

**Constitution and By-Laws
of
Cornerstone Congregational
Church**

Constitution of Cornerstone Congregational Church

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Article I. Name and Principal Office/Organization

The name of the Corporation is Cornerstone Congregational Church. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Constitution and By-Laws as “Cornerstone”, the “church”, or the “corporation”. Cornerstone Congregational Church maintains its principal office at 32 Graniteville Road, Westford, Massachusetts. The congregation of Cornerstone Congregational Church shall have full power and authority to change the location of the principal office from one location to another. Such change in address shall not be deemed an amendment of this Constitution. The membership shall be notified in writing at least sixty (60) days in advance of a change of address. Such notices shall include the new address, effective date, and telephone numbers and a copy shall be filed with this Constitution.

The Corporation was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a non-profit corporation, organized and recognized in **July 2017**. No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its directors, officers, members or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for any professional services rendered to it and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein.

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, this church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of this church.

It is intended that the church shall be entitled to qualify for exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as same may be amended from time to time (the “Code”) and shall not be a private foundation under Section 509(a) of the Code.

Notwithstanding anything else herein provided, the Church is organized exclusively for religious and charitable purposes, as said terms have been and shall be defined pursuant to Sections 170(c) and 501(c)(3) of the Code, or under any successor sections thereto. The church shall in no event be controlled directly or indirectly by one or more disqualified persons or by any organization which is not described in Section 509(a)(1) of the Code. All powers of this church shall be exercised only in such manner as will assure the operation of this church exclusively for said religious or charitable purposes, as so defined, it being the intention that this church shall be exempt from federal income tax and all purposes and powers herein shall be interpreted and exercised consistently with this intention. All references herein to the Internal Revenue Code shall be deemed to refer to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now in force or hereafter amended and to particular sections of the Internal Revenue Code shall be deemed to refer to similar or successor provisions hereafter adopted.

Article II. Affiliation

Cornerstone Congregational Church is fully autonomous, affiliated with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (8941 Highway 5, Lake Elmo, Minnesota 55042) and its New England Congregational Christian Fellowship.

Article III. Polity

Section 1: Overview

Cornerstone Congregational Church is Congregationally governed, Elder led, Deacon served, Staff equipped, and Congregation engaged, under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Officers

The Chairman of the Elders is the Moderator of the Corporation; the Vice Chair of the Elders is the Vice Moderator of the Corporation; and the Secretary of the Elders is the Recording Secretary of the Corporation. The Treasurer of the Corporation is the Church Treasurer.

Section 3: Congregationally Governed

The Congregation has the final say in the budgets, officers, and the hiring and firing of pastoral staff. Additionally, when the congregation acts prayerfully together, as in a congregational meeting, decisions by the whole congregation are believed to be led by God's Spirit and must be followed by the leaders and members.

Section 4: Elder Led

God gave the New Testament church the office of Elder to lead the local believers, and we believe that a biblically-based church is to be led by a plurality of duly elected, qualified, and God-honoring men called Elders. Elders are called to cast vision for the church and shepherd, equip, oversee, discipline, and protect the saints, devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Those who lead a church must be fully surrendered to Christ¹ and qualified according to Scripture.² Jesus' model of servant leadership³ must be followed as they lead the flock, make whole-life disciples, and seek to reach the world around us.

The Elders exercise oversight over all church functions and ministries. The Pastoral staff and Deacons report to the Elders. Ministry teams report either to the Elders or Deacons, as specified in the By-Laws.

Section 5: Deacon Served

God also gave the New Testament church the office of Deacon. Deacons serve the church and raise up servant-hearted individuals to join them in their task. The Deacons take care of the

¹ Galatians 2:20

² 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

³ Philippians 2:1-8

physical and logistical needs of the church under the oversight of the Elders. They are the church's physical servants and material managers. Their primary calling is caring for the people of the church followed by caring for business concerns. This allows the Elders to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. God calls both men and women to the office of Deacon.⁴

Section 6: Staff Equipped

As a biblically-based church we desire to have at least one trained and ordained Pastor. The senior or solo Pastor is the primary teaching and preaching Elder of the church. We believe that Pastors are called to serve the church by equipping the believers for the work of the ministry.⁵ Pastors are to come alongside the congregation to enable them to identify how God has gifted them for service, teach them how to serve, and empower them to serve.

The Senior Pastor submits to the decision of the Elders when they are acting as the Board of Elders and to the members of Cornerstone Congregational Church when they are acting as the Congregation. All church members recognize that such relationships are to be under the ultimate authority and Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 7: Congregation Engaged

As believers grow in Jesus and are equipped for service,⁶ they are encouraged to join teams where they can use their gifts and abilities to help grow God's kingdom. The participation of the congregation is organized and managed by ministry teams that are supervised by the Elders or Deacons. Ministry teams not only accomplish tasks, but also engage the larger church body in shared ministry through volunteers. Ministry team members work together for the purpose of wisdom, accountability, and encouragement. The best ideas often come out of and are refined by a group of people working together to serve Jesus.

Article IV. Purpose

Cornerstone Congregational Church is a gospel-centered church that changes lives through sharing the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Its mission is to make, mature, and multiply followers of Jesus.

The Corporation is organized under the Massachusetts Nonprofit Corporation Law for religious and charitable purposes. The general purpose of this Corporation is to have and exercise all rights and powers conferred on nonprofit corporations under the laws of Massachusetts, provided that this Corporation shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the primary purposes of this Corporation.

⁴ 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Romans 16:1

⁵ Ephesians 4:11-16

⁶ Ephesians 4:12

Article V. Articles of Faith

Introduction

Doctrinal statements help us love and worship God rightly, love others unconditionally, and make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are a Christian church that affirms the orthodox, historic faith taught in the Scriptures. Our beliefs are summarized in the following Articles of Faith, which are affirmed by all our members.

Cornerstone's Articles of Faith and our Constitution and By-Laws do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. For the purposes of this Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Board of Elders is this church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

I. The Scriptures

1. We believe that the entirety of the Bible is the Word of God, free from error in the original words (inerrant),⁷ authored under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit⁸ (God-breathed),⁹ fully authoritative in all matters it addresses,¹⁰ incapable of being wrong (infallible),¹¹ and always accomplishing its purposes.¹²

⁷ Matthew 5:18: For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. (All Scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® unless noted otherwise)

⁸ 2 Peter 1:21: For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

¹⁰ 1 Thessalonians 2:13: And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

¹¹ 2 Peter 1:19: We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

¹² Isaiah 55:11: so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

II. The Godhead

2. We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Trinity).¹³

A. The Father

3. We believe in God the Father,¹⁴ almighty Creator of heaven and earth,¹⁵ eternal in His being,¹⁶ perfect in holiness,¹⁷ sovereign over all creation,¹⁸ all-knowing (omniscient),¹⁹ all-present (omnipresent),²⁰ and all-powerful (omnipotent).²¹ We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men,²² hearing and answering prayer,²³ and that He saves from sin and death those who believe in Jesus Christ.²⁴

