

# Bethel Church

## Owatonna, Minnesota

### *Constitution and Bylaws*

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#### Revision Record

Date	Description of Changes
April 15, 1954	Original— Two Board Structure (Deacon and Trustee)
1968	Added Christian Education Board. All Boards and Church Officers met together as the Church Board.
1980	Added Deaconess and Missions boards.
1988	Single 12 member Elder Board Structure with Task Forces representing major ministry areas.
2003	Major Revision— 7 member Elder Board, major rewrite with most details in Bylaws
December 2006	Changed Fiscal Year to October 1; changed Elder terms to maximum of three 3-year terms.
October 2009	Numerous updates—Board/Staff relationships; Treasurer position removed; Board duties defined.
July 2016	Added Deacons and Ministry Teams; Restored Senior Pastor as Elder; added Treasurer and Church Clerk; clarified role of Elders, Elimination of Nominating Committee.
September 2016	Clarification of wording

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## A CONSTITUTION

### A.1 Name and Affiliation

#### A.1.1 Name

The full name of this corporation shall be Bethel Baptist Church of Owatonna, Minnesota. The full name may also be abbreviated to "Bethel". The organization was incorporated April 15, 1954.

#### A.1.2 Affiliation

This church shall maintain a voluntary affiliation with Converge North Central (formerly the Minnesota Baptist Conference) and Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference).

### A.2 Directors

The directors of the corporation shall be the members of the Elder Board.

### A.3 Officers

The number, term, and qualifications of corporate officers shall be as provided in the Bylaws.

### A.4 Government

Recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head of the Church, this congregation shall seek to ascertain and to obey the will of Jesus Christ in all matters of faith and practice. The government of this church is vested in the body of its members, who shall have the final authority for decisions.

### A.5 Membership

#### A.5.1 Qualifications for Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the Statement of Faith (Section C, page 21) and Church Covenant (Section D page 23), who have been baptized by immersion and who have been received into its membership in accordance with the Bylaws (Section B page6) of this church.

#### A.5.2 Voting Rights

Each Active Resident Member (Section B.12.4.2) shall have voting rights as specified in the Bylaws.

### A.6 Disposition of Church Property

#### A.6.1 Division

In case of a division of the church, the property of this church shall belong to the group representing the largest portion of the church membership that is loyal to the Constitution and Bylaws. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees of Converge North Central, and its decision shall be final.

#### A.6.2 Dissolution

Should conditions arise when for any reason the church work cannot continue, the church property, subject to debt repayment, shall be transferred to the Converge North Central, if then in existence, otherwise to the Converge Worldwide.

#### A.6.3 Consolidation

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church seems advisable, upon approval of the church membership, the Elder Board shall be authorized to negotiate the terms of such a consolidation. A report setting forth the terms of the proposed consolidation shall be submitted to the church membership for approval.

### A.7 Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended at a business meeting of the church by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those eligible church members in voting. For the purpose of amending the Constitution, a quorum shall consist of a minimum of 15% of the Active Resident Members of legal age (18). Notice of the pending vote on such amendment shall have been published at least four (4) weeks prior to the business meeting with a copy of the proposed amendment posted in a conspicuous place. A verbal notice shall be given during the regularly scheduled services on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

## B BYLAWS

The operation of Bethel shall be governed by the provisions contained in these Bylaws and policies adopted by the Elder Board.

### B.1 MISSION AND VISION

The Elders shall review the mission and vision statement of Bethel Church annually.

