

*By-Laws and Constitution***Article I. Approval, Adoption and Amendment**

- After development of this initial Bylaws document by the Bylaws Team of The Church at Trace Crossing, in conjunction with the current Servant Team, this document will be submitted to the current Servant Team for approval. The Bylaws team in conjunction with the current Servant Team will then submit the Bylaws document to the Membership of The Church at Trace Crossing for Approval and Adoption.
- The Active Members of the church will then have a ten (10) day period to review the document and submit questions to the Bylaws and Servant Teams. At the end of the ten (10) days there will be a gathering of the Church to discuss the submitted initial Bylaws. Fourteen (14) days after the original submission to the church, there will be a gathering of the membership to approve and adopt the initial Bylaws document, if approval and adoption is the decision reached by the church by a clear majority by the show of hands of those active members present at this gathering.
- The Initial Elder Team (see Article V below) will work with the Bylaws Team to develop fully the Bylaws document, including a procedure whereby the Bylaws may be adapted and amended to meet the changing needs of the church.

Article II. Membership**2.01 Definition****The Bible describes two kinds of “membership”:**

- **Membership in The Body of Christ:** Scripture contains many references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and His body, which happens at the instant of conversion (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22; et. al.). At that moment, a person becomes a member of the Body of Jesus Christ (the Church Universal), based solely on God’s Grace through Faith. This membership is eternal and unchanging.
- **Membership in a Local Body of Believers:** Scripture also urges members of Christ’s Body to continue growing and serving by becoming active members in a local assembly of believers. (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:25-31; 14:12; 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; et.al.). During the course of his or her lifetime, a person may be a member of several local bodies of believers. While we cannot see the invisible bond of membership in the Body of Christ (The

Church Universal), we can identify those who are the active members at The Church at Trace Crossing (or other local body of believers).

2.02 Process of becoming a member of The Church at Trace Crossing.

- Must have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Must verbalize testimony of Spiritual journey to Senior Pastor or other designated Elder or staff member.
- Must have participated in the Church's current membership information/orientation meeting.
- Must have demonstrated a desire to be engaged wholeheartedly in the Beliefs, Values, Vision, Mission, and Purpose of The Church at Trace Crossing.

Article III. Polity

Colossians 1:15-18 And He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. <NAS>

Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the true source of all the church is and does. His glory is to be the object of every act, function and motive of the body both individually and corporately. It is before Him that all other leadership must bow. He communicates his will for the church through his Word, the Bible. He also gives guidance by the leading of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart of each believer. He calls out leaders for the church to whom He has given specific spiritual gifts. These leaders are given the ultimate responsibility for the oversight of the church body and the shepherding of its members. The government of this church is vested in its Elders. (Refer to Article IV. Plurality of Leadership.)

All internal groups formed and empowered by the church shall exist to further the Values, Vision, Mission, and Purpose of the church. These groups shall be accountable to the Elders. The Elders shall be accountable to God and to the church.

Article IV. Plurality of Leadership

Acts 14:23 And when they [Paul and Barnabas] had appointed Elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. <NAS>

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you Overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." <NAS>

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint Elders in every town, as I directed you. <NIV>

The New Testament clearly teaches that the church is to be led by a plurality of Godly Christ followers. Their assignment falls into four categories: First, they are given the responsibility, accountability and authority to skillfully and lovingly lead the flock. Next, they are to feed the flock, offering accurate and insightful teaching of the Scripture. Third, they are to care for the flock. This care is shown in the love, concern, prayers, ministry, and adept management of church resources. Finally, they are to protect the flock from harmful influences and beliefs. These leaders are known by three titles, each of which reveals a separate aspect of their function.

