

Oakwood Church BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - QUALIFICATIONS

Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who has the assurance of salvation is encouraged to become a member of this organization, hereinafter referred to as “the Church.” Membership classes and the Oakwood Membership Manual provide information about our Constitution and By-Laws and clarify the biblical position of this local body. We encourage parents to model the importance of church membership to their children. Qualifications are defined in the Oakwood Membership Manual to provide understanding and the foundation for commitment and unity.

Section 2 – ADMISSION

Admission to membership in the Church will follow the processes and procedures described in the Oakwood Membership Manual administered by designated Staff and Elder leadership. This Manual will be consistent with our Constitution and By-Laws and be developed by the Pastoral Staff and Elders to provide orientation, expectations and procedure for the addition of new members to the Church. The Oakwood Membership Manual and classes associated with membership admission will provide the terms and expectations of member conduct, absence, withdrawal and discipline. Admission to membership assumes commitment, providing a platform for discipling and providing identification with the members and mission of this local expression of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Section 3 - PROPERTY RIGHTS

The private property of the individual members of the Church shall be exempt from corporate debt and corporate legal liability.

Section 4 – GIVING AND THE CHURCH BUDGET

Individual members of the Church are expected to pledge themselves to biblical stewardship to provide for the ministry operating funds of the Church as defined in the Church Budget. The annual Church Budget is prepared by the Ministry Staff and Elders with the accounting review of the Church Treasurer. The budget preparation process is managed by the Ministry Staff and Elders, and the proposed budget is presented to the congregation for review and approval before the start of the new fiscal year.

All funds received from the congregation are free will offerings and go to meet the ministry operating needs of the church as defined in the affirmed Church Budget. Special circumstance or opportunities may cause the Ministry Staff and Elders to request or accept offerings over and above the Church Budget. Fundraising projects are also limited to special limited time events that comply with the Fundraising Policy of the Church. The Church has other defined giving options such as Endowment and Planned Giving opportunities explained on our Church Web site, www.oakwoodnow.org.

ARTICLE II – GOVERNMENT

We believe that it is critical that we be led and directed by the head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Our structure of government is meant to achieve that end, to produce theocracy (government by God), not democracy (government by the people). Only in that end will our structure of government have meaning. Submitting ourselves to the lordship and authority of Jesus Christ, we strive to be Ministry-led, meaning that our focus for decision making and direction are driven by ministry need, rather than by preference or majority rule. In that spirit and based on our understanding of the pattern of Scripture, we set forth the following on how this Church will be governed.

Section 1 - THE CONGREGATION

Our government shall be congregational in its form in the sense that all leaders are accountable to the Congregation. Recognizing the Word of God as our authority and the Holy Spirit as our power, we do not claim authority in ourselves but seek to be under the lordship of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that the Church is a work of God through the Holy Spirit. **The members shall entrust all matters of Church leadership to the Elders and the Pastoral Staff, except those matters reserved to the Congregation, as listed below.** All Elders, Church Officers, and heads of ministry teams must be chosen from among members of the Church. Teachers and volunteer ministry leaders will follow the guidelines for service as developed for each ministry and/or defined by church wide policies.

The following matters must be brought before the members for approval:

- Hiring the Lead Pastor
- Buying and selling real estate
- Building new buildings or remodeling existing structures in excess of \$100,000
- Incurring debt in excess of \$50,000
- Changing the Constitution and/or By-laws
- Approval of the annual Church Budget
- Approval of non-budgeted expenses that exceed 2% of total annual Church Budget per occurrence
- Electing Elders
- Electing the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer
- Electing the Financial Secretary and the Assistant Financial Secretary
- Electing Nominating Team Members

Section 2 - PASTORAL STAFF

A. Lead Pastor

1. The Lead Pastor is called by the congregation and is accountable to the Elder Team. He shall preach and teach the Word of God, oversee the public worship services of the Church, watch over the spiritual welfare of the Church, manage the Church staff and daily staff activities, and lead the congregation in a practical Christian life. In collaboration with the Pastoral Staff and other members of the Elder Team, he will develop the mission and vision of the Church and shepherd all the functions of the ministry. The Lead Pastor shall consult with the Elders on policy and personnel matters, doctrinal questions, ministry priorities, and budget priorities, seeking their advice and perspectives on such matters. He shall be a voting member of the Elder Team and an ex-officio member of all committees and teams.
2. The Lead Pastor shall be chosen by a three-fourths majority vote at any regular or special business meeting of the Church. The Lead Pastor shall be an ordained minister in accordance with EFCA standards. The vote to call a pastor shall also signify acceptance into Church membership for the pastor and his wife. He shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
3. The Lead Pastor's employment may be terminated by a unanimous decision of the Elder Team (other than the Lead Pastor).

