

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this corporation (church) shall be “Community Church of East Gloucester, MA.”

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

As Christians, we share a common set of beliefs and practices with millions of believers throughout history and around the world, including: the deity of Jesus Christ; the Bible as the Word of God and foundation for all matters of faith and practice; the person and work of the Holy Spirit; relevant, expository, and biblical preaching; and the importance of public worship, service, evangelism, and prayer.

As a church, we acknowledge and participate in the broad mission of every church, namely to exalt God, equip the Church, and extend God’s grace to an unbelieving world. Our church is unique, however, in how we accomplish the broader mission of the Church. We recognize that we are distinct due to our church culture, which emphasizes community, the core components of which are grace, participation, collaboration, equipping, and sending.

2.2 Mission Statement – What We Do...

It is the mission of Community Church to exalt God, to equip His church, to extend His grace, and to enjoy His presence.

2.3 Distinctives – How We Do What We Do...

As a community of faith, we share a culture that informs how we interact as Christians and operate as a church. We call the core components of this culture our “distinctives.” They represent the core values that help govern the heart and spirit of how ministry is carried out at Community Church.

Grace

We believe grace should govern all relationships. Therefore, we extend grace to one another for the sake of unity, growth, and witness; and we extend grace to unbelievers with the hope that they may experience redeeming grace.

Equipping

We believe it is the duty of the church to make disciples by training Christians for life and ministry. Therefore, we desire to help every believer to identify their gifts, to develop their abilities, and to equip them for effectiveness in ministry.

Participation

We believe that every Christian is called to ministry and uniquely gifted to build up the church and engage the world. Therefore, we invite every believer to cultivate a lifestyle of ministry and provide opportunities for participation in ministry.

Collaboration

We believe that ministry and church leadership should be a group effort. Therefore, we embrace collaboration at every level of ministry and leadership to ensure that multiple perspectives are creatively brought to bear on our ideas, decisions, and ministries.

Sending

We believe that all Christians are sent into the world to serve the spiritual and practical needs of their neighbors for the sake of the gospel. Therefore, we communicate the gospel in relevant ways to people in our community and partner with those who are active in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

2.4 Doctrinal Statement

As a church we accept the areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been agreement among all Bible-believing Christians. However, because of our conviction that we are part of a larger body of believers, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on other doctrinal matters, provided that any interpretation is based upon the Bible alone, and that no such interpretation shall become an issue that hinders the ministry to which God has called us.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired and the only infallible and authoritative Word of God, and that it is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (2 Tim. 3:15,16; 1 Peter 2:2).

We believe there is one God, creator of all things, eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Duet. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 5:17-30).

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His complete and perfect humanity. We believe in the virgin birth, in His sinless life and His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal, future return to Earth in power and glory to rule over the nations (Isaiah 7:14; Acts 2:22; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; Acts 1:9-11).

We believe that man and woman were created good and upright in the image of God, but that they voluntarily sinned by disobeying God and thereby were alienated from God, and incurred both physical and spiritual death. That historic fall brought all mankind under divine condemnation. Because of the fall, each person's nature is corrupted, and they are thus totally unable to please God (Gen. 1:26,27; Rom. 5:12-19).

We believe that regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to salvation, and His indwelling presence necessary for the living of a Godly Christian life; and that it is only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ that people can be saved. The salvation of all who believe is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or

goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justified them in His sight (Luke 24:37; Rom. 3:16; 10:13-15; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

We believe in the Holy Spirit as a person, separate and distinct from and co-equal in the triune Godhead with the Father and the Son. He is sent to dwell within the heart of each child of God, to comfort and to lead into all truth (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 2:4; 10:44-46; 15:8,9).

We believe in the victorious reign and future personal return of Jesus Christ, who will judge all people with justice and mercy, giving over the unrepentant to judgment and condemnation but receiving the redeemed into eternal life (Matt. 25:26; Mark 9:34-38; Rev. 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement (Eph. 1:22,23; 2:22; Heb. 12:23).

We believe that Christians are to be baptized; and to partake in the Lord's Supper on a regular basis (Matt. 29:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Matt. 26:20-29).