### B.2 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

### B.3 ELECTIVE YEAR

The elective year of the church shall begin on the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

### B.4 CHURCH GOVERNMENT

#### B.4.1 Leadership and Organization: Overview

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the church is the final authority within this local church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the church. However, the vote of the membership of this church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be required to effect the following actions:
  - a. Elect officers of the church;
  - b. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office (B.12.5);
  - c. Approve annual budgets of the church and authorize any non-budgeted expenditures of the funds in excess of 5% of the annual budget;
  - d. Accept, reject or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the Elder Board;
  - e. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or Bylaws of this church;
  - f. Approve the call and job description of the Senior Pastor;
2. The officers of the church shall be Elders and Deacons. The purpose of the officers of the church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
3. The leadership of the church shall be vested in the Elder Board who is responsible for directing the church, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God in this church and perform the duties as listed in B.6 The Elders shall be equal in authority but specialized in function
4. Deacons shall assist the Elder Board by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

#### B.4.2 OFFICERS

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the church governs the church ministries through the Board of Elders (Elder Board). While the congregation retains

final authority, it delegates the members of the Elder Board the authority to make all policy decisions not specifically limited by these Bylaws. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of Treasurer and Clerk. All officers must meet the qualifications of LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS before assuming their responsibilities.

The Senior Pastor will be a member of the Elder Board in addition to a maximum of 8 elected (B.7.4) or appointed (B.6.1.20) male members holding the following positions:

1. Board Chair
2. Board Vice Chair
3. Members at-large (maximum of 6)
4. Senior Pastor

#### B.4.2.1 Board Chair

The Board Chair Shall:

1. Preside at all business meetings of the church and all meetings of the Elder Board.
2. Work with the Elders to establish agendas for Business and Elder Board meetings.
3. Represent the Board to outside parties in announcing board-stated positions.
4. Perform other tasks agreed upon by the Elder Board.

#### B.4.2.2 Board Vice Chair

The Board Vice Chair shall:

1. Perform the duties assigned to the Board Chair during absence of the Board Chair.
2. Perform other tasks agreed upon by the Board Chair or the Elder Board.

#### B.4.2.3 Board Secretary

The Board Secretary shall:

1. Record minutes of Elder Board meetings.

#### B.4.2.4 Members At-large

The Members at-large shall:

1. Help shape strategic direction for the church.
2. Perform other specific tasks agreed upon by the Board Chair or the Elder Board.

Elder Board - 2015	
Oversight Roles	Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic Planning</li><li>• Finance</li><li>• Legal and contractual matters</li><li>• Senior Pastor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board Chair</li><li>• Board Vice Chair</li><li>• At-Large Members (up to 6)</li><li>• Senior Pastor</li></ul>

Table 1. Elder Board Structure

## B.5 DEACONS

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The Elder Board shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for deacon.

Candidates for the role of Deacon will be brought before the congregation for election at an annual business meeting or at a scheduled business meeting in accordance with section B.10.2 and B.10.3. Interim candidates may be selected by the Elder Board to fill vacant positions.

The church shall vote on candidates nominated by the Elder Board for the positions of Treasurer and Church Clerk at the annual meeting or next business meeting. They shall be recognized as Deacons and serve two-year terms, renewable as long as they are nominated for reappointment by the Elder Board.

#### B.5.1 TREASURER

The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the church and shall provide oversight and accountability over the financial processes of the church. The Treasurer shall help insure sound accounting practices are used in recording transactions and shall review the accuracy of financial reports.

More specific duties of the treasurer may include but are not limited to:

1. Recommend financial and accounting policy changes.
2. Oversee financial recordkeeping and reporting functions.
3. Perform an internal review each year of the church's existing financial processes
4. Ensure that financial reports are available for the Elder Board and appropriate financial information is accessible to the church.
5. Act as a check signer.
6. Monitor the cash position of the congregation and may invest available funds in accordance with church investment policies with the approval of the Elder Board.
7. Is empowered to borrow funds as directed by the Elder Board.
8. Assists in the preparation of the annual church budget
9. Serves as an advisor to the Pastors and Elders in financial matters when necessary

#### B.5.2 CHURCH CLERK

The Church Clerk shall be nominated by the Elder Board and shall keep an accurate recording of church business meetings and a current record of all members. The Clerk shall give a statistical membership report at the annual meeting which will be used as a basis for calculating a quorum. The Clerk shall assess the status of inactive members and keep an accurate roll of membership. In the absence of the Church Clerk, the Secretary of the Elder Board shall perform such duties.

