



Fredericksburg International Christian Church

By-Laws

I. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES.

A. MEMBERSHIP.

Church membership is established so that the church may be governed by those committed to honoring Jesus Christ as part of this particular local body and under its principles. While all are welcome to take part in the worship, Bible study, service, activities and other church functions, it is by expressing commitment to the purpose, mission and principles of this body by active Membership that believers make themselves available to participate in formal leadership and governance functions such as voting.

1. Application for Membership shall be based on a testimony of personal experience with and public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. For newly converted believers, acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ shall be publicly proclaimed through believer's baptism by immersion.
2. All applicants for Membership shall be instructed in the foundations of our faith and the responsibilities of Membership.
3. Membership implies submission to the Bible teaching and discipleship of, prayer for, and service together with this body of believers.
4. Members agree to come under the authority of the church in spiritual matters.
 - a) Those Members who are flagrantly disobedient to God's laws may come under the church's loving discipline, to include correction and rebuke by the church's leadership.
 - b) Those Members who remain flagrantly unrepentant despite the church's best efforts to bring them to repentance (following the Lord's model in Matthew 18:15-17) shall, upon the unanimous vote of the Council, have their Membership suspended, in order to preserve the integrity of the church and in the hopes that a temporary loss of the benefits of Membership might bring about their full

restoration. Restoration of membership following a suspension requires the recommendation of the Pastor and a simple majority vote of the Council.

5. Those Members who, for whatever reason, cease to be actively involved in Church life, shall, upon the review and simple majority vote of the Council, be designated inactive.

a) Inactive Members are welcome in fellowship, but their votes shall not be considered in Church business decisions.

b) Inactive Members may request to be reactivated by asking the Pastor or the Council Chair, who will clarify the Member's circumstances. A simple majority Council vote is required to reactivate a Member.

6. Although this Church does not require transfers of letter, Members of this congregation should ensure that they are not simultaneously Members of more than one Church.

7. Members shall indicate their commitment to the body by signing the Covenant of Membership card (Appendix).

II. CHURCH LEADERSHIP.

The church's appointed leaders shall be Covenant Members.

A. The Pastor shall be called or removed only following unanimous recommendation from the Council and a 2/3 majority vote by the active Membership.

B. Ratified Leaders. Deacons, Teachers, the Treasurer, and primary members of the Ministry Council (as defined below) are considered Ratified Leaders, as these positions require ratification by the Membership.

1. Ratified Leaders shall serve 1-year renewable terms, running from 1 January through 31 December.

2. Ratified Leaders shall be nominated and recommended by the previous year's seated Council by simple majority vote, then be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the active Membership before the end of the previous Council's term.

3. If a Ratified leader cannot complete his or her term, he or she shall be replaced within 30 days, following the process of nomination by the Pastor and confirmation by a simple majority of the Council. The replacement Council member will serve through 31 December unless renewed by the Membership in the normal manner of ratification enunciated above.

4. Ratified leaders must maintain high standards of personal conduct. Those whose ability to live up to these standards falls into question—either for serious moral failings (real or widely perceived) or for chronic inactivity—should voluntarily step down so that the leadership may continue to enjoy the confidence of the Membership. Otherwise, they

may be involuntarily removed for the remainder of the annual term by a simple majority vote of the remaining primary Council members.

5. In general, Ratified Leaders who have been removed shall not be considered for restoration for the remainder of the annual term. Under extraordinary circumstances (such as when a perceived moral failing is demonstrated to have been without merit), a Ratified Leader may be restored in-term by recommendation of the Pastor and unanimous vote of the Council.

C. Appointed Leaders. Other appointed leadership positions within the church do not require ratification by the Membership, but are appointed and removed as required by the ratified Ministry Council members with the consultation and approval of the Pastor.

III. THE MINISTRY COUNCIL:

The Ministry Council shall be responsible for planning and coordinating the schedule of the ministries of the church, to provide continuity of direction, and to make recommendations on matters requiring congregational approval.

A. The voting members of the Council are Ratified Leaders, and are defined as the sitting Coordinators of the church's five principal ministry groups: Worship, Education/Discipleship, Outreach, Caregiving (Deacons), and Administration.

B. The Council is vested with the responsibility to vote on the regular business of the church, and to make recommendations to the congregation on matters exceeding the authority vested by these By-Laws.