B. The Son

4. We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal and only Son of God,²⁵ conceived by the Holy Spirit,²⁶ born of a virgin,²⁷ sinless in His life,²⁸ making atonement for sin by His death,²⁹ and providing access to the Father.³⁰ We believe in His bodily resurrection,³¹ ascension to heaven,³² and promise to return to this world.³³

¹³ Acts 7:55: But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

¹⁴ Matthew 23:9: And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

¹⁵ Genesis 1:1: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

¹⁶ Isaiah 40:28a: Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God,

¹⁷ Isaiah 6:3: And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

¹⁸ Proverbs 16:9: In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

¹⁹ 1 John 3:20: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

²⁰ Psalm 139:8: If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

²¹ Matthew 19:26: Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

²² 1 Peter 1:3: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

²³ 1 John 5:14-15: This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

²⁴ John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

²⁵ Colossians 1:15-17: The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

²⁶ Matthew 1:18: This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

²⁷ Matthew 1:22-23: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

²⁸ 1 Peter 2:22: "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:3: For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

³⁰ John 14:6: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

³¹ 1 Corinthians 15:20: But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

³² Luke 24:51: While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

³³ John 14:3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

C. The Holy Spirit

5. We believe in the Holy Spirit who comes forth from the Father and the Son³⁴ to convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.³⁵ The Holy Spirit regenerates,³⁶ dwells within,³⁷ sanctifies,³⁸ teaches,³⁹ empowers for service,⁴⁰ intercedes,⁴¹ and comforts⁴² all who believe in Jesus Christ.

III. Satan, Sin & Mankind

6. We believe in the existence of Satan⁴³ and the fallen angels,⁴⁴ the adversaries of God and His people.⁴⁵ Equipped Christians⁴⁶ can successfully resist them through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

7. We believe that God created all people in His own image,⁴⁸ that mankind was tempted by Satan,⁴⁹ sinned,⁵⁰ and thereby incurred eternal physical and spiritual death,⁵¹ which is separation from God.⁵²

³⁴ John 15:26: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.

³⁵ John 16:8: When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:

³⁶ Titus 3:5: he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

³⁷ Romans 8:9a: You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

³⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:18: And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

³⁹ John 14:26: But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

⁴⁰ John 15:26: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.

⁴¹ Romans 8:26: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

⁴² John 14:16: And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—

⁴³ Job 1:6: One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

⁴⁴ 2 Peter 2:4: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

⁴⁵ Ephesians 6:12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

⁴⁶ Ephesians 6:11: Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

⁴⁷ James 4:7: Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

⁴⁸ Genesis 1:26a: Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,

⁴⁹ Genesis 3:1: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

⁵⁰ Genesis 3:6: When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

⁵¹ Genesis 2:17: but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

⁵² 2 Thessalonians 1:9: They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might

8. We believe that as a consequence of the Fall, all human beings are born with a sin nature, rebellious toward God,⁵³ choose willingly to sin,⁵⁴ and are therefore under God's condemnation.⁵⁵

IV. Salvation

9. We believe that Jesus Christ secured forgiveness for sin and the gift of perfect righteousness through his obedient life, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead.⁵⁶ We believe that those who repent⁵⁷ and put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ⁵⁸ alone⁵⁹ as Lord and Savior receive eternal life.⁶⁰ Through the work of the Holy Spirit (regeneration) they are delivered from condemnation⁶¹ and become a new creation.⁶²

V. The Church

10. We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head, and of which all people (past, present, and future) who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are members.⁶³

11. We believe in the local church, believers in Jesus Christ who assemble locally under biblical leadership for the purpose of worship, teaching and equipping Christians for the work of God, and fellowship all to the glory of God.⁶⁴

12. We believe in observing the ordinances of the Lord's Supper (communion)⁶⁵ and baptism. Our church practices baptism after confession of faith.⁶⁶

⁵³ Psalm 51:5: Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁵⁴ Romans 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

⁵⁵ Ephesians 5:6: Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

⁵⁶ Romans 5:19: For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

⁵⁷ 1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

⁵⁸ John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

⁵⁹ Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

⁶⁰ Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

⁶¹ Romans 8:1: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

⁶² 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

⁶³ Ephesians 1:22-23: And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:17: For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

⁶⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26: For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

⁶⁶ Acts 8:38: And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

13. We believe that God has called the local church to the task of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.⁶⁷

14. We believe that salvation in Christ is intended for every nation, tribe, people, and language.⁶⁸

VI. The Last Things

15. We believe in the personal and undeniable return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth⁶⁹ and the fulfillment of His kingdom.⁷⁰ We believe in the resurrection of the body,⁷¹ the final judgment,⁷² the eternal punishment of the wicked,⁷³ and the eternal peace and joy of the righteous.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

⁶⁸ Revelation 7:9: After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

⁶⁹ Mark 14:62: "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁷⁰ Philippians 3:20: But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

⁷¹ 1 Thessalonians 4:16: For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

⁷² Romans 2:6-8: God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

⁷³ Matthew 25:46: "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

⁷⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:1: For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Article VI. Church Covenant

God brought me to Cornerstone to believe the gospel, mature as a follower of Jesus, love His church, and join His mission. I fully agree with Cornerstone's Articles of Faith and commit to Cornerstone's unique calling and expression as explained in our Vision, Mission, Core Values, Philosophy of Ministry, and By-Laws.

I submit myself to the leadership, discipleship, and discipline of the Board of Elders, and the mutual accountability of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ at Cornerstone. As a follower of Jesus, and a member of our church, with the Lord's help and to the best of my ability, I promise to:

- a. **Love God** by regularly reading and studying the Bible, praying, seeking to obey Jesus' commands, asking for the Holy Spirit's active presence in my life, faithfully attending worship services, taking the Lord's Supper, and by giving tithes and offerings of my money and time to Cornerstone;
- b. **Love God's People** by regularly participating in community discipleship, attending members meetings, using my gifts and talents for the church's benefit, being quick to forgive, asking for and receiving forgiveness, encouraging one another, and protecting the unity of the church;
- c. **Love God's Mission** by building friendships with unsaved neighbors, coworkers, and family members, praying for them, sharing the gospel, inviting the unchurched to Cornerstone, welcoming first-time guests in as new friends, and supporting the work of reaching the lost around the world.

If one day I leave Cornerstone, I promise to join a like-minded church that believes the gospel and joins God in His mission to make, mature, and multiply followers of Jesus.

Article VII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting. Proposed changes shall be made when approved by two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast by the voting members of the congregation present at the meeting. The content of the proposed changes shall be published 30 days prior to the meeting.

Article VIII. Dissolution Clause

The property of this Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious and charitable purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of this Corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member of this Corporation or to the benefit of any private individual. Upon the winding up and dissolution of this Corporation, and after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the Corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to another non-profit organization or organizations, selected by the Board of Elders, which subscribe to the similar purposes and beliefs as are contained in our Constitution and By-Laws, organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes, and which has established and maintained its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue

Law of 1986, as amended (the “Internal Revenue Code”) or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue Law.