2.5 Church Covenant (1863)

As we trust that we have been individually brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we do now solemnly covenant with each other to walk together in love, to exercise Christian watchfulness over each other, faithfully to warn, rebuke and admonish one another, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor to omit the great duty of prayer both for ourselves and for others, to participate in each other's joys and to sympathize with each other in sorrow, to seek divine aid to enable us to walk circumspectly in the world, to strive together for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, and while we live, through evil report and good report, to seek to live to the glory of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

ARTICLE 3: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

The mission, distinctives, and doctrinal commitments of Community Church govern and inform our style of ministry and leadership structure. Because of our commitment to team leadership, we conduct ministry and leadership as a community of leaders. Members of each leadership team endeavor to embody grace, equipping, participation, collaboration, and sending on a personal level and to infuse the entire organization with these values.

3.2 The Elders

The elders are the primary governing body of Community Church. They are charged to shepherd the congregation by providing and promoting a healthy environment for spiritual growth, in which everyone is encouraged to use their gifts to glorify Jesus and build up the church. As a ministry team, the members of the eldership are accountable to one another. Specifically, they are

charged with spiritual affairs (prayer and the ministry of the word), the pastoral care of congregation, equipping laypeople and leaders for life and ministry, and developing doctrinal standards for ministry. The specific duties of team members are determined by each individual's abilities, spiritual gifts, and call in conjunction with the needs of the congregation. Pastors of Community Church are considered elders by virtue of their office. Associate Pastors and other staff positions can be elders by nomination and election but not by virtue of their office.

The elders assist Community Church in pursuing its mission in accordance with its distinctives and doctrinal statement. They bear the responsibility for: (1) ensuring that the ministries and initiatives of the church are aligned with our mission and distinctives; (2) ratifying and/or making major decisions regarding doctrine, policies, finances, or vision; (3) vetting, recommending, and confirming volunteer and staff candidates for pastoral ministry, administrative, and ministry leadership teams; (4) conferring the power to perform religious rites (e.g., marriages, funerals) to church staff and ministry volunteers; (5) organizing and calling congregational meetings, including the annual meeting; (6) preparing an annual report; (7) ensuring the development and implementation of strategic plans. All church members and staff are accountable to the elders.

A nominating committee convened by the elders recommends candidates for eldership to the congregation for a vote of confirmation on an annual basis. Qualifications for Elder at Community Church are the those listed in scripture for the office of elder. While not required, a sabbatical from the elders board is recommended after three years of service.

3.3 Other Leadership Teams

In order to be consistent with the mission and distinctives of Community Church, leadership must be collaborative in its structure and implementation. The Elders will appoint or chose to have elected various other leadership teams with whom they can partner in leading and shepherding the church. These teams will be consistent with the Mission and Distinctives of Community Church and its By-Laws.

3.4 Administrative Ministry Team

The Administrative Ministry Team is responsible to develop and manage the financial, human, and material resources of the church for the purpose of empowering leaders for ministry. It consists of an executive team, and a broader administrative ministry group that together carry out these responsibilities.

The Executive Team of the Administrative Ministry consists of the Lead Pastor, the Chair of the Admin Team, and a representative from the Elders. The chair and elder representative will be appointed by the Board of Elders annually. The larger Admin Team should also include a number of other important positions which can include – but are not limited to – a treasurer, collector, bookkeeper, a facilities manager, and a person overseeing human resources. These positions are appointed by the executive Admin Team, and do not require formal approval by the congregation and are under the broad oversight of the elders. Other positions (e.g., assistant treasurer, administrative assistant) may be established by the team as necessary and also do not require formal approval. The Executive Committee will also appoint a Church Clerk (see description below) to act on behalf of the corporation in conjunction with the Chairperson and the Treasurer.

The Administrative Ministries Team prepares and presents an operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year and holds an open congregational budget meeting each December to present the draft

of next year's budget to the church membership. The team is responsible to keep the Elders, and the congregation apprised of the financial condition of the church. This ministry supervises all contracts for repairs, alterations, and improvements to the physical plant. It is also the duty of the Administrative Ministries Team to write letters of dismissal and transfer, keep a register of members, keep a list of eligible voters, and any other personal information collected from the church community. Furthermore, the administrative team maintains and updates job descriptions for the church administrator, treasurer, collector, and all paid church staff.