C. The Pastor shall preside over Council meetings as Chairman, though he will not vote, and he shall recuse himself when terms of his employment or compensation are considered. In his absence, the Administrator shall preside.

D. A quorum of the Council shall consist of all five voting Members. Any voting member may appoint an assistant to represent him/her if he/she is unable to attend a meeting.

E. The Council Chair may obtain Council votes on immediate issues without calling a meeting, as long as he contacts all five voting members to record their votes.

F. Members of each year's Council (except Deacons) shall be nominated by a process managed by the Administrator, overseen by the Pastor, and confirmed by a simple majority vote of the active Membership.

IV. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

The congregation shall be assembled at least annually for the purpose of confirming its leadership, as well as for special meetings when required to consider matters of great weight or import to the entire body. The Administrator shall normally moderate congregational meetings.

A. Changes to the Constitution, as well as the calling or removal of the Pastor, may only be effected by a 2/3 majority vote of the active Membership.

B. Changes to these By-Laws and annual installation of Ratified Leaders may only be effected by a simple majority vote of the active Membership.

C. The Treasurer shall report the financial status of the church to the Membership at a congregational meeting at least annually (this report may be combined with other business).

D. Any request by the Pastor, any Council member, or any five active covenant church Members for a vote on a particular matter by the entire Membership must be honored and carried out within 30 days.

V. PASTORAL MINISTRIES.

The Pastor's chief ministry is to provide spiritual and pastoral leadership to the Membership.

A. The Pastor's principal responsibilities are to "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2) This includes:

1. To continually lead the congregation in worship, Bible study, and prayer which honors God, edifies the body, and makes known the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.
2. To be the chief theologian and guardian of the church, ensuring that doctrine which is preached and taught is consistent with a sound understanding of Scripture, and to continually study the Scripture to show himself approved as a minister of the Gospel.
3. To guide and direct the regular corporate worship service.
4. To make regular individual contact with the church body through an energetic program of visitation, in order to counsel and minister to the Members' spiritual, emotional and physical needs.
5. To regularly participate in church ministries and meetings—except where excluded for reasons of propriety—in order to encourage, edify, and guide their progress.
6. To receive, baptize, instruct, and disciple new believers and Members.
7. To confront, correct, and rebuke sinful members in order to restore them to right fellowship with God and the church.
8. To regularly pray for the church, its ministries, and the salvation of the lost in our community.

B. The Pastor shall be male, in accordance with the church's Constitution and with Scriptural principles on gender roles within the church (1 Timothy 2:11-15).

C. The Administrator shall provide formal feedback to the Pastor at least annually or at any time upon the Pastor's request. For such feedback the Administrator shall canvass the other primary Council members for their input.

VI. CAREGIVING MINISTRIES.

The purpose of the Church's caregiving ministries is to ensure that the church meets its Members' various physical, material, emotional and spiritual needs, particularly during times of crisis or hardship (Acts 6:1-3).

A. Deacons are Ratified Leaders, and are those Members gifted in and set apart for works of service among the body of Christ. Those selected should possess the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, to include exemplifying Christ in daily and family living; and exemplifying Christian standards in work, speech, love, faith, purity, and stewardship. Deacons shall:

1. Select their own Caregiving Ministries Coordinator from among their number by a simple majority vote (with the Pastor breaking any ties), who shall represent them on the Council.
2. Be the Pastor's primary assistants with regards to providing spiritual, emotional and physical nurture and care to the Membership; following up with church visitors; and providing comfort to the sick, the needy and the grieving.
3. Oversee disbursement of Benevolence funds for the needy.
 - a) The Caregiving Ministries Coordinator may authorize the Pastor to disburse up to \$250 in Benevolence funds. Funds above that amount must be approved by a vote of the entire Council.
 - b) Benevolence funds are intended to be distributed on a non-recurring basis for acute and extraordinary needs. Membership is a consideration but not a prerequisite for receiving Benevolence funds.

VII. WORSHIP MINISTRIES.

The purpose of FICC's worship ministries is to ensure that corporate worship is reverent and acceptable in God's sight (Hebrews 12:28), and that it is orderly, so that both regular and occasional participants may wholeheartedly participate and be edified (1 Corinthians 14:31-33a).

A. The Worship Coordinator is a Ratified Leader and voting Council member, and champions the cause of corporate worship within the congregation. He/she shall:

1. Oversee the church's corporate worship practices, to ensure its focus remains on the exaltation of Jesus Christ in all things, according to Biblical principles.
2. Appoint coordinators and assistants to plan and direct the Church's arts and music ministries, children's worship services, ancillary worship service functions, etc.