By-Laws of Cornerstone Congregational Church

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Article I. Membership

Section 1: Qualification for Membership

Membership in Cornerstone Congregational Church shall be open to any person who:

- a. evidences personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,
- b. earnestly desires to live in obedience to Scripture,
- c. has been baptized after confession of faith,
- d. unreservedly agrees with the church's Articles of Faith,
- e. does not belong to any other religion, cult, or secret society,
- f. commits to the church's unique calling and expression as explained in its Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Philosophy of Ministry,
- g. willingly abides by the provision and requirement of the church's Constitution and By-Laws, and
- h. signs the church's membership covenant.

Section 2: Receiving into Membership

Any person may make his or her desire to join the membership known to the Pastor or any of the Elders. Representatives from the Board of Elders shall then meet with the candidate to hear their testimony. After consideration the Board of Elders may approve the candidate as a member according to the qualifications of Article I of these By-Laws. Once approved, applicants are immediately recognized as members of the church. After new members have been received, they shall be formally introduced to the church family.

Section 3: Voting Eligibility

Those members ineligible to vote:

- a. are younger than 18 years of age,
- b. do not regularly participate in worship services,
- c. maintain a primary affiliation with another church as their home church, or
- d. are under church discipline by the Board of Elders.

If members have been absent for reasons beyond their control or for other acceptable cause, the Board of Elders shall determine their eligibility to vote after communicating with the member or making a good-faith effort to reach out to the member. Members made ineligible to vote shall be notified verbally or in writing of their status a minimum of two weeks before a congregational business meeting.

Section 4: Holding Church Office

Only members can be Elders within the church or Officers of the Corporation.

Section 5: Removal from Membership

- a. Members may be removed from membership by decision of the Board of Elders for any of the following reasons:
 1. Moving from the area and thus being no longer able to attend regularly
 2. Death

These members shall be added to a special memorial list (a.k.a, the "Heavenly Roll") in perpetuity
 3. By request of the member, including letter of transfer
 4. Six months without attending worship without appropriate cause
 5. Regularly attending another local church
 6. Leaving the church
 7. For church discipline and failing to repent and humbly accept correction
 8. For violation of Biblical principles
 9. Insubordination to the leadership of the congregation
- b. The Board of Elders shall practice concern for the spiritual well-being of the congregation and shall attempt to contact, and as appropriate, correct and offer restoration to a member before removing them from membership.

Section 6: Church Discipline

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for ensuring that church discipline conforms to the Biblical principles given in Matthew 18:15-18, Romans 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, Galatians 6:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, Titus 3:10-11, and 2 John 1:9-11. The Board shall establish a specific discipline policy and procedure according to these principles, and shall be responsible for carrying out such a process when Biblically warranted and appropriate.

Acceptance of membership into this congregation and of its membership covenant implies consent to be placed under the applicability of such church discipline.

Section 7: Restoration of Membership

Individuals who request to be restored to membership may be reinstated by decision of the Board of Elders, if:

- a. They have recommitted to regular attendance.

- b. They have repented from whatever led to their removal for discipline, if applicable.

Section 8: Membership Covenant

Those desiring membership in Cornerstone Congregational Church must agree to the following and are required to sign a copy of this Membership Covenant:

Cornerstone Covenant

God brought me to Cornerstone to believe the gospel, mature as a follower of Jesus, love His church, and join His mission. I fully agree with Cornerstone's Articles of Faith and commit to Cornerstone's unique calling and expression as explained in our Vision, Mission, Core Values, Philosophy of Ministry, and By-Laws.

I submit myself to the leadership, discipleship, and discipline of the Board of Elders, and the mutual accountability of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ at Cornerstone. As a follower of Jesus, and a member of our church, with the Lord's help and to the best of my ability, I promise to:

- **Love God** by regularly reading and studying the Bible, praying, seeking to obey Jesus' commands, asking for the Holy Spirit's active presence in my life, faithfully attending worship services, taking the Lord's Supper, and by giving tithes and offerings of my money and time to Cornerstone;
- **Love God's People** by regularly participating in community discipleship, attending members meetings, using my gifts and talents for the church's benefit, being quick to forgive, asking for and receiving forgiveness, encouraging one another, and protecting the unity of the church;
- **Love God's Mission** by building friendships with unsaved neighbors, coworkers, and family members, praying for them, sharing the gospel, inviting the unchurched to Cornerstone, welcoming first-time guests in as new friends, and supporting the work of reaching the lost around the world.

If one day I leave Cornerstone, I promise to join a like-minded church that believes the gospel and joins God in His mission to make, mature, and multiply followers of Jesus.

Section 9: Worship Services

The church shall normally gather each week to worship God through music, prayer, scripture reading, the preaching of God's Word, the giving of tithes and offerings, and by other means as determined by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall determine the times and frequencies of the services, as well as any service changes or cancelations, including those recommended by the Board of Deacons due to weather or facility related concerns. The Lord's Supper shall normally be scheduled at least once a month.

Article II. Congregational Business Meetings

Section 1: Location

Congregational business meetings shall be held at the church or if necessary such other place(s) as determined by the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Announcement

The date, time, and location of all congregational business meetings of Cornerstone Congregational Church shall be announced at the two worship services preceding the meeting and in appropriate church publications.

Section 3: Annual Congregational Business Meeting

The Annual Congregational Business Meeting shall be in May each year at a time and date determined by the Board of Elders. The purpose of the meeting shall be to adopt an annual budget and elect church officers and directors, as required by the By-Laws and applicable state laws. Requests for other matters of business to be brought before the congregation must be presented to the Board of Elders by a member of the church at least four weeks prior to the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. A business item presented by this procedure will be added to the Agenda of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting if a majority of the Elders deem it is ready for the congregation's consideration. The agenda, all motions to be voted on, the nominees, and all other reports for this meeting will be made available to the church at least one week prior to the meeting.

Section 4: Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called for any purpose and at any time by the Board of Elders or the written request of at least one-third (1/3) of the members of the church or at least ten (10) members of the church, whichever is smaller. Meetings will be scheduled by the Board of Elders within 30 days of the request by giving notice to the members in accordance with Article II, Section 2.

Section 5: Quorum

One-fourth (1/4) of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum at the Annual Congregational Business meeting of the church. One-tenth (1/10) of the members of the church eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum at special business meetings of the church.

Section 6: Voting

Unless otherwise stated in these By-Laws, decisions of the congregation shall be by a simple majority of votes cast by the members of the church present at the meeting. Elected positions will be voted on individually by secret written ballot. Ballots will be counted by a minimum of two members.

Section 7: Rules of Order

The version of Robert's Rules of Order adopted by the Board of Elders shall govern the conduct of the meetings.

Article III. Officers and Other Elected Positions

Section 1: Officers of the Corporation

The elected Officers of Cornerstone Congregational Church are:

- a. The Chairman of the Board of Elders, who acts as the President of the Corporation,
- b. The Secretary of the Board of Elders, who acts as the Recording Secretary of the Corporation, and
- c. The Church Treasurer, who acts as the Treasurer of the Corporation.

