

# BYLAWS

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## **FIRST CHURCH OF GOD, DALLAS, TEXAS**

### **Article I. ORGANIZATION**

#### Section 1. Name:

The name of this Corporation shall be “First Church of God, Dallas, Texas” and may use alternate “doing business as” (d/b/a) names as recommended by the Elders and confirmed by an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the Members present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church.

#### Section 2. Definitions:

Whenever the word “Church” is used in these Bylaws or their Amendments, it shall signify the non-profit Corporation organized under the laws of the State of Texas.

The phrase “a vote of the Church” or any similar phrase shall mean a vote of the members comprising the Church who are qualified to vote at any legally convened meeting at which a quorum is present.

Whenever the words “the Elders” are used in these Bylaws or their Amendments, they shall signify the Board of Elders of the non-profit Corporation organized under the laws of the State of Texas.

Whenever the word “Pastor” is used, it shall refer to an Elder whose calling by God and gifts of preaching and teaching have been confirmed by the church, and is actively serving the Church in the role of pastor.

#### Section 3. Standard of Faith and Practice:

The Church recognizes the Word of God as the only divine standard of faith and practice, and as the highest authority in all matters of life and conduct to which it speaks.

#### Section 4. Affiliation:

The Church maintains fellowship with the General Assembly of the Church of God, with national offices located in Anderson, Indiana, and supports the basic tenets of this movement in the quest for holiness, unity of believers and effective witness in the world.

### **Article II. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Church of God has taken the position from the beginning that creeds have the inherent danger of limiting the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) which is found in Scripture. The entire Bible, then, is our rule of faith and practice as illumined by the Holy Spirit. All doctrinal statements, or statements of faith, or statements about the beliefs of the Church (such as web-site explanations) will be subject to the above qualification.

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### Article III. PURPOSE

#### Section 1. General:

The general purpose of this Church shall be to carry out as fully as possible the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ, who made the Church:

- To be His earthly body
- To witness for Him in our community and to the fullest extent possible throughout the world
- To observe His ordinances
- To build up His people in spiritual grace

#### Section 2. Ministry:

The ministry purposes of the Church are:

- To worship God with heart, mind and soul.  
Worship is sought by God; therefore, give Him honor and glory privately and corporately. John 4:23-24.
- To teach God's Word as the rule of faith and practice of the Church.  
True Christians are hearers and doers of the Word. James 1:22.
- To make disciples as spiritual gifts are exercised.  
Through equipping and ministry of gifts, the Body of Christ, in its individual members and corporately, is to grow up into Him who is the Head, Jesus Christ. Eph. 4:13.
- To evangelize as empowered by the Holy Spirit.  
Share the good news of Jesus Christ with all men, in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that they might believe and be saved. Acts 1:8.
- To meet needs as a demonstration of the compassion of Jesus.  
Jesus ministered by healing the sick, comforting the broken-hearted, caring for the poor, and releasing the oppressed. Luke 4:18-19.
- To seek justice as a prophetic voice.  
The Church must speak prophetically and act courageously for righteousness and against evil in persons and in segments of society. Romans 12:9-21.

#### Section 3. Business:

The Corporation, as organized under these Bylaws, is responsible to guide and facilitate the business activities of this Church, including:

- The acquiring and holding of real estate;
- The collecting and disbursing of money;
- The appointing and directing of boards and committees to conduct the activities of this Church.

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The First Church of God, Dallas, Texas Corporation reserves the right to restrict the use of all properties owned from any event or program judged by the Board of Elders to be at odds with the mission or teachings of the congregation and/or with the Church of God movement (Anderson, IN), represented formally by the actions of the movement's General Assembly in North America. The Church shall maintain an official policy manual that defines acceptable use of the properties, building(s), and grounds.

### **Article IV. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1. General:**

Membership in this Church shall be open to born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who take the Scriptures as their rule of faith and practice and who choose to associate themselves with this body of believers.

All Members of this fellowship are expected to conduct their lives according to the standard set forth in the Scriptures. Such conduct includes moral purity (I Cor. 6:18-20; I Thess. 4:1-7), personal integrity (Eph. 4:25), biblical fidelity (Jude 20-21; II Tim. 3:14-17), baptism according to the example and ordinance of Christ (Matt. 3:15, 28:19), and harmony and unity in the Body (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:12-17; I Pet. 3:8-9).

Members' lives are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity (I John 1:6-7), emulating the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:15-21; II Pet. 1:5-8).

