

BYLAWS

Rock Bridge Community Church

Article I: Name and Principal Office

The name of the corporation is Rock Bridge Community Church, herein referred to as “the Church.” The Directional Elders shall specify the Church’s principal office location and make this address known to the membership.

Article II: Purpose and Beliefs

Section I: Purpose & Mission

Rock Bridge Community Church is organized for the purpose of providing regular opportunities for public worship, to practice the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, to uphold the Christian doctrines and ethics as articulated in the Scriptures and the Church’s Belief Statement, and to do the work committed to the Church by Jesus, our Lord, Savior, and King (this work is best summarized by Matthew 28:18-20).

The Mission Statement of the Church is to glorify God by connecting people from all walks of life to life in Christ.

Section II: Belief Statement

The Church’s official and full statement of belief is found in Appendix A. Our Statement of Belief does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible, as the Word of God, speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of people. For the purposes of Rock Bridge Community Church’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Directional Elders are the final interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application.

Article III: Membership

Section I: Church Membership

Each member of Rock Bridge shall:

1. Have personally believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ through repentance and faith, identifying as a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ.
2. Have been water baptized as a believer and follower of Christ.
3. Complete the Church’s membership commitment process.
4. Not be under the biblical discipline of another church.

Section II: Removal of Membership

Members shall be removed from the Church membership for the following reasons:

1. By transfer of membership to another church of like faith.
2. By death of the member.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. By church discipline (see Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-13)
 - a. Removal from and restoration to Church membership shall be overseen by a team of Elders.
5. By inactive status:
 - a. Members who for one year or longer do not contribute to or participate in the Church's ministry in some form, shall be contacted out of concern and potentially for care or for church discipline.
 - b. If, after 90 days, the member is unable to be contacted or fails to respond, they may be removed from membership by their campus elders.

Article IV: Church Leadership

Rock Bridge Community Church is an independent, autonomous church with full and final authority to determine solely within itself all matters related to the life of this church including but not limited to its financial affairs, affiliations, ownership and property, and pastoral leadership.

The Church is Jesus-ruled, Elder-guarded and guided, staff-led, and congregationally accountable.

Section I: Church Membership

- A) The members of the Church are responsible for carrying out the mission of Rock Bridge Community Church. A majority vote of the members present at a duly called Business Meeting will be required for any of the following decisions:
 - a. Approval of the annual budget.
 - b. Calling a new lead pastor.
 - c. The purchase of real estate, non-budgeted capital improvements, debt acquisition, or increases to the total current year budget that exceed one-twelfth (1/12) of the previous year's annual budget.
 - d. Merger or dissolution of the Church.
 - e. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church.
 - f. Any other matter as decided by the Directional Elders.
- B) The Church shall have at least one duly called Business Meeting per year. Special business meetings may be called by the Directional Elders. All business meetings must be announced at least seven (7) days in advance by written or electronic communication as well as announced from the worship platform on two (2) successive weekend worship services.

- C) The Directional Elders shall set forth the manner of voting allowed; only active members who are 18 years or older may vote. Voting by proxy is not allowed; however, the Directional Elders may allow voting electronically or in writing.

Section II: Elders

- A) Elders are called to serve among and provide spiritual protection for the Church. Elders—as under-shepherds of Jesus, the head of the Church—provide overall leadership to the Church through their godly example, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, ministry of the Word (teaching and discipleship), member discipline and restoration. The Church’s Elders primary area of service is at the congregational or local campus level.
- i. Elders are not expected to determine specific ministry programming, as those responsibilities reside with the Church staff and the members of the Church itself.
 - ii. Elders at each respective Rock Bridge campus shall meet for prayer and other matters at least six (6) times per year.
- B) Elder candidates shall have been an active member of the Church for at least one year, be at least 21 years old, and should consistently exhibit and uphold the traits found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. No staff member other than the Lead Pastor may serve as an Elder.
- i. New elders are appointed by the existing campus elders and the Lead Pastor after a prayerful selection process.
 - ii. Prior to their appointment, the names of new elder candidates will be shared with the members for at least two (2) weeks prior to joining the Elders. During this time, members may raise questions or concerns to the Lead Pastor or another Elder, which could result in a delay or determination that the candidate should not serve as an Elder.
- C) Elders shall serve three (3) year terms that are renewable; however, elders will be encouraged to take at least one-year off after nine (9) consecutive years of service. When terms are renewed, the same selection criteria must be applied and reviewed.
- D) Removal. An Elder may be removed from their office by resignation, grievance, or misconduct. When a potential grievance or alleged misconduct arises, it will be brought before the Campus Elders or Directional Elders as applicable. After consideration of the issue and a proper investigation that includes prayer and follows biblical principles (*see Matthew 18:15-17; I Timothy 5:19*), a determination is made as to whether the grievance and/or misconduct is true, substantial, and unfitting of an Elder. If this determination is made by the Campus and/or Directional Elders as applicable, the Elder may be removed from office by a vote of not less than two-thirds vote of all Directional Elders (excluding the Elder under question).