All elected Officers of Cornerstone Congregational Church must be members of the church.

Section 2: Duties

The duties of the Chairman of the Board of Elders are outlined in Article IV, Section 5 (e). The duties of the Secretary of the Board of Elders are outlined in Article IV, Section 5 (k). The duties of the Church Treasurer are outlined in Article VIII, Section 3.

Other duties of the Officers are outlined in Article VIII, Section 6.

Section 3: Election of Officers

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders. The Church Treasurer shall be elected annually by the members of the church.

Section 4: Selection of Nominees

The Board of Elders shall receive candidates from the congregation for Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Collectors, and the Pastoral Search Team. The Board of Elders will examine and select candidates based upon their Biblical qualifications, spiritual maturity, giftedness, training, and experience for their respective offices. The Board of Elders reserves the right to investigate the financial and criminal background of all candidates. Candidates approved by the Board of Elders shall become Nominees.

Section 5: Election of Nominees

Nominees will be presented in writing to the congregation with the agenda for the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. Nominations to elective church office are not accepted from the floor at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. Concerns should be brought to the Board of Elders prior to the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. Each Nominee will be elected to their respective position as outlined in Article II, Section 6. Nominees are elected by a simple majority of votes cast by the members of the church present at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. Nominees may be presented at a congregational business meeting other than the Annual Congregational Business Meeting as determined by the Board of Elders.

Section 6: Filling Vacancies

In case of vacancy in the elected offices of Treasurer or Collector the Board of Elders may appoint members of the church to fill such vacancies until the next Annual Congregational Business Meeting. The Treasurer must be a member of the church as outlined in Article III, Section 1. Appointed members may also be subject to financial and criminal background checks as outlined in Article III, Section 4.

Section 7: Terms

- a. Officers of the Corporation shall remain in office until their terms are complete and a replacement has been elected.
- b. Elders shall serve for terms as outlined in Article IV, Section 8.
- c. Deacons shall serve for terms as outlined in Article V, Section 6.
- d. The Treasurer may serve for up to three consecutive two-year terms and may return to office after at least one year out of office.
- e. Collectors may serve for up to three consecutive two-year terms and may return to the position after at least one year out of office.
- f. Members of the Pastoral Search team may serve for the duration of the search process.

Section 8: Removal

- a. Elders may be removed as outlined in Article IV, Section 9.
- b. Deacons may be removed as outlined in Article V, Section 7.
- c. The Treasurer, Collectors, and members of the Pastoral Search team may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the church present at a congregational business meeting.

Article IV. Board of Elders

Section 1: Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 list the basic qualifications for a local church Elder. All Elders must be members of the church and men.

Section 2: Selection

Elders (except for the Senior Pastor) will be selected by the process outlined in Article III of these By-Laws.

Section 3: Senior Pastor as Elder

The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shares equal voting rights with the other members of the Board of Elders, but shall be considered the primary preaching and teaching Elder of the church (1 Tim 5:17, Acts 15:22). The Senior Pastor may not serve as the Chairman of the Board of Elders, but may serve as the Chairman of Ministry Teams or Other Teams as directed by the Board of Elders.

Section 4: Pastoral Staff as Elder

Additional pastoral staff members may be selected as an Elder by the same process outlined in Article III of the By-Laws. Interim Pastors shall be non-voting Elders.

Section 5: Duties

- a. Calling: Our Elders lead and shepherd the church and devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.
- b. Leadership: The Board of Elders has the spiritual authority and responsibility to see that the church remains on a Biblically true course. The Board of Elders lead the overall ministry of the church by casting vision, setting direction, and establishing priorities.
- c. Discipleship: The Board of Elders is to oversee the discipleship and discipline of the church, ensuring all members and attenders receive accurate Biblical teaching and the life of the church is well managed. The Board of Elders guards the church from false doctrines and divisiveness. Elders assist the Pastoral Staff in preaching and administration of the ordinances.
- d. Devotion: The Elders are to practice personal times of devotion and prayer.
- e. Authority: The Board of Elders will prayerfully endeavor to reach unified decisions, but may make decisions by majority vote. When the Board of Elders makes a decision, all Elders and pastoral staff shall support that decision. An individual Elder's authority is only present as part of the Board of Elders as a whole or is limited to that specific authority delegated to him by the Board of Elders.
- f. Membership: The Board of Elders shall oversee the membership process as outlined in Article I, Section 2.

- g. Board of Deacons: The Board of Elders shall appoint Deacons as outlined in Article V, Section 2 and shall oversee them. Although the Board of Deacons shall oversee the budget process, the Board of Elders shall finalize and submit the annual budget to the congregation for approval. The Elders should coordinate with the Deacons to ensure that the sick, elderly, and the hospitalized receive spiritual and physical care as needed.
- h. Ministry Teams: The Board of Elders shall call into being ministry teams as needed. The Board of Elders shall appoint members of the church to be ministry team leads. They may remove ministry team leads at any time. The Board of Elders may assign the Board of Deacons to oversee a ministry team as needed.
- i. Policies: The Board of Elders shall review all church policies and grant them final approval as appropriate.
- j. Chairman: The Chairman of the Board of Elders, who also serves as the President of the Corporation, shall be selected by a majority of Elders. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall call and preside over the Board of Elder meetings and shall preside over congregational business meetings.
- k. Secretary: The Secretary of the Board of Elders, who also serves as Secretary of the Corporation, shall be selected by a majority of Elders. The Secretary shall take minutes for the Board of Elders meetings and provide those minutes to the Board of Elders for review and approval. The Secretary shall make available approved redacted minutes to the congregation in a timely manner, not to exceed 90 days of the meeting. The Secretary shall also take the minutes for congregational business meetings and shall present the minutes to the congregation at the next appropriate congregational business meeting.
- l. Board Roles: All positions, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Vice-Secretary will be chosen from among the Elders within three weeks of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. The Vice-Chairman will fill-in for the Chairman in his absence. The Vice-Secretary will fill-in for the Secretary in his absence. The roles of Vice-Chairman and Secretary (or Vice-Secretary) may be filled by the same Elder if needed.
- m. Pastoral Supervision: The Board of Elders shall supervise the Senior Pastor. The Board of Elders' supervision will normally include a yearly performance plan and annual review. They may use other processes as needed. The Board of Elders shall also direct the supervision of additional Pastoral Staff as outlined in Article 6, Section 2.
- n. Staff: The Board of Elders shall be responsible to review and approve job descriptions and reporting arrangements for all church staff. The Board of Elders, or their designee, shall be responsible to hire and dismiss all church staff other than Pastors. The Board of Elders shall direct the supervision of support staff as outlined in Article VI, Section 2.
- o. Salaries: The Board of Elders shall negotiate and recommend to the congregation the compensation and benefits package for all paid church staff. This should be reviewed annually prior to the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