#### **Section 2. Discipline of Members:**

Should any Member willfully depart from this scriptural standard and engage in conduct which conflicts with biblical principles for godly living and service, the procedure set forth in Matt. 18:15-16 shall be followed for the purpose of leading the erring individual to repentance and ultimately to full restoration. This shall be done in a spirit of humility and gentleness (Gal. 6:1) as well as loving honesty (Eph. 4:25). If after these steps of reproof are taken and there is no repentance, at least two Elders shall confront, counsel and pray with the person. Should there still be no evidence of repentance, the erring Member's sin(s) shall be told to the Church. If the Member refuses to listen even to the Church, the Church (as instructed in Matthew 18:17 and I Cor. 5:9-13) shall not continue to associate with the person concerned, and all rights of membership as provided in these Bylaws shall be withdrawn from the person for a period of not less than one (1) year.

#### **Section 3. Withdrawal of Membership:**

Withdrawal of membership shall be decided upon by the Elders for the following reasons:

- (a) Conduct unfitting for a Christian and refusal to respond appropriately to discipline as outlined in Section 2 of this Article. The reasons for such action shall be stated in a pastoral letter to the person concerned.
- (b) Lack of interest in the ministry of this Church for a period of one (1) year and no response to a written inquiry.

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- (c) Voluntary withdrawal of membership by written or electronic notice to the Church office.

### Section 4. Right to Vote:

The right to vote at business meetings shall be reserved for active Members who meet all of the following criteria:

- (a) Meet the qualifications contained in Section 1 of this Article.
- (b) Have worshipped regularly with this body of believers for the preceding six (6) months.
- (c) Have reached the age of sixteen (16) years or older.
- (d) Have completed a course of orientation to this Church.

### Section 5. Voter Roster:

The Church shall maintain a roster of those Members eligible to vote. The roster shall be updated and posted prior to each Annual Meeting and Special Meeting.

### Section 6. Membership Requirement for Positions of Responsibility:

All officers, teachers, members of any committee, or any other position of responsibility with the Church or its organizations shall normally be required to meet the qualifications set out in Section 4 of this Article. Exceptions may be allowed only with the prior approval of the Elders.

## **Article V. GOVERNMENT**

### Section 1. Self-government

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. As a self-governing body, the Church shall delegate its general oversight function and authority to Elders chosen from among its Members. "They shall tend the flock of God that is in their charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in their charge but as being examples to the flock." I Pet. 5:2-3.

### Section 2. Officers

The legal corporation entity, First Church of God, Dallas, Texas, shall have at a minimum four corporate officers, as follows: one Chairman, one Vice Chairman, one Secretary, and one Treasurer. Other Directors of the Corporation may be named by the Board of Elders as necessary. The Corporate Board Chairman shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders and the Corporate Board Vice Chairman shall be the Vice Chairman of the Board of Elders. The Secretary and the Treasurer may be Elders, but are not required to be. The Corporate Board of Directors shall serve in the legal capacity for management of the corporation as required by laws of the State of Texas and all applicable US law.

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- (a) The Elders shall elect annually a Chairman from among themselves who shall serve as the senior administrative officer of the Church, to preside over meetings of the Elders and over congregational business meetings.
- (b) The Elders shall elect annually a Vice-Chairman from among themselves who shall act for the Chairman when necessary.
- (c) The Elders shall appoint a Secretary of the Corporation who shall keep minutes and maintain order in meetings of the Elders and congregational business meetings. The Secretary is not required to be an Elder.
- (d) The Elders shall appoint a Treasurer who shall oversee the finances of the Corporation. The Treasurer may be terminated at the Elders' discretion. The Treasurer is not required to be an Elder. The Treasurer shall serve as the chairman of the Finance and Facilities Committee.

### **Article VI. ELDERS**

#### **Section 1. Membership**

The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of five members, with a preference of seven to ten members. All pastors (defined as an employee of the Church and serving the role of "pastor") shall be Elders. Each non-staff Elder shall be ratified by the congregation for a three year term, and may serve no more than two full terms consecutively, which allows for serving one partial term and one full term. An Elder may serve a subsequent term after taking a minimum of one year "Sabbath rest." The Board of Elders must include a majority of non-compensated, or non-staff, Elders. If necessary to balance terms, an Elder may be nominated and ratified to serve a shorter term than three years.

#### **Section 2. Responsibilities:**

- (a) Give spiritual oversight and direction to the Church, advising the pastoral staff in matters of coordinating and implementing church ministry, program, and function, including stating the doctrinal position of the Church.
- (b) Work directly with the pastoral staff in maintaining the overall direction and focus of the Church, reviewing, refining, and approving the Church's ministry-emphasis. The Elders shall also establish policy as is appropriate to maintain the direction and focus of the Church.
- (c) Receive the recommendation from the personnel committee for all pastoral staff positions and will, if approved, submit the candidate to the congregation for approval as required by the Bylaws.
- (d) Appoint new Elders as needed and present them for confirmation by the Church.
- (e) Serve with the pastoral staff in maintaining communication, harmony, and unity in Christ's body through prayer, care, and conversation.
- (f) Assist in resolving problems submitted by the pastoral staff, providing church discipline along scriptural guidelines as may be required.