B. Pastoral Staff

1. The Pastoral Staff shall consist of men and women who are called of God to dedicate their lives to vocational ministry. They shall give servant leadership to the area of ministry where they have been called to serve. The titles given to each Pastoral Staff member shall be determined by the Lead Pastor based on the nature of their ministry, their training and background, and the policies and procedures of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
2. Pastoral Staff will work under the direction of the Lead Pastor.
3. The Pastoral staff shall oversee and coordinate the activities of ministry volunteers.
4. The Lead Pastor will employ and dismiss Pastoral Staff with the concurrence of the Elder Team.

Section 3 - CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of the Church have vested in them all the powers and authority usually ascribed to officers of a corporation and will have authority to use these titles when necessary in handling corporate or civil matters involving the Church. The Church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin as a non-profit religious organization, and the officers of the corporation are stated as follows:

A. President (an Elder appointed by the Elder Team)

The Chairman of the Elder Team shall be the President and Church Chairman. He shall preside over business meetings of the Church and ensure that all decisions of the Church are fully carried out.

B. Vice President (an Elder appointed by the Elder Team)

The Vice Chairman of the Elder Team shall serve in the capacity of Vice President. He shall fill the role of Chairman in the Chairman's absence. In addition, he shall be the Elders' liaison to the Nominating Committee.

C. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer (elected by the congregation)

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected for a term of (3) years not to exceed two consecutive terms and would qualify for re-election after a one-year break in service. The Treasurer shall have charge of accurate recording and reporting of church funds, except the Church Benevolent Fund. He/she shall perform the Treasurer's responsibilities as outlined in that job description.

D. Church Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary (elected by the congregation)

The Church Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary shall be elected for a term of three (3) years not to exceed two consecutive terms and would qualify for re-election after a one-year break in service. The Financial Secretary shall ensure the proper receipting of all money received by the church and keep proper records of the source and the purpose for the money given. He/she shall perform the Church Financial Secretary responsibilities as outlined in that job description.

Section 4 - ELDER TEAM

The Bible is very clear about the qualifications for and responsibilities of elders in the local church. The Bible also speaks regarding how elders should perform their duties.

A. Elder Qualifications and Terms

Elders should be men of proven character (1 Timothy 3:1-7); men of sound doctrine (Titus 1:5-9); and men who are active disciple-making ministry participants assisting the Pastoral Staff in caring for the congregation (Matthew 28:1-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 5:1-6). Elder selection is based upon the recognition of these attributes in the life of the one being considered for the position of Elder here at the Church.

The Elder Team shall consist of a maximum of twelve (12) and a minimum of six (6) men. The term of an Elder shall be 3 years; however, the team may adjust the terms so that approximately 1/3 of the team is elected each year. An Elder can be elected to no more than two consecutive terms. Being out of office one year restores eligibility.

The Elder Team shall annually appoint from within its membership a Chairman and a Vice Chairman. This team shall meet once a month or whenever called together by the Lead Pastor, the Chairman or any two members of the Elder Team.

B. Elder Responsibilities

Elders are to be men who:

1. Promote congregational unity, and protect the congregation and the Pastoral Staff from division and doctrinal error (Ephesians 4:3; Acts 20:28-30).
2. Shepherd the congregation, with the Pastoral Staff, to stay on mission (1 Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 28:18-20), and to provide the following types of support to the Lead Pastor and the Pastoral Staff:
 - **Advice** → The Staff needs to know what the Elders think and why (Proverbs 12:15).-The Elders will provide their insight and questions to the Staff in order for the Staff to manage ministry in an effective manner.
 - **Affirmation** → The Staff draws strength from Elder encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25) particularly by the way that it implies “we are on the same team.”
 - **Perspective** → As those who are from and in touch with the congregation, the Elders will help the Staff see issues from different experiences (Exodus 18).
 - **Unity** → In discussion, the Elders are to be diligent in seeking unity—producing discipline, understanding and clarity (Ephesians 4:1-6).
3. Maintain accountability of the pastoral staff to the Church’s mission, ministry priorities and financial responsibilities.
4. Provide administrative and policy assistance to the Pastoral Staff for the conducting of operational and procedural matters (ex: fundraising, job descriptions etc.)
5. Realize that the elder role is one of servant leadership (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Luke 22:24-26).
6. Use their gifts and talents for the edification and encouragement of the Lead Pastor, the Oakwood staff and congregation, and Oakwood’s ministry partners.
7. Set financial parameters for the annual budget.
8. Provide a written or oral report to the congregation annually regarding its activity during the past year and its plans for the upcoming year.

C. Temporary Appointments

In the event that any of the elected positions specified in this article goes vacant, the elders shall have the authority to make temporary appointments to fill the vacant position(s) until it (they) can be filled by a special election or by election at the next annual meeting. The elected positions which can be filled temporarily in this manner are Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, or Nominating Committee Member. Elders shall not have the authority to appoint other elders.

A person holding a temporary appointment may hold that appointment for up to two terms of up to six months each. If a temporary appointment is to extend beyond the first six-month term, the elders must approve the extension. Time served as a temporary appointee shall count toward time served the same as if the appointee had been elected.