### B.6 ELDER BOARD

#### B.6.1 DUTIES OF THE ELDER BOARD

The Elder Board shall be the central governing body of the church. The congregation governs the church ministries through the Elder Board. While the congregation retains final authority, it delegates to the Elder Board the authority to make all policy decisions not specifically limited by these Bylaws. Any action taken by the Elder Board can be reviewed by the congregation at a congregational business meeting and changed by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided a quorum is present and voting.



All Elders are servants of Christ and the church and should look upon their tasks as spiritual ministries of the Lord. Members of the Elder Board shall manage and shepherd the church by:

1. Teaching biblical truth. (Titus 1:9)
2. Modeling Christ-like behavior. (1 Tim. 3:2)
3. Maintaining doctrinal purity. (Acts 20:29-30)
4. Disciplining unruly believers. (Gal. 6:1)
5. Praying for those who are ill. (James 5:13-15)
6. Providing redemptive care and supervision to the Senior Pastor.
7. Assisting the pastoral staff with the spiritual, physical, material, and social needs of the congregation.
8. Intentionally developing future spiritual leaders. (2 Tim. 2:2)
9. Promoting missions.
10. Seeking to discern the will of God with respect to vision, direction and long-range planning.
11. Overseeing financial matters (Acts 11:30).

Subject to the will of the congregation, the Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, to the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and to shepherding God's flock. The Elders shall take particular responsibility to oversee the work of the deacons, appoint church agents and ministry teams, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership to do the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

*B.6.1.1 Other specific responsibilities of the Elders include:*

*B.6.1.1.1 Strategic Planning.*

*The Elders shall:*

1. Clarify the mission of the church and ensure it is carried out.
2. Approve written governing policies that address each area of the organization.
3. Assess and strengthen the spiritual dimension of the church.
4. Systematically monitor both the performance of Bethel Church and the Senior Pastor.
5. Approve all major legal transactions, such as acquisition and disposition of assets. The matter shall be put to a vote of the church membership if the acquisition of property or buildings will require financing. (B.10.5) A vote is also required if the acquisition does not require financing but exceeds 5% of the approved budget for the current fiscal year.
6. Review the Constitution and Bylaws in light of the church's changing needs. Consider proposed changes suggested by any church member or organization. Recommend any needed changes, as appropriate to the church. Such review is suggested a minimum of every three years.
7. Clarify the interpretation of the Constitution and Bylaws when needed.

#### B.6.1.1.2 Financial Management

8. Review the proposed budget to assure that it does not deviate materially from the Board's priorities or risk financial jeopardy. The budget will be presented for approval of the membership at the annual business meeting.
9. Recommend church members as Financial Secretaries to receive and record all receipts of the church. Two or more Financial Secretaries shall be present at all times when money is counted. The recommendation shall be affirmed by a majority vote at a church business meeting.
10. At least annually monitor a review of Bethel's financial records.
  
11. Approve non-budget requests not to exceed 5% of the approved budget for the current fiscal year. A non-budget request approved by the church membership shall not be included in this annual limit.

#### B.6.1.1.3 Legal and Contractual

12. Represent the church in legal matters and execute any contracts, deeds, mortgages, notes, and such other documents as authorized. Any two church officers shall execute such documents. Such commitments or obligations shall be signed only after proper authorization by the Elder Board.

#### B.6.1.1.4 General

13. Review and make recommendations on matters to be brought before the church.
14. Hear suggestions and concerns from church members who request an appearance.
15. Oversee the search to fill the Senior Pastor position.
16. Act in matters of church discipline as discussed in Bylaws section B.11.1.2.2 Grievance Against the Senior Pastor and section B.12.5.1 Personal Grievances.
17. Appoint the Elder Board Chair and Elder Board Vice-Chair.
18. Appoint a recording secretary for the Elder Board.
19. Call special church business meetings as necessary.
20. Make appointments to fill all vacancies in elected and appointed positions until the next annual meeting.
21. Approve all candidates for lay Elder and Deacon.