1 Peter 5:1-2 To the Elders among you, I appeal as a fellow Elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as Overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <NIV>

They are first called “Elders”. An Elder (Greek “presbuteros”) is a Godly leader whose wisdom and maturity are respected by God’s people. Next, these are people who give oversight. That is, they are “Overseers” (Greek “episkapos”). An Overseer is a person who is a good manager of resources and guardian of people. Finally, these leaders are called “shepherds”, which is also translated as “pastors” (Greek “poimain”). This word refers to the role of caring for and leading the flock. Within the New Testament model of church organization, authority for leadership is not granted to just one individual pastor, nor is it given as democratic rule by the congregation. Instead, the Bible states that authority for leadership is conducted by a plurality of leaders who are appointed by the church and accountable to God. The Scripture further teaches that when the church supports the Elders, both the church body and the individual Christian will flourish. (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Peter 5:1-5; Acts 20:28) These Elders do not form a separated “clergy class” of Christians. Instead, the Elders, some of whom fill church vocational roles or other non-vocational roles, are like family with the people, always seeking God’s best for the members of the church. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 2 Corinthians 8:19).

Article V. Church Leadership

5.01 Elders

(a) Purpose

The Elders serve as the spiritual Overseers of the body. The biblical Elder has the responsibility for the spiritual and moral care of the flock of God whom he shepherds. When biblical Elders are established, the body functions in victory and freedom. Church order is maintained because a centralized authority is established and recognized by the body resulting in the following:

- **Unified vision**
- **Accountable leadership**
- **Shared responsibility for the equipping of the saints as member ministers**
- **Restorative church discipline**

Elders are called and appointed of God because of their spiritual character and are servants who consistently seek direction for the body from the Lord through prayer and diligent study of the Bible while maintaining the highest standards of integrity and maturity before God and man. The Elders are to complement the lead pastor as they carry out their responsibilities.

(b) Responsibilities

The Elders shall be the spiritual leaders of the congregation and responsible for establishing policies, teams and ministries to support the work of the church in the following areas without limitation:

- (a) spiritual matters,**
- (b) personnel matters,**
- (c) business and financial matters.**
- (d) use and maintenance of church property and facilities, and**
- (e) all ministries, whether standing or arising out of a recognized need.**

Because the Elders will be assigned responsibilities based on God's gifting to each Elder, responsibilities could change as the lead pastor or Elders change. The Elders shall fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Shepherd the flock by providing spiritual leadership and accountability in accordance with Scripture (1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 5:1-2).
- Pray together, listening to God for wisdom and power in caring for the body.
- Lead through example.
- Study the Bible, teach and exhort.
- Refute those who contradict the Truth.
- Administer restorative church discipline.
- Establish objectives and goals to accomplish the mission of the church.
- Evaluate achievements in accordance with church objectives and goals.
- Give guidance to church leadership staff.
- Oversee the business affairs of the church.
- Serve as moderators of the church when in family conference sessions.
- Establish guidelines, leaving day-to-day coordination of the ministry to the church staff.
- Model the active and ongoing use of spiritual gifts within the body.
- Select members of the finance ministry team.
- Review and approve the financial audit.
- Where appropriate, delegate responsibilities to the ministry teams within the church body.
- Meet or assign the personnel requirements of the church, including but not limited to:
 - Oversight of all staff activities
 - Annual evaluation of the lead pastor to nurture, encourage, counsel, advise.
 - Reviewing the evaluations of ministerial staff and support staff
 - Employing and releasing all staff (Body affirmation is required when employing and/or releasing leadership staff)
 - Enforcing policies as outlined in Personnel Policies and Procedures Document

(c) Characteristics

1 Tim 3:2-7 An Overseer, then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and a snare of the devil. <NAS>

Titus 1:5-9...appoint Elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the Overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. <NAS>

Elders of The Church at Trace Crossing must be adult males who are active members of the church and who are:

- **Above Reproach** - Elders must be blameless, presenting no patterns of scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.
- **Husband of One Wife** - An Elder, if married, must be a devoted spouse.
- **Temperate** - Elders must be self-Controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
- **Prudent** - Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- **Respectable** - Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
- **Hospitable** - Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
- **Able to Teach** - Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way. (2 Timothy 4:2; 2:24)
- **Not Addicted to Wine** - Elders must be free from addictions and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- **Not Pugnacious** - Elders must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness, not having a quick temper.
- **Uncontentious** - Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
- **Free from the Love of Money** - Elders must not be stingy, greedy nor out for sordid gain. They should not be preoccupied with amusing material things, but rather should be a model of giving.
- **Manage Own Household** - Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children (pertains to those whose children still live under parental authority).
- **Not New Converts** - Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and spiritual depth.
- **Good Reputation with Outsiders** - Elders must be well respected by unbelievers.