The Chair of the Administrative Ministry Team and the Treasurer represent the church corporation in legal proceedings, have power to sign all official papers, and may perform such other duties as may legally be requested of them, except in rare cases that the elders determine otherwise.

Chair (CEO of Corporation)

Administrative Ministries Team is under the leadership of the Chairperson, who acts in an executive capacity on behalf of the church corporation, unless otherwise directed by the elders. The Chair is responsible to submit a written annual report to the church on behalf of the Administrative Ministries Team to be included in the Church Annual Report.

Treasurer (CFO of Corporation)

The treasurer is responsible to the Chair of the Administrative Team and the elders and performs the duties and the responsibilities of the office according to accepted accounting policies and practices. The treasurer is the chief financial officer of Community Church, manages and analyses the church budget, arranges for banking and other financial services, keeps accurate and detailed records of deposits and disbursements, makes recommendations relative to insurance coverage for liability and property, and advises the Administrative Ministries Team on appropriate payment for services rendered and for non-ministerial employees.

The treasurer supervises and/or prepares a proposed budget for the fiscal year, based on the requests received from the ministerial staff and ministries. The treasurer schedules and conducts the annual congregational budget meeting. The treasurer is expected to complete an internal audit of income to ensure that deposits agree with the collector's reports.

Collector

The collector is responsible for recording income received by the church and making sure monies are deposited into the correct bank account. The collector records the giving of those who use envelopes and/or checks on a weekly basis and provide to members confirmation of their donations, for tax purposes, upon request. The collector schedules and supervises counters for each week and ensures appropriate procedures and protocols are being followed.

Clerk

The church Clerk, under the direction and supervision of the elders, will keep a list of eligible voters. The Clerk will present a current list of eligible voters to the elders before the annual meeting, and at other times as requested. The church Clerk is also responsible for keeping minutes of all congregational meetings throughout the year.

3.5 Pastors and Pastoral Staff Team

The number of pastors at Community Church will be determined by the Elders taking into account the size, needs and resources of the congregation and ministries of Community Church. Those persons with the appropriate responsibilities, gifting and calling will be given the role of pastor. (see process below) The pastoral staff team of Community Church is comprised of the Lead Pastor, and any other pastors, associate pastors, ministry coordinators and ministry assistants.

Church staff members are accountable to the elders and they minister under the supervision of the Lead Pastor. The elders, together with the pastoral staff, determine the powers and duties of these ministry positions and initiate changes within their ranks.

The Calling and Commissioning of Pastors and Designation of Lead Pastor

A pastoral search committee convened by the elders considers possible candidates for open pastoral positions, giving preference to candidates from within the church community. The elders vet potential candidates, and recommend a vetted candidate to the church membership for candidacy and confirmation by a congregational vote. A quorum of one-third (1/3) of the eligible voting members is required to appoint pastors and three-fourths (3/4) of the vote must be in favor of the appointment. Votes shall be made by ballot. The designation of a Lead Pastor is made upon the recommendation of the elders by a congregational vote with the same constraints as the call of a pastor. The elders shall commission new pastors in a public service within the first month of the start of their employment in their pastoral role.

Dismissal of Pastor

Upon recommendation of the elders, full pastors may be dismissed by a congregational vote. A quorum of one-third (1/3) of the eligible voting members is required for an official dismissal, three-fourths (3/4) of the votes must be in favor of dismissing a pastor, and votes shall be made by secret ballot. Such action taken may be taken at the annual meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. Associate pastors, ministry assistants, and any other church staff may be dismissed by the elders, not requiring congregational affirmation.

Resignation of the Pastor

A pastor who decides to resign is required to give a minimum thirty (30) day notice. At the time of resignation the elders may determine an earlier date of separation should they deem it appropriate.