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- (g) Serve in areas of pastoral care with any Church family member with prayer, discernment, advice, correction, and concern on matters that influence the immediate spiritual needs of the Church, especially during times of transition.
- (h) Approve nominees suggested by the Personnel Committee for presentation to the congregation at the annual meeting for ratification to serve on the Board of Elders.
- (i) Establish Elder-appointed committees and subcommittees, and approve members thereof. A designated Elder shall also serve on all Elder-appointed committees and subcommittees regarding finance, facilities, missions, and personnel. For all other committees and/or subcommittees, the Elders may serve at their discretion
- (j) Review and approve, with revision if so desired, the recommendation of the Personnel Committee regarding all staff salaries for presentation to the Finance & Facilities Committee for inclusion in the annual budget.
- (k) Approve the minutes of all annual and special business meetings of the church at the first regular meeting of the board following each annual or special business meeting.
- (l) Receive and approve the proposed budget from the Finance & Facilities Committee and present it to the congregation for approval at the annual business meeting. Authorize expenditure of all monies belonging to the Church, in accordance with the approved budget and within the limits of spending authority delegated to pastoral and administrative staff. Any expenditure outside of the approved budget shall be reported at a legally convened meeting of the Church.
- (m) Review and advise the Missions Committee on the annual budget for Missions, prior to the presentation of the budget at the annual meeting. The Elders shall determine what portion of the general budget will be provided to the Missions Committee for disbursement.
- (n) Commission ministry staff serving in the Church that are not licensed or ordained. The commissioning shall be accomplished in accordance with Biblical standards and with existing Church policy.
- (o) Ratify or decline candidates recommended by the Personnel Committee for ministry positions or for senior-level administrative positions.
- (p) Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board of Elders may be taken without a meeting if all members of the board consent to the action in writing, and the written consent is filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the board, committee or subcommittee. The Board may make decisions and vote on actions through electronic means, such as email, provided all correspondence and votes are properly recorded with the official minutes of the Board.
- (q) Attend to the spiritual and scriptural purity, peace and well-being of the Church.
- (r) Review and advise selection of ministry leaders within the Church.
- (s) Convene the Annual Meeting of the Church and Special Meetings of the Church as needed.

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### Section 3. Meetings and Attendance

- (a) The Board of Elders will meet a minimum of four times a year, at least one time per calendar quarter.
- (b) Attendance at meetings is mandatory except for a valid reason communicated to the chairperson prior to the meeting.
- (c) Elders who also serve on a committee or sub-committee are expected to attend every meeting of the committee or sub-committee when possible.

### Section 4. Qualifications

- (a) Meet the qualifications of membership in the church as stated in Article IV Section 1, and be approved by the sitting Board of Elders using I Timothy 3:1-13 as a biblical basis for leadership qualities.
- (b) Serve in a wide range of leadership experiences and be active within the Church's ministry (e.g. church committees, Sunday School, small groups, or other areas that show servant leadership), demonstrating the discipline, vision, wisdom, discernment, servanthood, and spiritual maturity needed for such an assignment.
- (c) Worship consistently at the Church for at least three (3) years.
- (d) Demonstrate faithful financial partnership with this Church.
- (e) Hold in highest regard the elected and appointed leadership of the Church as well as the church staff so as to exemplify the servanthood of Christ.

### Section 5. Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring on this board amongst members shall be filled by appointment of the remaining members of the Board of Elders. This appointment shall be until the next annual business meeting of the Church, at which time the voting members of the Church shall ratify the appointed individual(s) for the balance of the term(s).

### Section 6. Compensation

The Church shall not pay any compensation to the Elders for their services. Upon resolution of the board, the Church may reimburse Elders for the actual and reasonable expenses incurred in attending any meeting of the board or of any committee or sub-committee.

### Section 7. Accusations against an Elder:

No accusation shall be brought against an Elder except on the testimony of two or three voting Members of the Church (I Tim. 5:19-21). Any accusation brought against an Elder must first be submitted in writing to the Elders for their consideration. A special meeting of the Elders shall be called for the purpose of reviewing both written and oral testimony and for considering the qualifications of the Elder. The Elder whose status is being considered shall have the right to be present at the meeting, but shall not sit as an Elder at that meeting. He shall be notified in writing prior to the meeting of the nature of the accusations against him and be afforded the opportunity to comment in person and in writing to the Elders prior to the



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confirmation vote. If he so desires, he may be accompanied by another Church Member of his own choosing, to assist him in any presentation to the Elders and to witness the discussion. Within thirty (30) days from such meeting, the Elders shall vote to confirm or revoke such Elder's appointment. Confirmation shall be accomplished by a two-thirds vote of the other Elders.