#### B.6.2 Attendance and Participation

All members of the Elder Board shall attend its meetings and participate actively in the functioning of the Elder Board. In the event of absences consisting of three (3) or more consecutive meetings, and/or 25% of the total elective year meetings, the Elder Board may declare the office vacant.

#### B.6.3 Elder Board Meetings

Elder board meetings:

1. Frequency
  - a. A regular schedule set up by the board with additional meetings as needed
2. Who can attend
  - a. Open to Bethel members who check with board chair ahead of time.
  - b. The Elders have right to close meetings if discussion is confidential in nature.

A quorum for a meeting of the Elders is defined as ½ of the Elders. Actions by the Elder Board shall require support of a majority of the Elders present.

## B.7 ELECTIONS

### B.7.1 Time

An annual election of Elder Board members shall be held at the Annual Business Meeting.

### B.7.2 Nominations

#### *B.7.2.1 Slate of Candidates*

The Elder Board shall publish a written ballot of nominees for the positions of Elders, and Deacons and post the ballot in the church building for review by the congregation two weeks in advance of the annual meeting.

#### *B.7.2.2 Nominations from the Congregation*

It shall be the privilege of any member qualified to vote to nominate any eligible person for any office. The nominations must be presented to the Elder Board for their consideration at least eight weeks prior to the election meeting. Members of the Elder Board shall recognize, interview and investigate candidates for (lay) elder and deacon. In no instance shall any individual be considered a nominee without that nominee's consent. In cases where the Elder Board concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion.

### B.7.3 Voting Procedures

Voting shall be by written ballot. The ballot shall clearly indicate the term of office for which each nomination has been made.

Members who are unable to attend a meeting may cast an absentee ballot in any election by sealing and giving it to the Board Chair prior to the election. Absentee ballots given to the Board Chair must be reported at the meeting. Any member present can challenge the validity of the set of absentee ballots and call for a vote not to accept them.

### B.7.4 Persons Elected

The following positions shall be elected by the church membership:

1. Elder Board members (excluding the Senior Pastor).
2. Deacons at large (including Treasurer, Clerk)

Elder Board candidates and Deacons must receive a two-thirds vote of votes cast. No open position will be filled by any candidate that has not received a two-thirds of the votes cast.

### B.7.5 Terms of Office

#### *B.7.5.1 Elder Board Members*

The term of office for Elder Board Members excluding the Senior Pastor shall be three (3) years. A maximum number of three (3) terms (not reaching ten (10) years) as an officer can be served consecutively. There shall be a lapse of at least one (1) year before the member can again serve as an Elder. More than one year constitutes one term in cases of serving an unexpired term.

1 <sup>st</sup> Election Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Election Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Election Year
Elder 1	Elder 2	Elder 3
Elder 4	Elder 5	Elder 6
Elder 7	Elder 8	

*Table 1 Elder Board Election Years*

### B.7.5.2 Deacons

The term for office of Deacon shall be two (2) years. A maximum number of three (3) terms (not reaching seven (7) years) as an officer can be served consecutively. There shall be a lapse of at least one (1) year before the member can again serve as a Deacon. More than one year constitutes one term in cases of serving an unexpired term.

### B.7.6 Removal or Dismissal of an Officer

1. Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he feels that he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.
2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in our Statement of Faith or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder [or Deacon], such grievance may be brought before the Elder Board by any two believing witnesses. Following the procedures prescribed in the Bylaws of this church. If the Elder Board, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, it shall formally request that the officer resign their position. Should the officer decline to do so, the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elder Board when supported by closed ballot of two-thirds of those members of the church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting (see B.10.3). Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The charges against the officer and the findings of the Elder Board shall be presented at the business meeting prior to the vote.

