) ElmCreek Church will have four primary ministry purposes: Worship, Evangelism, Love, and Discipleship. Each team will have a primary focus but all aspects of our purpose should be kept in mind. Therefore, elements of Worship, Evangelism, Love, and Discipleship should be found in all ministry functions. The purpose of these teams is to carry out the tasks determined by the church and the Servant Leadership Team, in agreement with the purpose and goals of the church. All ministry teams will have an advisor from the Servant Leadership Team to help

provide coordination with other ministries. Each Ministry Team shall meet at least four times per year to perform its duties.

- a. **Qualifications.** A ministry team leader shall be the Servant Leadership Team advisor or a member of the church who has demonstrated the character qualities outlined in 1 Tim. 3:8-13. Any potential ministry team leader needs to be fulfilling the responsibilities of church membership.
- b. **Composition.** The ministry team leaders shall be appointed by the Servant Leadership Team. The leaders, with the Servant Leadership Team advisor's help, will then recruit needed lay people with appropriate spiritual gifts to carry out their appointed tasks to the best of their abilities. All team leaders may be appointed for a period of one year.
- c. **Evaluations.** Ministry teams are to evaluate their effectiveness and their team leader's effectiveness on a yearly basis. Team leaders will also evaluate their Servant Leadership Team advisors each year.

Article 8 Officers of Corporation

- A. **Officers.** The principal officers of the Servant Leadership Team and the corporation shall be as follows:
 - a. **President.** The President shall lead all congregational and Servant Leadership Team meetings. He may perform all other acts as required by law.
 - b. **Vice President.** The Vice President shall serve as President in his absence and succeed automatically to the presidency should that office be vacated. He may perform all other acts as required by law.
 - c. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for recording minutes of all Servant Leadership Team and congregational business meetings and for the oversight of maintaining accurate and current membership rolls. He may perform all other acts as required by law.
 - d. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that proper procedures are followed in the administration of all church funds.
- B. **Selection.** President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer are legal agents of this church and shall be subject to the authority of the church at all times. They shall be appointed by the Servant Leadership Team for one-year terms.

Article 9 Staff

- A. **Ministry Staff.** Ministry staff shall be under the authority of the Pastor to whom they are directly responsible. They will work closely with the Pastor in providing leadership and teaching.
 - a. **Qualifications.** 1 Tim. 3:8-13 character requirements.

- b. **Duties.** To equip the church for the works of ministry for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12).
 - c. **Selection.** The Senior and Associate Pastor(s) will work closely with the Servant Leadership Team to determine the best available candidates after the need is determined., The Servant Leadership Team shall hire all ministry staff members. Ministry staff job descriptions and salary shall be developed and reviewed by the Servant Leadership Team as often as necessary.
 - d. **Term.** Ministry staff members serve indefinitely. The relationship may be terminated on thirty days written notice. The Servant Leadership Team, by a simple majority vote, may dismiss a ministry staff person.
- B. **Program and Support Staff.** Other staff members shall be hired as necessary by the Servant-Leadership team to carry out the church's ministry, with job descriptions reviewed by the Servant-Leadership team as often as necessary. They shall report to and work under the authority of the senior pastor. The Servant-Leadership team, by a simple majority vote, may dismiss a staff person.

Article 10 Bylaws

- A. **Nominating Team.** The members of the Nominating Team shall be appointed yearly by the Servant Leadership Team. The Nominating Team shall be composed of no more than ten members, including the Senior Pastor, two Servant-Leadership team members, and other mature members of the congregation (Gal. 5:16-26). The Nominating Team shall present the names of Servant Leadership Team candidates to the congregation for approval. The Servant Leadership Team shall present the names of the candidates to the congregation for a three-fourths affirmative vote.
- B. **Annual Meeting.** In January of each year, a congregational meeting shall be held to vote on the necessary areas mentioned in Article 5, section B, and conduct any other business as determined by the Servant Leadership Team. A quorum shall be 20% of the active voting membership with a three-fourths affirmative vote to act on these areas.
- C. **Special Business Meetings.** The Servant Leadership Team shall call a special business meeting of the congregation as needed. At least 14 days written notice, or an announcement at the worship service on two successive weekends, shall be required for any special business meeting. The Servant Leadership Team must call a business meeting upon receiving a written petition signed by at least 40% of the active voting membership with a specific statement of the business intended. Proper notice must be given and no other business shall be transacted at that time. For all congregational meetings, a quorum shall consist of 20% of the active voting membership with a three-fourths affirmative vote to act on these areas.
- D. **Constitution Revisions.** This Constitution can be revised by the congregation provided it is presented in written form to the Servant Leadership Team at least one month before being acted upon. If approved by the congregation, the revision becomes effective immediately, but not retroactively. The Constitution shall be completely reviewed by the

Servant Leadership Team or a selected committee at intervals of no more than five years.

E. Rules of Order.

- a. Legal officers of this corporation must be at least 21 years of age.
- b. All members 18 years of age and older are eligible to vote on all matters of church ministry.
- c. Any new business brought up from the floor at the annual meeting may be referred, by the President, to the appropriate ministry team for discussion and determination of action, if any, at the next special or annual meeting.

F. Further Rules of Order.

- a. All questions not clearly answered in this Constitution and Bylaws shall be settled by the Servant Leadership Team through use of the Holy Scriptures, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Heb. 13:17)
- b. Questions not clearly answered in this Constitution concerning parliamentary procedure will be settled by the customary rules governing deliberative bodies as given in Robert's Rules of Order.

G. Dissolution. This corporation shall be in perpetuity without a specific term of existence. The property and assets of the corporation are irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and upon the liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of the corporation, after providing for the debts and obligations thereof, its assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person, but shall be distributed to representatives of the Minnesota Association of the North American Baptist Conference.

H. Handling of Corporate Funds. Any corporate officer shall be authorized to sign for banking transactions involving corporate funds after receiving specific authorization from the Servant Leadership Team to do so. The Servant Leadership Team may designate other persons to handle special accounts. The Treasurer's books shall be audited by persons appointed by the Servant Leadership Team prior to each annual meeting, and at such times as deemed necessary by the Servant Leadership Team. The Treasurer shall consistently maintain church books in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. At least two people representing different families shall always be present to count contributions.