- p. Church Meetings: The Board of Elders shall manage congregational business meetings as outlined in Article II.
- q. Good Faith: The Board of Elders shall perform duties in line with Biblical principles, in good faith, and in a manner in which shall be in the best interests of the Corporation, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, as an ordinary prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances.
- r. By-Laws: The Board of Elders shall act as the final authority on the interpretation of these By-Laws.
- s. Biblical Interpretation: Cornerstone's Articles of Faith and our Constitution and By-Laws do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. For the purposes of this Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Board of Elders is this church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Section 6: Meetings

- a. The Board of Elders shall normally meet to conduct business a minimum of once a month. One month may be skipped per year. A quorum shall be a majority of the Elders, but not less than three, unless the board consists of only two Elders. See Article IV, Section 7.
- b. The Board of Elders shall adopt a version of Robert's Rules of Order for use by the Board of Elders, Board of Deacons, and all other Ministry Teams.
- c. The Board of Elders should include regular times of prayer and discipleship, focusing on shepherding the flock, as part of their meeting schedule.
- d. The Board of Elders may hold regular meetings at times and places as the Chairman of the Board of Elders determines, provided all Elders are notified verbally or in writing.
- e. The Board of Elders may hold special meetings at any time and place designated in a call by the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or two or more Elders. Notice of such meetings shall be given to each member of the Board of Elders verbally or in writing at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting. If the meeting needs to take place sooner than twenty-four (24) hours, those Elders unable to attend must submit their written approval of the meeting within thirty (30) days of the meeting or the meeting shall be considered invalid, unless they are unable to do so due to medical incapacitation.
- f. The Board of Elders shall call and hold a joint meeting with the Board of Deacons at least twice a year. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall chair the meeting.

Section 7: Number

- a. The Board of Elders shall consist of no more than thirteen (13) members.
- b. If the Board of Elders falls below three (3) members, former members of the Board of Elders, who are still qualified to serve as Elders shall be immediately considered to

serve on the Board of Elders in an interim basis. In addition, the remaining board shall immediately solicit the congregation for new candidates for Elder. The remaining board shall examine the candidates as outlined in Article III, Section 4 and present them to the congregation as Nominees. The remaining board shall call a special business meeting to vote on the Nominees. If the Board of Elders is not restored to three or more members within 90 days of the initial fall below three members, the Elders shall call a special business meeting to address the issue with the congregation.

Section 8: Terms

Elders shall be elected for up to three two-year terms. Elders are required to take a yearlong break on the seventh year.

Section 9: Removal

Following the instructions of Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19-22, if an Elder no longer meets the qualifications for Elder, becomes inactive, or demonstrates insubordination to the governance of the church, he may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation.

Article V. Board of Deacons

Section 1: Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7 list the qualifications for a Deacon. All Deacons must be members of the church and may be men or women.

Section 2: Selection

Deacons will be selected by the process outlined in Article III of these By-Laws.

Section 3: Duties

- a. Calling: Our Deacons serve by meeting the physical and material needs of the church.
- b. Support: Deacons are servant-ministers who support the work of the church and the vision and mission of the Board of Elders. Deacons allow the Board of Elders to focus on spiritual leadership with the confidence that the needs of the congregation will be met.
- c. Devotion: The Deacons are to practice personal times of devotion and prayer.
- d. Care: The Board of Deacons should set the example for loving and serving by mobilizing, ensuring, and providing direct care to the congregation. The Deacons should coordinate with the Elders to ensure that the sick, elderly, and the hospitalized receive spiritual and physical care as needed. The Deacons should assist those in need from among the congregation and from the community as appropriate.
- e. Finances: The Board of Deacons shall provide oversight of finances as outlined in Article VIII. The Board of Deacons shall receive the annual budget proposal from the Finance Ministry Team and submit a proposed budget to the Board of Elders for approval. The Board of Deacons shall faithfully communicate the financial condition of the church to the congregation. The Board of Deacons may pass budget cutbacks with Elder approval.
- f. Property: The Board of Deacons shall provide oversight of buildings and grounds. They shall ensure the maintenance, repair, and upkeep of buildings and grounds so that they meet the needs and mission of the church. They shall supervise the use of the facilities with direction from the Board of Elders.
- g. Accountability: The Board of Deacons may perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.
- h. Ministry Teams: The Board of Deacons may manage responsibilities themselves or create Ministry Teams to perform their duties as outlined in Article IX, Sections 1-2.
- i. Roles: The Board of Elders shall select the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall select all other roles, including that of Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Vice-Secretary. The Vice-Chairman will fill-in for the Chairman in his or her absence, as will the Vice-Secretary for the Secretary. The roles of Vice-Chairman and Secretary (or Vice-Secretary) may be filled by the same Deacon if needed.

Section 4: Meetings

- a. The Board of Deacons shall meet to conduct business at least once per month, at least eleven months of the year. A quorum shall be a majority of the Deacons, but not less than three.
- b. The Board of Deacons shall use the version of Robert's Rules of Order adopted by the Board of Elders.
- c. The Board of Deacons shall hold regular and special meetings as called by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons, or in the case of special meetings, by two or more Deacons.
- d. The Board of Deacons shall meet with the Board of Elders as outlined Article IV, Section 6 (e).
- e. All Deacons shall be notified verbally or in writing of every meeting, regular or special.

Section 5: Number

- a. The Board of Deacons shall consist of no more than thirteen (13) members.
- b. If the Board of Deacons falls below three (3) members, they shall immediately notify the Board of Elders.

Section 6: Terms

Deacons shall be reviewed annually and may serve up to three sequential two-year terms. Deacons are required to take a yearlong break on the seventh year.

Section 7: Removal

Following the instructions of Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19-22, if a Deacon no longer meets the qualifications for Deacon, becomes inactive, or demonstrates insubordination to the governance of the church, he or she may be removed by a majority vote of the Board of Elders or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation.

Article VI. Senior Pastor

Section 1: Qualifications

The qualifications for Senior Pastor shall include the qualifications for Elder. In addition, the Senior Pastor must be ordained previously or within one year of hiring. The Senior Pastor must have had theological training as part of training for ministry.

Section 2: Duties

- a. Preach the Scriptures (Colossians 1:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:15,24-26; 3:16-4:4; Titus 1:5-11;2:15; James 3:1)
- b. Oversee the Administration of the Ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
- c. Equip the Saints for Ministry (Ephesians 4:11-17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- d. Disciple Believers (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28-29; 2 Timothy 2:2)
- e. Shepherd the Flock (John 21:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-11)
- f. Evangelize the Lost (2 Timothy 4:5)
- g. Live an Example of Godliness (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3)
- h. Oversee weddings and funerals
- i. Supervise the Pastoral Staff as directed by the Board of Elders
- j. Supervise support staff as directed by the Board of Elders
- k. Perform other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Elders

Section 3: Pastoral Search Process

- a. Upon a vacancy of the office of Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders shall create a Pastoral Search Team. At the start of the process, the Board of Elders shall recommend two current Elders and five additional members of the church who are not currently serving on the Board of Elders to serve on the Pastoral Search Team. All seven nominees will be subject to congregational approval.
- b. The Pastoral Search Team shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Vice-Secretary from their ranks at their first meeting.
- c. If there is a vacancy in the Pastoral Search Team during the search for Senior Pastor, the Pastoral Search Team shall determine whether a replacement is required, and if so, shall recommend a replacement candidate or candidates to the Board of Elders for review. The Board of Elders may appoint members of the church to fill such vacancies until the next Annual Congregational Business Meeting, as outlined in Article III, Section

8. At no point in time shall the Pastoral Search Team operate with less than five members.
- d. The Pastoral Search Team shall take the necessary steps to secure a candidate for the vacant office. The Pastoral Search Team shall evaluate the potential candidates' spiritual gifts, doctrinal beliefs, education, ministerial abilities and experience, and family and personal life. The Pastoral Search Team reserves the right to investigate the financial and criminal background of all candidates. All deliberations prior to recommending a candidate should be strictly confidential.