## B.8 LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

### B.8.1 All Church Leaders

Church leaders shall be persons who by their daily lives provide spiritual leadership in the church. However, it is recognized that each may provide different areas of strength as appropriate to their different responsibilities (Rom 12:3-8). They shall be persons who are not eager for power, but eager to serve (Matt 20:25-28 and 1 Peter 5:2-3), and who recognize that God gives differing gifts not to promote pride but for the good of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7).

Church leaders shall be especially able to work harmoniously with other people and to encourage and motivate others in the work of the church. They shall be faithful in fulfilling responsibilities, and shall have other abilities suitable to the work of the particular boards which they lead on which they serve. All church leaders must be members of Bethel church.

## B.8.2 Members of the Elder Board

Any nominee for a position on the Elder Board must meet each of the following qualifications:

1. A professing Christian who is not a recent convert.
2. An Active Resident Member of the church for at least two (2) years.
3. At least 25 years of age.
4. Demonstrate the qualities of biblical leadership listed in the passages below:

The qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7:

<sup>1</sup>“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full [a] respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”

The qualifications of Titus 1:6-9

<sup>6</sup> “An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe[b] and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

The qualifications of 1 Peter 5:1-3

<sup>1</sup> “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

5. Demonstrate a willingness to serve the body as evidenced by involvement in some area of ministry (or recent involvement), and doctrinal soundness by investigation.
6. Active participation in an Elder/Leader development program. This involves shepherding/teaching by current Elders to evaluate giftedness and training in biblical leadership skills.

## B.8.3 DEACONS AND MINISTRY TEAMS

Anyone selected as a Deacon shall:

1. Meet the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Be selected in accordance with the Bylaw provisions on elections.
3. Fulfill a specific role as defined by the Elders.
4. Meet the ministry oversight qualifications described in 1 Timothy 2:12-14.
5. Give of themselves in service of the church (see Acts 6:1-7).

### B.8.3.1 Responsibilities

In general, deacons serve and assist the Elder Board by giving advice and assisting the Elders in any service that will support and promote the Mission and Vision of Bethel Church, including ministries of the church and the care of the members of the congregation.

Deacon roles will be defined by the Elder Board. Responsibilities may include but not limited to the following areas:

1. Finance
2. Building/facilities
3. Membership/assimilation
4. Missions

### B.8.3.2 Organization:

Each elected Deacon shall lead a Ministry Team. Ministry Teams shall be chartered by the Elder Board to implement various ministries of Bethel Church.

#### B.8.3.2.1 Charter

The charter for a Ministry Team shall include:

- |                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Statement of Purpose | } | Determined by the Elder Board                    |
| 2. Objectives           |   |  |
| 3.                      | } | Determined by the Deacon with Elder Board input. |
| 3. Strategies           |   |  |
| 4. Structure            |   |  |

#### B.8.3.2.2 Membership

Each Deacon shall form a Ministry Team as required to perform its ministry.

#### B.8.3.2.3 Annual Review

Ministry Teams shall be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Staff or the Elder Board as to how they have accomplished the purpose of the church, objectives of the charter, and their organizational and functional effectiveness. If upon annual review, the Ministry Team is not meeting its purpose and objectives, the team shall be encouraged to change its organization or ministry approach to accomplish its charter or be decommissioned.

#### B.8.3.2.4 Duties of Ministry Teams

1. Define and obtain the necessary materials required for ministry.
2. Meet as required to plan and execute specific ministry objectives.
3. Develop and review annually its charter for Elder Board review.
4. Recruit and train qualified Ministry Team members.
5. Submit annually to the Elder Board proposed budgets (where necessary) and objectives for the coming year.

## B.9 SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special committees shall be formed on an ad hoc basis and exist until the specified function has been performed. The Elder Board shall select the individuals to serve on each appointed board or committee.