ARTICLE 4: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Introduction

The objectives of this church are outlined in the mission statement, distinctives, doctrinal statement, and church covenant which are detailed in Article 2, to which each member must subscribe on an annual basis before the Annual Meeting. Membership is an indication of mutual commitment between the church the individual believer. Members have the privilege and responsibility of supporting the church by giving of their time, spiritual gifts, natural and professional abilities, and finances. Likewise, members may participate in church leadership by serving in various ministry and leadership positions and/or by voting in congregational meetings.

Anyone is welcome to apply for membership in Community Church by submitting an application to the elders. The elders review completed applications and may choose to interview applicants as necessary. After a review and interview, the elders vote to accept or deny membership and then inform applicants of the outcome in a timely manner. It is the practice of Community Church to make every effort to welcome new applicants into membership.

4.2 Requirements for Membership

The elders consider any person 18 years or older for membership who professes faith in Jesus Christ, has been baptized, gives evidence of a changed heart, lives out their lives with good

Christian character, and affirms the church mission statement, distinctives, doctrinal statement and covenant, and commits to biblical standards for their lives.

4.3 Expectations of Membership

Members are expected to support and provide for Community Church through consistent and regular attendance at the services of the church, by financially supporting the church through regular tithing, and by actively looking for ways to participate in the life and ministry of the church through service and ministry involvement. Members are also inviting Community Church to hold them accountable to the faith they profess, and invite the church and the elders to lovingly confront them should their lives cease to be consistent with biblical Christianity and the expectations of membership outlined above.

4.4 Associate Membership

The purpose of associate membership is to give an opportunity to individuals who have been baptized and profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to actively participate at Community Church, without giving up their home church membership. This category of membership is suitable for students or those who are temporarily living in the area. Associate members have all of the same privileges and responsibilities of membership as stated in the By-Laws.

4.5 Transfer or Resignation of Members

Any member in good standing, may, at their own request, be granted a letter of transfer and be recommended to another church of the same faith. A letter shall be sent to the receiving church and notification be given to the applicant that the letter has been sent. Any member may be released from or transfer their membership by notifying the elders of their desire.

4.6 Absentees

Members absenting themselves for two (2) consecutive years without active participation in the church and signing the annual membership reaffirmation will be removed from membership. The elders will remove the names of any absentee from the membership role after efforts to reactivate them. Members who do not sign the annual affirmation are not eligible to vote.

4.7 Church Discipline

If any member engages or persists in immoral or unchristian conduct or practices that are in clear violation of biblical teachings, Christian doctrine, or church policy or conduct or practices that are detrimental to the ministries and reputation of Community Church, they should be helped to see the error of their ways and restored gently by someone who is spiritually mature in the church. If a member or a Christian within the church were to sin against another Christian, they should work it out between the two of them. If members cannot work out their differences in Christian love, or if a member continues to be unrepentant in their sin, then the matter should be brought before two or three witnesses who are mature in their faith. If the matter continues without any repentance, then it should be brought before the elders. The goal of this process is to help a person who is involved in behavior that is contrary to the Bible to change their behavior and be restored to Christian fellowship. If a person refuses to change it may be necessary to have their membership removed by the church. This would be done upon the recommendation of the elders after the person has been given due notice and if the elders have been unsuccessful in having the person change their conduct and/or practice by making a confession of their sin and showing signs of true repentance. The recommendation to terminate membership must be sustained by a three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the elders at a meeting set for the purpose of considering the termination

of membership. If the member holds an elected or appointed office, they shall not attend any meetings during the period of time that the elders are conducting their review of the matter.

4.8 Restoration of Members

Any members who have been dismissed or terminated shall be restored to membership on confession of error and on giving satisfactory evidence of repentance to the elders and by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the elders. Members who have become inactive need to re-apply for membership in order to reinstate their active and voting status.

ARTICLE 5: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

5.1 Annual Meeting

The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held during the first six weeks of each new fiscal year at a date and time of the Elder's discretion. An announcement of this meeting along with a general description of items to be acted on will be announced on the two consecutive Sundays previous to the day the meeting will be held. The church Annual Report, consisting of reports from all church officers, boards, ministry teams and committees, including *ad hoc*, shall be made available in print and/or electronically to eligible voting members of the church no later than the Sunday previous to the day the meeting will be held.

