

# **Antioch Community Church Bylaws**

## **ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE**

- A. Name: This congregation of believers shall be known as Antioch Community Church. The church is incorporated as a Virginia nonstock corporation pursuant to Chapter 10 of Title 13.1 of the Code of Virginia.
- B. Purpose: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, for such purposes including, but not limited to establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers on the Bible and teachings of Jesus Christ, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world. Antioch Community Church provides a supportive and inclusive environment for worship and fellowship.

## **ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

- A. We believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: The third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
- B. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in actions we consider sinful.

## **ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP**

- A. All individuals are welcome to attend Antioch Community Church, regardless of their membership status.
- B. Previous members of Antioch United Methodist Church are automatically granted full membership.

C. New Membership.

1. Attend a pre-membership class led by the pastor.
2. Full membership will be granted upon majority vote of the church members, including the pastor, present at a scheduled worship service.

D. Associate Membership. Those desiring fellowship and opportunities for service in this church but who do not desire to be full members, may be granted associate membership. For example, an individual who is a member of another church, but who also attends Antioch Community Church, might want associate membership. Associate members may serve in any capacity deemed appropriate by the church council. For example, the church council may allow associate members to serve on committees and participate in church meetings. Associate membership will be granted upon the majority vote of the church members present at a scheduled worship service.

E. Privileges of Membership

1. Full and associate members of the church of at least eighteen years of age are entitled to vote at church meetings. For this purpose, attending a meeting virtually (by phone or computer) is equivalent to in-person attendance. Voting by proxy or absentee voting is allowed unless special circumstances arise in which proxy or absentee voting is deemed inappropriate by the members.
2. Full and associate members may inspect the prepared church documents, such as financial statements and meeting minutes, provided he/she shall have made a request to the church for the desired records unless prohibited by law (e.g., records that include personal identifiable information).

F. Termination of Membership. Under exceptional circumstances (e.g., a member is deemed dangerous to the congregation) a member may have their membership revoked if voted affirmatively by 2/3 of members present at a scheduled worship service.

G. Hereinafter, the term “member” shall refer to full and associate members except as otherwise noted.

#### **ARTICLE 4 CHURCH COUNCIL & OFFICERS**

A. Officers/Directors: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

B. Church Council: In addition to the officers, the church council shall include the following directors as long as these offices are filled: Finance Committee Chairperson, Trustees Chairperson, Antioch Women’s Ministry Chairperson, Pulpit Committee Chairperson, Lay Leader and any other directors the church deems necessary.

- C. Eligibility For Church Officers/Directors: Church officers/directors must be current members of the church.
- D. Election of Church Officers/Directors: The annual election of officers and directors by the church shall occur during the month of November at the annual church business meeting. Officers of the church must be elected by a majority of the eligible membership present at a regular or special church business meeting. An off-cycle vacancy occurring in any office may be filled at any regular church business meeting by a majority vote of membership.
- E. Terms of Service for Officers/Directors
1. The term of service for all officers/directors, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers/directors may be re-elected or re-appointed.
  2. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the church council, may be filled at any regular church business meeting by a majority vote of eligible members present. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless removed for disciplinary reasons.
  3. If a council member neglects or abandons his/her position prior to the end of the one year term, the council may remove the member upon a motion of any council member and an affirmative majority vote of the council at a duly called meeting. No congregational vote is necessary for church council member removal.
- F. Calling of a Pastor: Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the bylaw provisions of the church. The church shall use the following guidelines for calling a pastor:
1. The church council shall select a pulpit committee to consist of the church council and up to five other members responsible for conducting a pastor search.
  2. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include, at a minimum, the following: a background check, reference check, and resume that includes the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry, divinity education, and experience.
  3. Upon a recommendation from the pulpit committee, candidates will be formally announced to the church, after which the candidate must preach at least one regularly scheduled church service and be available to answer any questions from the congregation prior to being voted upon by the church membership.
  4. The pulpit committee will present all recommended and vetted candidates one at a time for consideration to the membership. When deciding between more than one candidate receiving a majority vote by the congregation, the candidate receiving

the most votes total will be selected. In the event of a tie, the church council will make the final selection.

5. The candidate must be elected as pastor by a majority vote of church members at a meeting to be held on a Sunday in conjunction with the designated worship service hour. This meeting to vote on the appointment of a pastor must be announced at least 2 weeks in advance of the vote from the pulpit and via email. The candidate shall not be present for the vote.

G. Pastor Dismissal Procedures:

1. The pastor position is an at-will position.
2. Upon 30 days written notice, either the church or pastor may end the employment arrangement. Written notice includes service via electronic mail.
3. Upon a motion and second by any member of the church, at a duly called meeting, the congregation shall vote on the dismissal of the pastor. The pastor shall not be present at this meeting or any other meeting where personnel issues are discussed.
4. The pastor shall be removed, upon a majority vote of the members present at the duly called church meeting.
5. The President of the church council is responsible for promptly notifying the pastor of his/her dismissal, which will become effective 30 days from the date of the majority vote in favor of removal.

**ARTICLE 5**  
**DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS/DIRECTORS AND PASTOR**

A. The Pastor

1. The pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church and its members.
2. The pastor, in consultation with the pulpit committee, will determine whether to perform and how to perform all ceremonies (e.g., weddings, funerals, communion, baptisms, memorial services, dedications, etc.).
3. The pastor shall oversee the new member orientation process for full members.
4. The pastor shall be responsible for preaching at each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his or her absence, the pastor (or the President of the church council in the case of pastor vacancy or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform his duties) shall be responsible

to arrange for speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in his or her absence in a manner consistent with the statement of faith.