## B.10 MEETINGS

### B.10.1 Conduct of Business Meetings

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall guide the church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, Bylaws or the special rules of order of this church.

### B.10.2 Annual Business Meeting

The Elder Board shall establish the date of the Annual Business Meeting of the church. Written annual reports shall be provided by the Elder Board Chair and the pastoral staff concerning ministry and financial functions.

### B.10.3 Special Business Meeting

The Elder Board, or any ten members of good standing, may call for a special business meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other communication means and must clearly state the particular purpose of the meeting.

### B.10.4 Meeting Announcement

*Notice of special business meetings shall be as listed in Table 2: Notice and Quorum Requirements Summary*

### B.10.5 Eligibility to Vote

All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by members who are of legal age (18). On all other matters, members who have reached their sixteenth (16th) birthday shall be eligible to vote.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Votes Needed</b>	<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Notice</b>	<b>When</b>
Amend Constitution	2/3 of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	4 Weeks Prior- must be posted/Oral notice 2 preceding Sundays	Annual or Special Business Meeting
Amend By-Laws	Majority of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	2 Weeks Prior- must be posted/Oral notice 2 preceding Sundays	Annual or Special Business Meeting
Review Board Action and Change	2/3 of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	No	Congregational Meeting
Elect Elders/Deacons	2/3 of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	2 Weeks Prior - must be posted	Annual Business Meeting
File grievance against officer of church	2/3 of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	Oral notice 2 successive Sundays preceding meeting	Annual/Quarterly or Special Business Meeting

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Votes Needed</b>	<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Notice</b>	<b>When</b>
Special Business Meeting	2/3 of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	2 Weeks advance notice	N/A
Emergency Meeting	¾ of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	No notice	As needed
Call Senior Pastor	¾ of Votes Cast	15% of resident members 18 years or older.	2 Weeks Prior must be posted	Special business meeting.

*Table 2: Notice and Quorum Requirements Summary*

### B.10.6 Quorum

A quorum shall consist of those members present unless otherwise specified in Table 2: Notice and Quorum Requirements Summary.

### B.10.7 Majority needed for passage

Unless specified otherwise in the Bylaws, any issue being voted upon is passed if it receives a simple majority of votes cast.

Notable exceptions are shown in Table 2: Notice and Quorum Requirements Summary.

## B.11 CHURCH STAFF

### B.11.1 Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall:

1. Be characterized by the qualifications for office stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and the spirit of humility and servanthood called for in passages such as Matthew 20:25-28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
2. Be in support of Bethel's Statement of Faith; Constitution and Bylaws; Governance Policy, and practice.
3. Have freedom of the pulpit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. Be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in Section B.6.1 above, and meeting the qualifications listed except his call shall not be subject to the three year terms set for Elders.
5. Be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.
6. Preach on the Lord's day, administer the ordinances of baptism (or this may be delegated), and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, the Elders shall assume the responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.



#### B.11.1.1.1 Selection of a Pastoral Search Committee

When it becomes necessary to call a Senior Pastor, a pastoral search committee shall be established consisting of two Elder Board members appointed by the Board and three at-large Bethel Members elected by the membership at a business meeting.

#### B.11.1.1.2 Extension of a Call

The recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee concerning the call of a full-time Senior Pastor shall be presented to the church at a special business meeting. Notice of such a meeting and its purposes shall have been read from the pulpit on two (2) successive weekends prior to the meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) super majority of votes cast shall be necessary to extend a call to anyone under consideration. The vote shall be by written ballot.

Employment terms, including salary and benefits, shall be determined by the Elder Board in accordance with the budget. When approved by the church, the call and its terms shall be formally presented to the candidate. Written acceptance of the call shall establish the pastoral relationship as of the date agreed upon by the church and the candidate.

#### B.11.1.1.3 Conditions of the Call

The call to the pastorate shall be prepared by the Pastoral Search Committee in consultation with the Elder Board.