B. The Pastor shall oversee the observance of the church's ordinances—baptism and the Lord's supper—during corporate worship or other appropriate venues, to ensure that they are carried out with reverence and in accordance with the Scriptures.

VIII. EDUCATION AND DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES.

The purpose of FICC's education and discipleship ministries is to conduct vibrant, Biblical education and spiritual development programs, to include small-group Bible Studies/Prayer Meetings (BSPM); Sunday school classes; and special discipleship ministries, such as men's, women's and youth programs.

A. The Education and Discipleship Ministries Coordinator is a Ratified Leader and voting Council member, and champions the cause of Christian education and discipleship within the congregation. He/she shall:

1. Work with the Pastor to oversee purchase of materials which are Biblical, effective, and appropriate to the target audience; and organize training opportunities for teachers and facilitators.
2. Appoint Members as coordinators and assistants as appropriate to carry out the church's education and discipleship functions, such as coordinating Sunday school, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and discipleship groups.

B. TEACHERS:

Teachers are Ratified Leaders, and are defined as those who, because of their training, study, ability, and personal character, are entrusted by the church to speak with authority on Scriptural matters to a particular group. They are to be chosen carefully as they will be judged more strictly (James 3:1).

1. Sunday school classes shall be led by teachers.
2. Teachers of classes which regularly include adult men shall be male, in accordance with Scriptural principles on gender roles within the church (1 Timothy 2:11-15).

C. **FACILITATORS.** Facilitators are those who are entrusted with regularly leading a particular group in discussion as guided by Scripture, in prayer.

1. The Education and Discipleship Ministries Coordinator shall appoint as facilitators church Members who are faithful to the Scriptures, and are above reproach in their personal lives.

IX. OUTREACH MINISTRIES.

The purpose of FICC's outreach ministries is to reach out to our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that those who are still lost in sin might be saved, and so that those who are in need of the care and service opportunity of a local church might be drawn into fellowship.

A. The Outreach Ministries Coordinator is a Ratified Leader and voting Council member, and champions the cause of outreach and evangelism within the congregation. He/she shall:

1. Oversee the church's outreach events, such as its regular fellowship dinners, public festivals, and community service projects.
2. Oversee the church's advertising activities.
3. Appoint Members as coordinators and assistants as appropriate to carry out the church's outreach functions.

X. ADMINISTRATION.

A. The Administrator is a Ratified Leader and voting Council member. The Administrator shall oversee the church's necessary business and administrative functions. The Administrator's purpose is to serve and enable the ministries of the church by ensuring compliance with the church's legal, regulatory and financial obligations, and its processes under its Constitution and these By-Laws. He/she shall:

1. Preside over the church's congregational meetings.
2. Oversee policies for paid personnel, including for hiring and termination, and benefits.
3. Serve as primary liaison to the host Church.
4. Oversee and manage the Church office, to include church-owned supplies, materials and equipment.
5. Oversee regular audits and inspections to ensure legal, ethical and sound management practices are observed.
6. Oversee and ensure church representation in conferences or meetings.

B. In order to ensure financial accountability, the Administrator shall nominate a separate Treasurer for Ratification by the Membership. The Treasurer's responsibilities include oversight of:

1. Accounting of church funds, to include the regular and special church offerings.
2. The Church's salaried employees.
3. Preparation and presentation of budgets and reports.
4. Preparation of Members' confidential annual giving statements.

XI. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT.

A. These By-Laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect when a simple majority of the active Membership, aged 18 years or older, vote in favor of them at a corporate gathering for that purpose.

B. These By-Laws may be amended, altered or repealed when the proposed change is announced to the Membership in writing, allowed to lie on the table for 28 days, and opened for public discussion and debate prior to a vote. Such a motion must be considered and recommended by the Council and approved by a simple majority of the assembled Membership.

Appendix: Covenant Membership Agreement

COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP THE FREDERICKSBURG INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and led by His Holy Spirit, I commit my life to serving Jesus Christ as a member of the Fredericksburg International Christian Church, according to its Constitution and By-Laws. I understand and agree to its Statement of Faith. I hereby promise to faithfully support this body with my time, talents, prayers, service, and material resources according to the Scriptures, and to submit to its leadership in Bible teaching and discipleship.

Sign/Name_____ Date_____