Section 4: Selection of Senior Pastor

- a. The Interim Pastor, or any other individual fulfilling the duties of the Senior Pastor, must immediately cease fulfilling those duties if he applies for the position of Senior Pastor. Pastoral staff who may apply for the position shall go through the same process as all other candidates.
- b. The Pastoral Search Team shall develop a draft job description for review and approval by the Board of Elders. In coordination with the Board of Deacons, the Pastoral Search team shall develop a draft financial package for review and approval by the Board of Elders. The Pastoral Search Team should use this information to prayerfully search for appropriate candidates.
- c. Upon recommendation of its members, consisting of no more than one dissenting vote, the Pastoral Search Team shall present its candidate to the Board of Elders. Upon review and confirmation by the Board of Elders, the Pastoral Search Team shall present the candidate to the congregation.
- d. The candidate should normally be invited to visit the church for preaching and interaction with the congregation. If invited, the Pastoral Search Team should announce the date and other details of his visit at least 14 days before his arrival.
- e. Within one week after the candidate's visit, the Pastoral Search Team shall call a special business meeting to present its written recommendation to the church. A minimum two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the congregation is required for calling a Senior Pastor. If the vote is less than two-thirds (2/3), the candidate shall be so informed. The Pastoral Search Team shall then seek another candidate.
- f. Following the positive vote of the congregation, the Pastoral Search Team shall inform the candidate and send the candidate two copies of a letter, in which the terms of the call are clearly defined. The Chairman of the Pastoral Search Team and the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders shall sign the letter.
- g. The Pastoral Search Team shall be dissolved only after receiving the candidate's signature on one copy of the letter of call.
- h. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the church upon hiring. The Senior Pastor shall serve for an indefinite length of time until resignation or removal.

Section 5: Pastoral Sabbaticals

Each Pastor should be given a paid sabbatical of three to four months every seventh year. This time may be used for reading, writing, education, reflection or renewal.

Section 6: Resignation or Removal

- a. The voluntary resignation of the Senior Pastor shall be submitted to the Board of Elders in writing.
- b. A majority of the Board of Elders may request the resignation of the Senior Pastor if he no longer meets the qualifications, becomes inactive, exhibits a gross moral failure, or demonstrates insubordination to church governance. Prior to such a request, the Board of Elders shall make every effort to resolve the situation in accordance with the directives of Scripture (1 Timothy 5:19-22). If unresolved, the Elders may call a special business meeting. The charges brought against the Senior Pastor shall be presented at that meeting.
- c. The congregation may terminate the Senior Pastor's term of service by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a congregational business meeting.
- d. Once notice of resignation or removal is given, the Board of Elders shall determine the roles, procedures, and financial arrangements until termination occurs.

Article VII. Other Staff

Section 1: Additional Pastors

- a. Besides the Senior Pastor, additional Pastors may be hired to serve the mission and message of the church.
- b. Additional Pastors shall be selected and presented for a congregational vote by the Board of Elders or using the Pastoral Search Process used for selection of the Senior Pastor as outlined in Article VI, Section 3. Additional Pastors must be ordained previously or should be within three years of hiring as outlined in Article XIII. The Board of Elders should present non-ordained additional Pastors with a certificate of licensing within 90 days of hiring as outlined in Article XIII (a).
- c. Additional Pastors shall perform all duties of office in accordance with written job descriptions prepared and approved by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall designate the reporting structure for each member of the pastoral staff.
- d. During a Senior Pastor vacancy, the Board of Elders may request an existing additional Pastor to fulfill the duties of the Senior Pastor. Such assignment shall be for a fixed duration, and must end should the additional Pastor apply for the position of Senior Pastor, or upon hiring of an Interim Pastor.
- e. Additional Pastors shall become members of the church upon hiring. Additional Pastors shall serve for an indefinite length of time until resignation or removal.
- f. Additional Pastors may resign or be removed using the same Resignation or Removal Process used by the Senior Pastor as outlined in Article VI, Section 5.
- g. Additional Pastors may serve on the Deacons, Ministry Teams, and Other Teams as assigned by the Board of Elders. They shall have equal voting privileges. They may only serve as the Chairman of the team if they are directed to do so by the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Pastoral Sabbaticals

Each Pastor should be given a paid sabbatical of three months every seventh year. This time may be used for reading, writing, education, reflection or renewal.

Section 3: Church Staff

- a. Church staff, whether full or part-time, shall be hired or appointed and dismissed by the Board of Elders as outlined in Article IV, Section 5 (n).
- b. All church staff shall affirm our Articles of Faith, allowing for such exceptions as the Board of Elders approve, and shall agree to operate within our By-Laws, but are not required to become members of the church.

Section 4: Interim Pastor

- a. An Interim Pastor shall not be considered the Senior Pastor or an additional Pastor for the purpose of these By-Laws.
- b. During the vacancy of Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders may hire an Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor shall work according to the job description and reporting arrangement as determined by the Board of Elders, and shall be hired for a fixed duration of time.
- c. The Interim Pastor may be dismissed at will by majority vote of the Board of Elders.

Article VIII. Finances

Section 1: Finance Ministry Team

- a. The Finance Ministry Team shall normally include the Treasurer, Bookkeeper, and any additional individuals deemed necessary by the Board of Deacons.
- b. The Board of Deacons may assume the responsibilities of the Finance Ministry Team, including the Bookkeeper in meetings as needed.
- c. The Treasurer will be selected by the process outlined in Article III.
- d. The Bookkeeper will be hired as outlined in Article VII, Section 3.

Section 2: Finance Ministry Team Duties

- a. Monitor the income, expenses, and savings of the church, ensure sufficient funds exist, and secure adequate insurance coverage.
- b. Set spending authorizations and, in addition to the Treasurer and Bookkeeper, appoint those authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Corporation.
- c. Propose budget cutbacks to the Board of Deacons if necessary.
- d. Prepare an annual budget draft to be presented to the Board of Deacons by no later than April 1st of each year.
- e. Have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property except by a specific vote of the church membership authorizing such action.
- f. Perform other financial ministry duties as may be assigned by the Board of Deacons.