#### *B.11.1.2 Dissolution of the Senior Pastoral Relationship*

##### B.11.1.2.1 Resignation

When a Senior Pastor chooses to terminate the relationship with the church, he shall present a letter of resignation to the Elder Board.

##### B.11.1.2.2 Grievance Against the Senior Pastor

Where a grievance exists against an officer of the church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in our Statement of Faith or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder, such grievance may be brought before the Elder Board by any two believing witnesses. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by the Elder Board because of grievances against the Senior Pastor, but only after the Elder Board has made every effort to resolve them. Following the procedures prescribed in the Bylaws of this Church. If the Elder Board, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, shall formally request that Senior Pastor resign his position. Should the Senior Pastor decline to do so, he may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elder Board when supported by closed ballot of two-thirds of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting (see B.10.1.3). Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The charges against the officer and the findings of the Elder Board shall be presented at the business meeting prior to the vote.

#### B.11.2 Ministry Staff

A call to candidate for a called ministry staff position other than the senior pastor shall issue from the Elder Board. Ministry staff includes paid pastors and directors.

#### *B.11.2.1 Qualifications*

Ministry staff must become members within one year of being hired.

#### *B.11.2.2 Ministry Staff Termination*

A called ministry staff relationship may be dissolved by action of the Elder Board. The Elder Board shall establish the terms of dissolution.

#### **B.11.3 Support Staff**

Support staff includes program staff, business staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff, pastoral interns, pastoral staff assistants and paraprofessionals, pastoral residents, musicians and temporary help.

All support staff shall be hired by the Senior Pastor on terms established by the Board of Elders. However, any non-budgeted compensation is subject to the same Board of Elders approval as other proposed expenditures not included in the annual budget.

Resignations and terminations of support staff shall be acted upon by the Senior Pastor or his designee.

### **B.12 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of Bethel Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Bethel Church Constitution, and who offer evidence by their confession and their conduct that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The membership of Bethel Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Bylaws.

#### **B.12.1 Responsibilities**

Each member of the church is expected to attend its meetings, to work for its growth, and to fittingly represent the Lord and church in the community.

They will pray for the pastors as well as other leaders of the church and work with them in carrying out the program of the church. They shall endeavor to grow in discipleship, connect with others, preserve the unity of the church, and, if at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental doctrines (Statement of Faith, C-1) of this church, shall not seek to disrupt its fellowship but shall quietly withdraw from its membership.

#### **B.12.2 Qualifications**

The qualifications for membership shall be as stated in the Constitution (A.5.1).

#### **B.12.3 Admission**

1. Candidates for membership shall be interviewed by a church officer or designee appointed by the Elder Board to make sure that they meet the membership qualifications as stated in the constitution (A.5.1). The membership committee will consist of 4 members that include 2 members of the called staff and 2 members of the Elder Board. Membership classes will normally precede this interview. The examining committee shall use an interview guide, approved by the Elder Board, in examining the applicants.

2. Upon unanimous vote of the examining committee that the applicant meets the membership requirements, membership shall be granted.
3. Candidates for membership who are granted membership status will be welcomed publically by announcement at a regularly scheduled worship service.

#### B.12.4 Membership Definitions

##### *B.12.4.1 Member*

A person who has fulfilled all of the requirements for membership as stated in B.12.3; continues to fulfill their responsibilities according to B.12.1; and has not withdrawn their membership, or been dismissed from membership. (B.12.5.2)

##### *B.12.4.2 Active Resident Member*

For voting purposes: A Member (B.12.4.1) who is actively involved in the affairs of Bethel as shown through attendance within the past year and lives within reasonable commuting distance of Bethel.