D. Conflict of Interest

If a conflict of interest by an Elder or Pastor should arise, that Elder or Pastor shall abstain from being involved in the decision in which there is a conflict of interest. Spouses of current Staff or Office Administration may be subject to conflicts of interest and may not be selected as elder candidates without special consideration by the Elder Team.

Section 5 – CHURCH RECORDS

Maintenance of Church Records shall be under the responsibility of the Church Office Manager and/or the Administrative Assistant. The following Church Records are kept:

- Meeting minutes from Church Annual and Semi-Annual Business Meeting along with Elders, Staff, Missions and Building and Grounds Teams meetings dealing with the administration of Church Ministries and funds are official records to be kept on file in keeping with current administrative procedures. Official copies of the minutes from the above meetings and teams shall be forwarded to the Church Office Manager and/or the Administrative Assistant for filing.
- The Church Membership roll with the dates of their reception. The roll is to receive updates as members are added and leave, as well as regular review by Elders and Staff for current status.
- Financial record summaries as reported by the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, not including any individual financial records.
- Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws along with any current amendments.

A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy the above mentioned records, at a

reasonable time and location specified by the Elder Team.

Section 6 - NOMINATING TEAM

This team shall consist of five to ten members as follows: Vice Chairman of the Elder Team, the Lead Pastor, and three or more from the Church membership (at-large).

The individuals from the Church membership shall be elected and serve for a term of three years and would qualify for re-election after a one-year break in service. Qualifications for this position shall include a member in good standing, a member who is active in at least one ministry of the Church and who understands and supports the importance of qualifying candidates for leadership roles according to biblical instruction.

The current nominating team shall nominate for congregational approval three or more at-large Nominating Team candidates. An at-large Nominating Team member can be eligible as a candidate for another elected position. A person cannot hold both an Elder position and be a member at-large on the Nominating Team. In the event that a Nominating Team member is seeking to be an Elder, this person's replacement on the Nominating Team should also be presented at the time of election.

When the Nominating Team is called on to develop a candidate list for open positions, the congregation should be given at least two weeks' notice to submit recommendations for open positions. This Nominating Team shall present the names of candidates for each elected position to be filled to the Elder Team for approval before individuals are contacted. The individuals so named shall have sought the office themselves or been nominated by someone from within the congregation or the Nominating Team.

The Nominating Team shall contact the qualified candidates to obtain their final consent to serve and place their names on the ballot for a church membership vote at a business meeting. The Team shall present the ballot to the congregation no later than two weeks prior to the business meeting.

ARTICLE III – CHURCH MINISTRIES

Section 1 - MINISTRY TEAMS

The ministries of the Church shall be developed, directed, and administered by designated Pastors, Ministry Directors, and their respective ministry teams. Ministry teams shall operate according to the ministry team policies as written in the Ministry Handbook. The Ministry Handbook will be reviewed periodically by the Pastoral Staff and Elder Team.

Each ministry shall recruit teams and individuals whom they deem qualified to serve with them in carrying out the ministry. The ministry team leader shall be a member of the Church.

Section 2 - OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Ministries formed within Oakwood Church with the participation of pastoral staff and support of the elders shall be considered Oakwood ministries. Ministries formed outside of this context that wish to be considered Oakwood ministries shall submit plans to the Pastoral Staff for consideration and recommendation. The Pastoral Staff will then forward their recommendations to the Elder Team for their approval and sanction.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

A. The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held in July each year, or at such time as may be decided by the Elder Team provided notification of such meeting has been announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to meeting date. The format of the Annual and Semi-Annual Business Meetings shall be arranged by the Ministry Staff and Elders to reach as many members as possible to inform and present matters before the Church.

B. The fiscal year shall end July 31 with the new budget year beginning August 1.

C. A Semi-Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held in January each year, or at such time as may be decided by the Elder Team provided notification of such meeting has been announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to meeting date.

D. Special business meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor, Chairman of the Elder Team, or by a request signed by a quorum of Church members. Notice of a special meeting shall be given either by announcement at the regular Sunday services of the Church at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting, electronically and/or by written notice mailed in time to reach all resident members at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

E. Twenty percent (20%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. For regular business matters such as election of officers and budget approval members not able to be present may request an absentee ballot. Valid absentee ballots shall be counted toward meeting the quorum requirements for voting purposes, except in the case of hiring a lead pastor. The quorum requirement must be met by in-person members to approve the hiring of a lead pastor. Oakwood will develop and maintain a written policy approved by the elders for in-person and absentee voting (whether by paper ballots and/or electronic voting).

F. All members who have attained the age of 18 years have the right to vote on all matters coming before the business meetings. All matters shall be determined by majority vote (more than one-half of all the votes cast), except when otherwise specified in these By-laws.

ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS

These By-laws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any regular or special business meeting of the Church, providing notification of the proposed alteration or amendment has been made to the congregation at least two weeks prior to such meeting.