Section 3: Duties of the Treasurer

- a. Subject to the Board of Deacons, hold in trust all monies belonging to the church in the appropriate checking, savings, or other type account.
- b. Sign checks on behalf of the Corporation.
- c. Oversee the maintenance of appropriate records of all income and expenditures of the church.
- d. Ensure the regular independent reviews and audits of the church financial records in accordance with local, state and federal regulations.
- e. Work with the Bookkeeper to maintain and report adequate financial records and reports.
- f. Prepare annual financial report for presentation to the congregation.
- g. Perform duties as are usually incident to that office and as may be vested in that office as designated by the Board of Deacons.

Section 4: Duties of the Bookkeeper

- a. Subject to the direction of the Treasurer, faithfully disburse funds in accordance with the church budget, and shall keep records of the funds of the church.
- b. Sign checks on behalf of the Corporation.
- c. Assist the Treasurer in the preparation of the annual financial report and any other financial reports as needed.
- d. Provide monthly financial reports for the various ministries showing all receipts and disbursements.

Section 5: Duties of Collectors

- a. Receive all incoming monies and deposit all funds received as directed by the Treasurer.
- b. Report receipts of deposits to the Bookkeeper.
- c. Keep an accurate account of giving for each church contributor.
- d. Provide each church contributor with a periodic statement of giving in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Section 6: Duties of the Officers

- a. When authorized to act by vote of the congregation, execute and deliver legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or lease of property or other legal documents where the signatures of Officers are required.
- b. Perform such other duties as are required by the regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Section 7: Personal Contributions

- a. Only the Collectors and Church Treasurer shall access records of personal contributions, except as allowed in Article VIII, Section 7 (b).
- b. With the approval of the Board of Deacons, and under the supervision of the Church Treasurer, non-pastoral church staff and volunteers whose duties necessitate access to the financial management system, may have access to records of personal contributions after signing a non-disclosure agreement.

Section 8: Handling of Offerings

- a. The Board of Deacons shall have oversight of the weekly offering.
- b. After collection, the offering will be secured until counted.
- c. A minimum of two Collectors shall count and record offerings.

- d. Deacons or Elders, except for Pastors, may fill the role of Collector if two or more Collectors are not available.
- e. After having been counted, the Board of Deacons shall oversee the secure deposit of the offering.

Section 9. Fund Raising

All fundraising shall require the approval of the Board of Deacons.

Section 10: Borrowing

The church may not borrow money from individuals or institutions without approval of a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the church present at a congregational business meeting.

Section 11: Disposition of Assets

The property of this Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious and charitable purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of this Corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member of this Corporation or to the benefit of any private individual. Upon the winding up and dissolution of this Corporation, and after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the Corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to another non-profit organization or organizations, selected by the Board of Elders, which subscribe to the similar purposes and beliefs as are contained in our Constitution and By-Laws, organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes, and which has established and maintained its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Law of 1986, as amended (the "Internal Revenue Code") or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue Law.

Section 12: Financial Review

The Board of Elders and/or Board of Deacons may request an independent review of the financial records of the church at any time, with a minimum of one independent review per year.

Article IX. Ministry Teams

Section 1: Creation

- a. The Board of Elders may create ministry teams as needed. The Board of Elders will determine their responsibilities, accountability, and duration.
- b. The Board of Deacons may also create ministry teams as approved by the Board of Elders. Ministry Teams may assist the Board of Deacons in their responsibilities as outlined in these By-Laws or assigned by the Board of Elders. The Board of Deacons will determine their responsibilities, accountability, and duration.
- c. The Board of Elders shall have final authority over the Board of Deacons, every ministry team, and all other teams (see Article IV, Section 5, g-h).

Section 2: Accountability

- a. Each ministry team shall have one Elder liaison or Deacon liaison who may or may not serve as an active voting-member of the team. The supervising board will select the liaison from their own number who shall act as a communication conduit between the ministry team and the board that oversees them.
- b. The supervising board shall define each team's responsibilities in a written ministry description. Each ministry team shall strive to achieve the vision and mission of the church while at the same time having freedom to express new ideas and creativity.

Section 3: Population

- a. The supervising board shall appoint the Chairman (team lead) of the ministry team. The Chairman and liaison shall populate the ministry team. See Article IX, Section 3 (b) for exception.
- b. The Board of Deacons shall populate the finance ministry team as outlined in Article VIII, Section 1.
- c. Other than the Chairman, additional ministry team members do not require approval by the supervising board, unless otherwise decided by the team's supervising board.
- d. All ministry team members shall affirm our Articles of Faith, allowing for such exceptions as the Board of Elders approve.
- e. The Board of Elders should review the membership of each ministry team annually.

Section 4: Meetings

Ministry teams will typically meet once a month and should have no more than a two-month gap between meetings. Ministry teams shall hold regular and special meetings as called by the Chairman (team lead) of the ministry team, or in the case of special meetings, by two or more members of the team. All ministry team members should be notified verbally or in writing of every meeting.

Section 5: Budgets

Ministry teams shall normally submit an annual budget request to the finance ministry team for expenditures no later than March 15th of each year. Once approved, each team should spend their budget as needed, monitor expenditures, adhere to the approved budget, and abide by any budget cutbacks as necessary.

Section 6: Procedures

- a. The ministry team Chairman (team lead) must be a member of the church.
- b. Each ministry team must have a minimum of three members, one of whom may be the Elder or Deacon liaison. If a ministry team does not have three members, they shall notify their supervising board who shall assist them in populating the team.
- c. The Chairman (team lead) is responsible for calling regular meetings, deciding what goes on the agenda, preparing and providing the agenda to all team-members before the meeting, and facilitating the meeting and discussion. The Chairman is not the decision-maker; but rather, helps the team make decisions as moderator.
- d. The ministry team should make decisions together, each team-member having equal vote. The ministry team may also empower individuals to make decisions or take actions on their behalf, as long as they are acting under the oversight of the ministry team. Business should normally be made in-meeting with allowances made by the ministry team for business done between meetings.
- e. Each ministry team should use the version of Robert's Rules of Order adopted by the Board of Elders; or they may use the abbreviated version of Robert's Rules of Order.
- f. Each ministry team shall have a Secretary, and if available, a Vice-Chairman and Vice-Secretary. The roles of Vice-Chairman and Secretary (or Vice-Secretary) may be filled by the same member of the team.
- g. The secretary shall record the meeting minutes, distribute the minutes to the team for approval, and maintain appropriate records.
- h. Each ministry team should provide meeting minutes to the supervising board within 60 days of the meeting and to the Recording Secretary of the Corporation.
- i. Each ministry team shall provide all team-approved documents or revisions to the supervising board. If needed, the ministry team should request review and approval.
- j. Each ministry team shall normally prepare a written report prior to the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

Section 7: Terms and Removal

- a. Each member of the ministry team, including the Chairman, may serve for up to six consecutive years and may return to the ministry team after a one-year break.

- b. Any member of a ministry team may be removed by a minimum two-thirds (2/3) vote of the team and subsequent approval by the supervising board.
- c. The supervising board may remove any member of a ministry team.