##### *B.12.4.3 Inactive Member*

1. An inactive member shall be defined as any member who has demonstrated lack of interest and/or support of the church. Lack of interest and/or support will be considered as an otherwise healthy member who still resides in the Owatonna area but otherwise does not meet the definition of Active Resident Member. A member may be declared inactive by the Elder Board and this action shall become effective after the congregation has been notified at a regular church business meeting. Such Board action shall be taken only after diligent efforts to effect restoration to fellowship have failed.
2. Inactive members shall be ineligible to vote or take part in church business meetings.
3. An inactive member may be restored to active membership status after making an appropriate request to the Elder Board and approval by the Board. The congregation shall be notified at the next business meeting of the church.

#### B.12.5 Church Discipline

##### *B.12.5.1 Personal Grievances*

In cases of grievances between members or members and others, the persons involved shall follow the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-16:

*"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." [NIV]*

If this procedure does not lead to reconciliation, charges in writing shall be submitted to the Elder Board for consideration. The Board will meet with the persons involved, and appropriate church action shall be taken as needed.

A grievance against an Officer of the church will not be entertained unless it is brought by two or more believing witnesses in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19.

#### *B.12.5.2 Termination of Membership*

##### *B.12.5.2.1 Dismissal by Erasure*

The Clerk shall see that reasonable attempts are made to contact any member who fails to otherwise make a favorable contact with the church during a church year. If the church is unable to make contact, or the member then fails to make a favorable contact with the church during the next church year, their name shall be referred to the Elder Board. Upon such referral, the Elders may instruct that they be dropped from membership.

##### *B.12.5.2.2 Dismissal by Termination*

Failure to preserve the membership covenant (page D-1) may result in discipline by the Elder Board. If a member falls into either ostentatious moral or doctrinal error, or causes division within the church, corrective discipline may be required, in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. In all cases, restoration and reconciliation shall be desired and prayerfully sought. If corrective discipline does not bring about restoration and reconciliation, the member shall be removed from membership by a two-thirds vote of all current members of the Elder Board. In matters of discipline, the investigation and action shall be confidential in nature.

##### *B.12.5.2.3 Dismissal by Withdrawal*

Upon receipt of notification from a member that they wish to withdraw their membership, the Clerk shall see that they are removed from the membership records and shall notify the Elders of such action.

### **B.13 AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The Bylaws may be amended at a business meeting of the church in the manner specified in Bylaws section B.10.6. Notice of the pending vote on such amendment shall have been published at least two (2) weeks prior to the business meeting, and a copy of the proposed amendment shall have been posted in a conspicuous place for the same period of time.

## C STATEMENT OF FAITH

### STATEMENT OF FAITH

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#### **The Word of God**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without error in its original manuscripts, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

#### **The Trinity**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; these are equal to every divine perfection and each executes distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

#### **God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

#### **Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles and His teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, His perpetual intercession for His people, and His personal and visible return to Earth.

#### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

#### **Regeneration**

We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and repent of their sins. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

#### **The Church**

We believe in the true or invisible church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

#### **Christian Conduct**

We believe a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellowmen, his conduct

## Bethel Church

should be blameless before the world, he should be a faithful steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

### **Biblical Authority**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind and is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board is the church's final interpretive on the Bible's meaning and application.

### **Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, respect and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

### **Ordinances**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the local church. We believe Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer into the name of the triune God. We believe the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ for the commemoration of death and the hope of the resurrection. We believe these two ordinances should be observed and administered by born-again believers, walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ until His return.

### **Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. Therefore, the church and state must be kept separate as having different functions, with each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

### **Church Cooperation**

We believe local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or a district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise, cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

### **The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the rapture of the Church, the resurrection of the Body, the final judgment, the eternal life and joy of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

## D COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We strive, therefore, by the aid of the Holy spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness, to promote its spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines, to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also strive to maintain family and private devotions, to educate our children in the Christian faith, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment, to seek to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger, to seek God's help in abstaining from all practices and behaviors which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own, or another's faith.

We further strive to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer, to aid one another in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we move from this place, we will if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the spirit of this covenant.

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