5. The pastor and the church council shall ensure that all church functions are safe and secure. There will be zero tolerance for illegal activities (including, but not limited to, the abuse of minors, illegal drug use, or harassment of any kind).

## B. The Church Council

The church council shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church and ensure the administrative needs of the church are met. The church council is responsible for ensuring any necessary changes to the bylaws are executed.

1. President. The President shall serve as moderator of all church council meetings and set the agenda of meetings in consultation with the council.
2. Vice President. The Vice President shall perform the duties of President in his/her absence.
3. Secretary. The church secretary shall:
  - a. Record the minutes of all church council meetings, including the date, time, and place of the meeting, list of those present, and an accurate record of the decisions made at the meeting.
  - b. Certify and keep, at a secure location in the church, the original signed copy of the current bylaws, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; keep an electronic copy of the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, record of baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
  - c. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
  - d. Ensure that all notices are given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws.
4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:
  - a. Count, or cause to be counted, along with one other person appointed by the council, and record in a permanent record all monies received as church offerings. This shall be done following each church service.

- b. Promptly deposit in the designated church bank account all money received.
  - c. Maintain a permanent record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions, and gifts. Issue an official receipt, if required, to each contributor at the end of the fiscal year.
  - d. Maintain an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds; keep electronic copies of all bank statements; make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church at the annual business meeting or other meetings as necessary; and deliver such records to his/her successor upon leaving office.
- C. Trustees: The church council will establish a Board of Trustees consisting of at least 3 church members to serve under its authority to oversee all real estate needs including legal issues, construction, repairs, and general upkeep. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the church council under these bylaws, the church council has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of church members at a duly called business meeting:
- 1. To take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
  - 2. To sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
  - 3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church.
  - 4. All powers of the church council shall be compatible with the laws of the State of Virginia.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

#### **A. Annual Church Business Meeting**

- 1. The annual church business meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in November unless the President of the church council designates another date. A quorum shall consist of the members present. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

2. The church council President shall serve as moderator of church business meetings. In the event of a conflict of interest, the church council may substitute a moderator.
3. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern all council, committee, and annual church business meetings.
4. At the annual church meeting, the Finance Committee Chairperson shall present a proposed annual budget on behalf of the church council. The budget will be approved upon a majority vote of the membership present at the meeting.
5. Any church business meetings, including the annual church business meeting, may be held virtually (by phone or other electronic means) for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person church business meetings. A quorum shall be those eligible voting members attending the virtual meeting, and voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the church council. Notice of business meetings shall be provided by church announcement and by electronic means (email and/or other methods deemed by the church council to be most likely to reach church members at least 2 weeks before the meeting).
6. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

#### B. Voting

1. Voting at any church meeting is limited to eligible members (full and associate members).
2. A majority vote of those members attending the meeting, whether in person or virtually (by phone or other electronic means), will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of motions and amendments to church documents such as the bylaws.
3. Voting may also be done by absentee or proxy methods if approved by the church council.
4. To maintain good order and to protect privacy interests, voting to hire or dismiss church personnel (e.g. pastor) shall be done via secret ballot at the designated church meeting.

#### C. Meetings of the Church Council

1. Regular or special meetings shall be held at such time and place as the church council determines.
2. Notice of Meetings: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the church council unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location

of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with the bylaws. Notice shall be sent to each church council member for special meetings by means of the secretary's chosen method of communication at least one week in advance if possible.

3. A quorum for meetings shall consist of members present (in-person or virtually) for the meeting.
4. The council President (or in his or her absence, the Vice President or other council officer designated by the President) shall conduct the meeting.
5. Church council members may participate in council meetings electronically (virtually or by phone).

## **ARTICLE 7 COMMITTEES**

The church council may designate or form any committees it deems necessary and may appoint members and/or chairpersons of said committees. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees. The primary function of committees is to advise the pastor and church council. Specific committee authority will be defined by the council (e.g., authority to make purchases). Committees shall make available upon request all of their records.

### **A. Nominating Committee**

1. The church council will appoint a nominating committee prior to the annual church business meeting.
2. The nominating committee shall be responsible for identifying volunteers willing to serve and recommending a slate of proposed officers, committee chairpersons and members to the church council for approval by the congregation at the annual meeting.
3. Members may also make nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.
4. A list of committee chairpersons and assigned members will be distributed following the annual meeting.

### **B. Pulpit Committee**

1. The pulpit committee shall be responsible for conducting a pastor search, including identifying qualified candidates and conducting panel interviews.

2. After a pastor has been selected, the pulpit committee will act as a liaison between the congregation and pastor with the goal of fostering a healthy ministry.
3. The pulpit committee is also responsible for managing personnel matters and advising the pastor on ministry goals and church protocol.

**ARTICLE 8  
TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS**

- A. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.
- B. Political involvement: The church shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office or political party. The church shall refrain from any and all political activity.
- C. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, or gender.

**ARTICLE 9  
AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the eligible members present (in person or virtually) and voting at any regular or special church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen days before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review (in paper and electronic form) at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving them.

These bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the church members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church council in which a quorum was present.

4/12/2024  
Date

Barbara P. Colli  
Church Secretary