### Section 8. Elder-Appointed Committees/Boards

The Elders may appoint necessary committees and/or sub-committees, including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) **FINANCE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

- (i) The Finance and Facilities Committee is responsible for the oversight of the business management of the Church based upon input from staff with job responsibilities to work with the committee. (The staff may serve as ex-officio members of this committee, with no right to vote.) The duties of the committee shall include, but not be limited to, the oversight of finances, the approval of financial policies/procedures relating to the church business operation, the preparation of an annual budget, and the approval of policies/procedures relating to the church building and grounds. The Committee shall submit the annual budget to the Board of Elders for approval and to the Church for ratification.
- (ii) The Finance and Facilities Committee shall annually appoint two (2) members of the Committee, and the Corporate Treasurer to be eligible to sign checks issued by the church.
- (iii) The Committee will appoint from its membership and/or the congregation those who are qualified to serve on any necessary special subcommittees with the approval of the board of Elders.

(b) **MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

- (i) The Missions Committee shall be responsible to oversee all mission efforts of the church. This oversight shall include, but not be limited to, the distribution of the amount of funds approved by the Board of Elders; the annual faith promise missions budget preparation, publication, and implementation; the approval, planning, and publicizing of all church-sponsored missions trips; and the review of requests from individuals or organizations seeking missions support.
- (ii) The committee will appoint from its membership and/or the congregation, subject to Board of Elder approval, those who are qualified to serve on various subcommittees deemed necessary by the committee to insure a strong and effective missions program.
- (iii) The committee shall annually submit its proposed budget to the Board of Elders for approval prior to the new missions year. Mid-year changes to the approved missions budget shall be reported to the Board of Elders prior to implementing the changes.

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(c) PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- (i) The responsibility of the Personnel Committee is to recommend to the Board of Elders policy and procedures related to the church staff. It shall also perform annual salary reviews of the Church staff, recommending annual salaries/pay rates to the Board of Elders for inclusion in each annual budget.
- (ii) The Personnel Committee shall also work cooperatively with the Board of Elders to interview and recommend candidates to the Elders for ministry and senior-level administrative staff positions.

### Article VII. PASTORS

Section 1. Responsibilities:

General areas of ministry responsibility for each Pastor shall be determined by the Elders. Each Pastor shall be responsible for the following within their assigned area of responsibility:

- (a) Presenting to the Elders proposals for accomplishing the vision of the church.
- (b) Working with Ministry Leaders, administrative staff and members of the church to implement agreed upon proposals.

Section 2. Qualifications

- (a) Any candidate for the position of Pastor shall satisfy the qualifications for an Elder set forth in Article VI, Section 4, except as to the membership requirement.
- (b) Any candidate for the position of Pastor shall be an ordained Pastor in good standing with the General Assembly of the Church of God (Anderson) or there shall be a reasonable expectation that ordination will be accomplished in a timely manner.

Section 3. Selection:

- (a) The Personnel Committee shall interview and recommend candidates for the position of "Pastor" to the Elders.
- (b) The Elders will consider the recommendation(s) from the Personnel Committee and, upon a unanimous affirmative vote, submit a recommendation to the Church.
- (c) Upon an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church, an invitation to serve as Pastor shall be extended to the candidate.

Section 4. Accusations against a Pastor:

No accusation shall be brought against a Pastor except on the testimony of two or three (2 or 3) voting Members of the Church (I Tim. 5:19-21). The procedure to be followed is that stated with regard to an accusation against an Elder in Article VI, Section 7.

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### Section 5. Term of Appointment

The tenure of each Pastor shall normally be indefinite. Any Pastor may dissolve the relationship with the Church upon at least ninety (90) days notice in writing to the Elders. The ninety-day period may, however, be altered by mutual consent of the Pastor and the Elders. The Church shall be informed of any actions taken.

In the case of a staff intern, or an interim Pastor, the term of appointment should be explicitly stated in the terms of service agreed to, in accordance with Section 6 of this Article.

### Section 6. Terms of Service:

The terms of service of each Pastor shall be clearly set forth in a written agreement established by the Elders. Any revisions to this written agreement shall be at the discretion of the Elders.