- **Not Self-willed** - Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive or prone to force opinions on others.
- **Not Quick Tempered** - Elders must exercise patience and self-control in difficult situations.
- **Loves What Is Good** - Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- **Just** - Elders must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principles.
- **Devout** - Elders must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, the study of Scripture and the guarding of their own spiritual walk (Act20:28).
- **Holding Fast the Faithful Word** - Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

(d) Selection Process

(i) Initial Selection:

- All men who exhibit the above characteristics and who are active members of The Church at Trace Crossing will be eligible to be considered for nomination as the church's initial Elders.
- The Church at Trace Crossing's active membership will nominate in writing men whom they think would serve well. The nomination process will be open for ten (10) days.
- The men who are nominated by the church will be considered by an Elder Selection Team whom will have been selected by the current Servant Team.
 - This team should be comprised of spiritually mature men and women who are active members of the church.
 - This Elder Selection team should represent the diversity in the church and should be as broad in scope of membership as the membership of the church.
- After review and examination, including individual interviews with the nominees, the Elder Selection Team will choose up to, but no more than seven (7) men, who are willing and believe that God has called them to serve as Elder, to compose the initial Elder Team.
- These men will be submitted to the current Servant Team for review. After this review, the Elder Selection Team will submit to the church the men who have been chosen.
- Current active Trace Crossing members will have thirty (30) days to provide signed, written reasons based on Scripture as to why a particular candidate is not suitable to serve as Elder.
 - The lead pastor, aided by the current Servant Team will review these reasons with the individual nominee(s).
 - If the individual agrees he is unqualified or the current Servant Team and lead Pastor determine he is unqualified, the individual will no longer be a candidate.
 - The decision(s) will be returned to the Elder Selection Team for selection of a suitable replacement from among the original nominees, if the Elder Selection Team deems a replacement is available.
- All candidates remaining after review of any disqualification petitions presented during the thirty (30) day period will form the initial Elder team. These men will be affirmed as Elders at a church-wide affirmation service.
- Additionally, the church's current lead pastor will be affirmed as an Elder.

(ii) Recurring Selection:

- The Initial Elder Team, in conjunction with the ByLaws Team will establish the process for recurring selection, using the characteristics from 5.01.c above.
- The Initial Elder Team will serve from Affirmation to the end of the FOLLOWING year – ex, if Affirmation by the church occurs in Apr 2010, the end of the first ‘service year’ will be December 2011. At that time, the rotation as specified below in 5.01.e will take effect.

(e) Term

Three years. The initial group of Elders will determine a rotating term for the group of Elders so that vacancies will not all occur in the same year. Approximately one-third of the group will rotate each year.

(f) Officers

The Elders will elect their officers who shall include a chairman and vice-chairman. The lead pastor cannot be considered for either of these officer positions. These officers will work with the lead pastor to facilitate Elder meetings and to manage Elder service.

(g) Removal

Any active member of the church may bring written scriptural reasons for removal of an Elder. Elders may be removed from office based upon being spiritually unqualified or the inability to serve and this by their own decision, by an eighty (80) percent decision of the other Elders, or by the action of the church, recognizing that no accusation against an Elder should be upheld except by the supporting testimony of two or three witnesses (1Tim 5:19) Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, with at least two (2) weeks notification given to all members. The meeting may be called only upon the recommendation of two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders or by written petition signed by not less than one third (1/3) of the church’s active members. The moderator of this meeting shall be the chairman of the Elders, or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the Elders.