- E) For the decisions below, a quorum consists of all elders currently serving and a 90% supermajority approval is required:
- a. Any change to the Church's Belief Statement or official doctrinal positions on issues or theological matters.
 - b. Any change to these Bylaws.
 - c. The calling of a new Lead Pastor.

Section III: Directional Elders

- A) The overall governance and direction of the Church shall be overseen by the Directional Elders.
- B) The number of Directional Elders shall be no fewer than five (5) and no more than eleven (11), including the Lead Pastor who serves by virtue of his position. Directional Elders are selected from among the actively serving elders. Directional Elders also act as trustees for the Church. They shall name a Chair and a Vice-Chair.
- C) The Directional Elders shall meet at least five (5) times per year with at least a three (3) day notice given to all members.
- A quorum consists of two-thirds of the number currently serving unless these Bylaws stipulate the participation of all Directional Elders.
 - Decisions and affirmations may be made by consensus and with unity; however, when clear and timely decisions must be made or are specifically required, a two-thirds supermajority vote is required (unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws).
 - Action can be taken without meeting to act on specific recommendations from the Lead Pastor or the Stewardship Team. For these actions, all members constitute a quorum. These actions shall be included in the meeting minutes.
- D) The Directional Elders fulfill the following specific responsibilities:
1. Approve the hiring of all Executive Pastors, Campus Pastors, and Multi-Campus Directors (or similar and/or equivalent roles in the Church).
 2. Approve the members of the Stewardship Team and the members of the Lead Pastor's leadership team.
 3. Delegate certain authority, actions and responsibilities to the Stewardship Team that relate to financial health and practices.
 4. Review and oversee the Church's organizational and spiritual health including finances, stewardship, facilities, staffing, and strategic direction.
 5. Recommend to the congregation the annual ministry budget and determine the fiscal year for the church.
 6. Establish a process for setting the salary and benefits for the Lead Pastor.
 7. Approve increases to the total current year budget, acquiring debt, the

purchase of real estate, and non-budgeted capital improvements that cumulatively for the fiscal year do not exceed one-twelfth (1/12) of the previous year's annual budget.

8. Approve specific policies and procedures of the Church.
9. Provide accountability to the Lead Pastor.

Section IV: Lead Pastor

- A) The Lead Pastor is a member of the Directional Elders, the primary teacher of God's Word and the day-to-day directional leader of the church—its mission, ministries and staff. He also implements the policies and priorities that have been established by the Directional Elders.
- B) The Lead Pastor is subject to the same removal standards as the Elders.
- C) When the position of Lead Pastor is vacated, the Directional Elders will take appropriate action to secure a qualified candidate to fill this position. A Pastoral Search Team shall be formed consisting of Elders, staff members, and church members who are neither Elders nor staff.
 - Approval for calling a new Lead Pastor requires at least ninety (90%) approval of the full Pastoral Search Team, all Church Elders, and of the membership present at a duly called meeting for this purpose.

Section V: Church Staff and Leadership Team

- A) Staff members are hired to further the mission, vision, and operation of the Church. The Lead Pastor or his designee shall direct the hiring of staff members in accordance with applicable Church policies and these Bylaws.
- B) The Lead Pastor will form a leadership team from the staff to assist him in providing leadership and direction to the Church staff as well as in the implementation of the mission, ministries, and initiatives of the Church. This team focuses on the spiritual health of the church in all its ministry and operational functions.

Section VI: Trustees

- A) The business affairs, legal matters, and corporate powers of the Church shall be conducted under the direction of the Directional Elders who shall serve as trustees for the Church. In accordance with these Bylaws, the Directional Elders shall execute on behalf of the Church, deeds, notes, deeds of trust, releases, and any other instruments or contracts as may be necessary to comply with the mandate of the congregation or Elders (as applicable) as to real property belonging to, being acquired by, being improved by, or being sold by the Church.

- B) The Directional Elders shall appoint and authorize two of their members—generally the Elder Chairman and Vice-Chairman/Secretary—to sign and execute legal documents such as contracts after appropriate approval has been granted in accordance with these Bylaws.

Section VII: Stewardship Team

- A) This Team oversees all financial matters, staff benefits, and related matters. They work collaboratively with the appropriate staff to oversee the budget process. Additionally, they ensure sound financial practices and policies are in place for the Church.
- B) This team must meet at least six (6) times per year. Meeting notifications and quorum requirements are the same as those for the Directional Elders.
 - a. The Directional Elders shall appoint a Stewardship Team of at least four (4) but no more than nine (9) members. The Chief Financial Officer, Business Administrator or equivalent staff position and at least one (1) Directional Elder shall serve on this team.
 - b. Team members serve three (3) year terms that are renewable.

Article V: Indemnification

The Church shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend its Elders, officers, staff members, advisors, and other individuals against any liability or other expense arising in connection with their service to the Church. This indemnification applies to the extent not prohibited by law and under the following parameters:

- i. Actions made for the benefit and best interest of the Church.
- ii. Actions made in good faith.
- iii. Actions where no reasonable cause existed to believe that the conduct was unlawful.

Article VI: Bylaw Amendments

Amending these Bylaws, including the Church's Statement of Belief, may be done by a 90% affirmative vote of all Church Elders.