### Section 7. Termination:

An appeal for the termination of appointment of a Pastor may be made (after compliance with Section 4 of this Article, and Article VIII, Section 3 of these Bylaws) by one of the following:

- (a) A petition calling for termination signed by a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the eligible voting Members of the Church and submitted to the Elders.
- (b) The unanimous decision by the Elders to recommend such termination.
- (c) The appointment of a Pastor may be terminated by the agreed vote of a minimum of one-third (1/3) of the eligible voting members of the Church. In such event, the Pastor's final compensation and severance package will be negotiated according to his terms of service and the specific circumstances surrounding the termination.

## **Article VIII. MEETINGS**

### Section 1. General:

The legally convened meetings of the Church shall be the Annual Meeting and Special Meetings.

- (a) The date of any meeting shall be fixed by the Elders, and all Church Members shall be notified of the date and place of meeting at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be deemed given when a public announcement has been made at a regular service of the Church on two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting and a written notice has been publicly displayed for two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.
- (b) For business to be transacted at meetings of the Church, a quorum of thirty three percent (33%) of the voting membership must be present.
- (c) Meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Elders or by the Vice-Chairman in his absence.

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- (d) Voting shall be by written ballot, except for procedural and courtesy voting, which shall be by voice vote or a show of hands.

### Section 2. Annual Meeting:

- (a) The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held in the first month of the fiscal year at a time and place to be set by the Elders. The order of business shall be determined in advance and posted with the Annual Meeting Notification.
- (b) In the event of any question in a business meeting regarding procedure that is not covered in these Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.
- (c) Members desiring to submit items of new business for consideration may submit a written request to the Elders at least one (1) month prior to the Annual Meeting. The introduction of additional business from the floor at the time of the meeting requires an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting.

### Section 3. Special Meetings:

A Special Meeting may be called by one of the following:

- (a) A petition signed by a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the eligible voting members of the Church, submitted to the Elders, calling for a Special Meeting, and outlining the business to be conducted. Only after prior written notification to the Elders may a petition be circulated among the members. The Elders shall have a reasonable period of time, not less than thirty (30) days, to consider the issue and to try to resolve the issue with the concerned members.
- (b) The unanimous decision of the Elders to call for a Special Meeting and outlining the business to be conducted.
- (c) Notification of the meeting shall be in accordance with Section 1 of this Article, and the business to be conducted at the meeting must be announced. No business other than that stated in the notice of the meeting shall be transacted.

### Section 4. Actions Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote:

The following actions are required by these Bylaws to take effect upon an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church.

- (a) Confirmation of Elders
- (b) Appointment of Pastors
- (c) Introduction of additional business at a meeting of Church
- (d) Approval of the budget
- (e) Property transactions
- (f) Amendments to the Bylaws
- (g) Changes to the "Doing Business As" (d/b/a) name(s) of the Church

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All other actions take effect upon an affirmative majority vote, except the termination of a Pastor as provided for in Article VII, Section 7.

### Section 5. Absentee Balloting

- (a) Absentee ballots will be allowed when an item of business is to be voted on by a simple “yes” or “no” ballot or when a resolution has been publicly posted, provided that it is not significantly amended during the meeting.
- (b) Members having the right to vote on such a matter at a meeting which they are unable to attend, may cast their vote by personally submitting a signed ballot to an Elder at any time prior to the “Call to Order” of the meeting.
- (c) Any voting Member of the Church who submits a signed absentee ballot in accordance with the conditions of this Section shall be considered “present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church” for which the absentee ballot is allowed.

## **Article IX. FISCAL MATTERS**

### Section 1. Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year of the Church shall correspond to the calendar year.

### Section 2. Budget Approval:

At the Annual Meeting, the Elders shall recommend to the Church a proposed budget for the coming year. This shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those Members present and voting. Should the budget not be approved, the Elders shall solicit comments from the Members and submit a new budget at a Special Meeting convened for that purpose.

### Section 3. Property Transactions:

The sale or purchase of real estate or any change in property deeding provisions shall require an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the Members present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church.

## **Article X. AMENDMENTS**

### Section 1. General:

Amendments to these Bylaws may be initiated by:

- (a) A petition detailing the proposed changes, signed by a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the voting Members of the Church, and presented to the Elders in accordance with Article VIII, Section 3.
- (b) A proposal detailing the recommended changes, by unanimous decision of the Elders.

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**Section 2. Notification:**

Notification shall be given to the Church about any Annual or Special Meeting at which Amendments are to be acted upon, and said notification shall contain a full description of the proposed changes.

**Section 3. Vote Required:**

These Bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be invoked, amended, suspended, or repealed by the affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the Members present and voting at a legally convened meeting of the Church.