The annual meeting is intended to be a time of celebration and remembrance of what the Lord has done in Community Church over the past year, and can also include elements of vision regarding the upcoming year of ministry. It is also the forum in which the congregation votes to accept the Annual Report, and to approve the proposed annual budget for the coming year. With the fiscal year beginning on January 1, it is understood that each year, the proposed budget will be implemented on a provisional basis prior to, but in anticipation of, congregational approval. The Administrative Ministry Team is responsible for holding a budget review meeting, open to the entire congregation, before the new fiscal year in order to discuss, answer questions, and interact with the membership about the proposed budget. At the Annual Meeting, should the congregation fail to approve the proposed budget, it is also understood by staff and ministry leaders that retroactive changes will be made to budget line items and any compensation already paid in accordance with the final, approved budget. A quorum of one-third (1/3) of all voting members is required to approve the Annual Report and the Proposed Budget, and they both require three-fourths (3/4) of the votes of eligible voting members to be approved.

5.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings shall be called by the elders in the manner provided for calling the annual meeting, upon the request of the Elders themselves or the written request of five (5) eligible voting members of the church. The call shall be specific as to the purpose of the meeting.

A meeting of the church may be called, without previous written notice by the Board of Elders, to be held at the close of any public worship service of the church to act on routine matters, such as recommendations from boards and committees, of a routine nature.

5.3 Voting

Only members may participate in voting, but anyone who attends Community Church (whether they are members or not) may speak on any issue. Absentee ballots are not allowed. The church Clerk is responsible for maintaining a list of eligible voting members to be presented to the elders before any meeting where voting will be taking place. A ballot will be used for all elections, and may be used for collecting information regarding voter rationale in order to allow the elders to follow up with members about concerns or problems in the church. The procedure for voting on other matters will be determined by the eligible voters in attendance.

5.4 Means of Meeting

The location and means of meeting, in person or in a digital format, will be determined at the Elders' discretion and included in the announcement of the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting per the process described above. Whenever possible, meetings should be held in-person; in the event that there are extenuating circumstances that limit or prevent meeting in-person, the elders may employ a different format so long as members are able to participate in real-time, and that it is possible to identify those who participate in the meeting for any voting purposes. Remote voting is possible for those who participate in an online meeting, while absentee voting remains excluded for those who are not able to attend the meeting in person or digitally.

ARTICLE 6 – NOMINATING PROCEDURE

The Elders will appoint a nominating committee and / or a Pastoral search committee on an “as needed” basis from their own members and/or church members at large. The Elders may establish other committees, standing and ad hoc on and as needed basis.

Each year, in preparation for the Annual Meeting, a Nominating Form will be distributed to each eligible voting member for the purpose of making nominations for the office of Elder. Nominations will not be allowed from the floor during any meeting.

The recommendation of the elders, and the vote of the church will confirm the nomination at a congregational meeting that conforms to the guidelines outlined in these bylaws. For someone to be considered for eldership, the candidate will be interviewed by the one of the pastors and/or elders who are responsible to ascertain if he meets the requirements of the office as outlined in the By-Laws. They will make the nomination to the church for affirmation.

ARTICLE 5: AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

These By-Laws shall supersede all By-Laws and rules for organization and government of the Community Church of East Gloucester, which currently stand on record. These By-Laws may be amended at any annual meeting or special meeting called for that purpose by receiving two thirds of the vote of the eligible members present and voting.

Proposed changes to the By-Laws must be presented to the eligible voting members of the church at least two weeks prior to the date of the called meeting. The changes must be in writing. An announcement of this meeting along with a general description of items to be acted on will be announced during two consecutive Sundays previous to the day the meeting will be held. No

major changes to the By-Laws that were not part of the written changes submitted previous to the meeting may be acted upon.

Version 5.4 Updated and Approved: Annual Meeting – February 10, 2013

Version 6.0 Updated and Approved: Annual Meeting – January 31, 2021