Section 8: Other Teams

- a. The Board of Elders and Board of Deacons may also create other ad-hoc teams as needed to assist them in their responsibilities as outlined in these By-Laws or assigned by the Board of Elders.
- b. The Board of Elders and Board of Deacons shall determine how ad-hoc teams shall function.
- c. Ministry teams may create ad-hoc teams with approval of the supervising board.

Article X. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall start on July 1st, and end on June 30th.

Article XI. Church Affiliations

Any proposed organizational affiliation with local, regional or national church groups, conferences, or denominations must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active membership present at a congregational business meeting. General church listings, such as in an online directory, only need approval of the Board of Elders.

Article XII. Licensing and Ordination

- a. The calling of all non-ordained pastoral staff to serve the church shall constitute approval for licensing. The Board of Elders should present such pastoral staff with a certificate of licensing within 90 days of hiring.
- b. The Board of Elders shall have authority to license any members of the church who show both internal and external evidence of a divine call to the ministry. Such evidence shall include an exemplary Christian life and faith, appropriate spiritual gifting, and may include a demonstration of teaching or preaching. Licensing shall be for one year and may be renewed annually.
- c. The congregation shall have authority to ordain any of its members who give evidence of a divine call to the ministry. Such members shall normally have been licensed for at least one year or have successfully completed a seminary education or its equivalent. The decision to begin the ordination process shall be approved the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will then invite a council of ministers and lay members from like-minded churches to examine the beliefs and qualifications of the candidate. If the council recommends ordination, a congregational business meeting will be called to vote upon their recommendation. A candidate receiving at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote shall be considered ordained. The Board of Elders shall then plan an ordination service.
- d. The Board of Elders may accept and recognize a Pastor or other individual's prior ordination credentials by a vote of the Board of Elders.

Article XIII. Church Planting

- a. Cornerstone Congregational Church may elect to plant a new church with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the church present at a congregational business meeting.
- b. Cornerstone's Board of Elders may appoint a Church Plant Board of Elders to oversee the new church plant until it becomes legally autonomous and financially independent. The Cornerstone Board of Elders shall oversee the Church Plant Board of Elders.

Article XIV. Indemnification

- a. Except as otherwise prohibited by state or federal law governing non-profit organizations to the extent that a person who is, or was, an Officer, Elder, Deacon, Pastor, employee or

other agent of this Corporation (collectively referred to herein as the “Corporation’s agent”) has been successful on the merits in defense of any civil, criminal, administrative or investigative proceeding that resulted in a judgment against the Corporation’s agent because he or she is, or was, an agent of the Corporation, the Corporation shall indemnify such person against expenses actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the proceeding.

- b. If a Corporation’s agent either settles such a claim or a judgment is entered against him or her, then the Corporation shall indemnify him or her against expenses, judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts reasonably incurred in connection with such proceedings only to the extent allowed by Massachusetts Nonprofit Corporation Law.
- c. The Corporation shall defend and hold harmless a Corporation’s agent from and against any and all claims arising from or in any way related to property with which the Corporation is involved in any way; and/or any acts, omissions, or the conduct of any of the Corporation’s agents. The Corporation shall further indemnify, defend and hold harmless a Corporation’s agent from and against all costs, attorney fees, expenses and liabilities incurred in the defense of any such claim or proceeding.
- d. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there shall be no indemnification in relation to matters in which the Elders or Deacons, collectively and/or individually, is/are “interested Directors” or are adjudged to have acted in bad faith; fraud; gross negligence; intentional, wanton, or reckless acts; oppression or malice; or in willful breach of authority, duties and responsibilities; or upon determination or proceedings brought by the State Attorney General, involving situations of unlawful self-dealing or conflict of interest transactions.
- e. The Corporation’s agents shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the Corporation.

Article XV. Conflict of Interest

- a. Each agent of the Corporation shall, in the course of his or her duties on behalf of the Corporation, act with strict loyalty and fidelity to the best interests of the Corporation, exercise the utmost good faith in all matters and transactions involving the Corporation, and adhere to the highest ethical standards of fiduciary duty to the Corporation.
- b. Each agent of the Corporation shall endeavor to avoid, to the best of his or her ability, any situation which may compromise his or her duty to the Corporation personally because of a duality or conflict of interest with any other entity or person with which the agent may be involved; and each agent shall endeavor to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest which may have an adverse effect on the Corporation.
 1. Duty of Full Disclosure. An agent shall disclose relationships and interests which may present a conflict of interest or a self-dealing transaction in writing to the Board of Elders immediately when the relationship is formed or upon the agent’s discovery of the potentially conflicting interests. Disclosure shall occur when the personal interests of the agent (or member of his or her family) could affect the activities, property, employees, or services of the Corporation or involve any matter

potentially requiring action by the Board, a Committee or an Officer exercising powers delegated by the Board.

2. All disclosed information shall be maintained in confidence by the Board. The Board shall provide access to financial information, if any, related to the disclosed relationships or transactions only to those persons who have a reasonable need to know the contents thereof.
 3. Recusal. When an agent has a direct or indirect financial interest in a proposed transaction, the agent shall be recused (leave the room) and shall not participate in the deliberations on the merits of the proposal or vote.
- c. The Board of Elders shall consider and evaluate each potential conflict of interest and/or self-dealing transaction disclosed in light of the Internal Revenue Code (“IRC”) standards for, and prohibitions of, self-dealing and private inurement, and the requirements of the Massachusetts Corporations Code. The Board shall appoint or authorize such transactions, if at all, only in good faith and without unjustified favoritism, provided that the primary beneficiary of the transaction is the Corporation.

Article XVI. Amendments to By-Laws

Section 1: Meetings to Amend By-Laws

These By-Laws may be amended at any congregational business meeting provided the procedures in the next section are followed.

Section 2: Amendment Procedures

- a. The proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the Board of Elders and approved by them, or may be presented to the church by the written request of at least one-third (1/3) of the members of the church or at least ten (10) members of the church, whichever is smaller.
- b. The content of the proposed changes shall be published in writing 30 days prior to the congregational business meeting.
- c. Notification of the proposed amendment shall be announced from the pulpit for the two consecutive weekends preceding the congregational business meeting in which it is to be voted upon.
- d. Final approval shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the members of the church present, provided there is a quorum of one-third (1/3) of the membership eligible to vote present at that meeting.

Section 3: Adoption of Restated By-Laws

The adoption of restated By-Laws will supersede and render null and void any previous By-Laws of the church.

Article XVIII. Theological Positions

Section 1: Church Accountability and Freedom

- a. We believe that every human being is ultimately responsible to God alone. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- b. We hold this church to be independent and autonomous, free from any interference by external ecclesiastical or political authority. (1 Timothy 2:5)
- c. We believe that like-minded local churches can help promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another by prioritizing fellowship, mutual accountability, and a unified witness. (John 13:35)

Section 2: Marriage and Human Sexuality

All Pastors, Elders, and Deacons shall affirm and uphold a biblical definition of marriage and human sexuality, meaning, God created marriage to be between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman; therefore, this is the only good and acceptable relationship to express and experience sexual intimacy (Genesis 2:18, 21-25, Matthew 19:4-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Timothy 1:9-10).