

BY-LAWS of FELICITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

847 State Route 133
Felicity, OH 45120

Established April 7, 1968

First Amendment: December 6, 1970
Second Amendment: December 4, 1977
Third Amendment: January 22, 1978
Fourth Amendment: December 1, 1991
Fifth Amendment: December 4, 2005
Sixth Amendment: December 3, 2017

PREAMBLE

These rules and regulations presuppose that the Bible alone constitutes the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the Church. These by-laws, therefore, intentionally avoid invading the realm of matters of faith. They are concerned with the realm of the permissive and are designed to aid the congregation in managing her affairs with decency and order.

ARTICLE I: NAME

For business and legal purposes the name of this congregation shall be FELICITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in this Church requires that people respond to the plan of salvation as set forth in the Bible. Salvation is promised to those who respond to God's grace by placing their faith in Jesus as God's one and only Son (*Ephesians 2:8-10*), repenting of their sins (*Luke 13:5*), confessing their faith (*Romans 10:10*), and being baptized (immersed) into Christ (*Acts 2:38*).
- B. Membership in our Church also requires that a person believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and will endeavor to live according to the teachings of scripture (*II Timothy 3:16-17*).
- C. Membership is attained either by being baptized at our Church, or by having an immersed believer respond to the invitation by coming forward to transfer his/her membership into our congregation.

ARTICLE III: MARRIAGE & HUMAN SEXUALITY

Marriage:

Marriage has been instituted by God (*Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5*). This Church defines *marriage* as the exclusive covenantal union of a man and a woman in which such union is a lifelong covenant or sacrament. Marriage and its union is the divine blessing of the bride and groom as they exchange vows while God receives the worship of the congregation as they witness those vows and as they offer Him prayer and praise.

A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the Church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage as described throughout Article III.

Human Sexuality:

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual relations outside of marriage including, but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation, distribution or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the Biblical witness.

Qualifications:

Every minister, elder, deacon, trustee, or employee shall affirm their agreement with Article III and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite and continual condition for holding these positions.

Policy:

Marriage is a union ordained by God. It was first instituted by God in the early chapters of Genesis, codified in the Levitical law. The Old Testament prophets compared marriage to a relationship between God and His people. Examples of it are in the historical narratives, and the Bible discusses the unique unity of this relationship. Jesus explained the original intention and core elements of marriage (*Matthew 19:5*). Marriage is a foundational core of Christ and the Church. As such, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution established by God. Due to the importance of marriage in the Biblical witness, this church adopts the following policy.

A. CEREMONY

Within this Church, a marriage ceremony shall consist of one man and one woman, include scriptural reading, prayer, spiritual admonition by minister(s), and recitation of vows. In view of these elements, a marriage ceremony shall be deemed a form of religious liturgy of the Christian faith.

B. MINISTER(S)

1. Only duly ordained Ministers shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on Church property.
2. Ministers employed by the Church shall be subject to dismissal or loss of ordination for officiating a marriage ceremony for a union that is inconsistent with the definition of *marriage* as defined in Article III.

C. APPLICANTS

1. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a minister(s) employed by the Church, or to use the facilities for a ceremony, must fall within the definition of *marriage* as defined in Article III. Besides the general definition of *marriage*, the Church has other teachings on marriage that may impact the availability of use of Church facilities for applicants, e.g., prior marriages, marrying outside of the faith, potential fraud. These issues will be explored during premarital counseling.
2. Applicants shall receive Pastoral guidance by minister(s) or counselors employed by the Church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the Pastoral staff of the Church, have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such guidance.

D. PREMISES

1. Any marriage performed on Church premises shall be officiated by ministers employed by the Church; however, in limited circumstances ministers from outside the Church may officiate marriage ceremonies, but must have prior approval of the Elders.
2. Any Minister(s) officiating marriage ceremonies on Church premises, whether or not employed by the Church, shall affirm their agreement with the definition of marriage and this Church's ceremony requirements in Article III and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

Policy of the By-Laws may, in the Minister's sole discretion, decline to make Church facilities available for, or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in the Minister's judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for doctrinal, moral, legal or other reasons.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Section I *Place*

All congregational meetings shall be held on the Church campus: 847 State Route 133, Felicity, OH 45120.

Section II *Annual Meeting of the Members of the Congregation*

- A. The annual congregational meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in December corresponding closely with the beginning of the Church's new fiscal year that starts on December 1 of each year.
- B. The purpose of this meeting shall be the mutual edification of the Lord as well as
 1. Annual reports from the minister(s).
 2. Annual financial report and the presentation of the Church budget for the subsequent year.
 3. The transaction of relevant business matters.
- C. Notice of the annual meeting shall be made from the pulpit, included in the Church paper and posted on the Church website two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section III *Other Congregational Meetings*

- A. Special business meetings of the Church may be called by the Elders or initiated by a petition signed by not less than ten (10) members of the congregation and submitted to the Elders. The petition must state the purpose for holding the

meeting. The meeting date and time shall be determined within 15 days of the filing of the petition.

- B. Notice of the special meeting shall be given from the pulpit, in the Church paper and on the Church website at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- C. If it should be deemed necessary by the Elders, a special congregational meeting may be called on shorter notice to handle urgent business matters. Such meetings shall be announced from the pulpit and the meeting shall be held immediately following the second worship service that same day.

Section IV *Quorum*

A quorum for annual or special congregational meetings shall consist of five (5) percent of the Church membership or fifty (50) members, whichever is smaller, after due notice has been given.

Section V *Voting*

- A. Certain business matters shall be voted on by members of this Church at congregational meetings as set forth in these by-laws. At the discretion of the Elders, other business matters may be brought to the congregation for a vote.
- B. Only members of this Church who meet the following qualifications shall be considered eligible to vote:
 - 1. Must have been a member for a least one year.
 - 2. Must be at least 15 years old.
 - 3. Must reside within a 25-mile radius of the Church campus.
 - 4. Must be present at the congregational meeting when the voting takes place.
- C. Long-standing members who live outside of the 25-mile radius and who are otherwise eligible to vote may be granted special voting privileges by the Elders. Such members must make their request to the Elders in writing.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Section I *Officers*

- A. The officers of the Church shall consist of the minister(s), Elders, Deacons, Trustees, and Treasurer(s).
- B. In addition to the above named officers, the Bible School and other special Church organizations may have officers as they desire and need, subject to the approval of the Elders.
- C. With the exception of the minister(s), all candidates for Church offices must have been a member of this Church for at least one year.
- D. All Church officers must meet the scriptural qualifications for their respective offices as defined in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and other relevant passages.

Section II *Duties of the Officers*

- A. The minister(s) shall discharge the duties of his office as set forth in the New Testament scriptures. These duties shall include preaching, teaching, shepherding the flock, administering day-to-day Church activities and other duties as deemed appropriate by the Elders.

- B. The Elders shall discharge the duties of their office as set forth in the New Testament scriptures. These duties shall include overseeing, guiding and directing the affairs and activities of the Church.
- C. The Deacons shall discharge the duties of their office as set forth in the New Testament scriptures. These duties shall also include active involvement in the care and upkeep of the Church facilities, active participation in the ministry work of various TEAMS and other duties as deemed appropriate by the Elders.
- D. The Trustees serve as agents of the Church in dealing with various legal and financial matters and discharge their duties at the direction of the Elders.
- E. The Treasurer(s) shall oversee the receipts and disbursements of all moneys. They shall work with the Finance TEAM to develop and maintain the annual Church budget and shall report the ongoing financial status of the Church at Board meetings and at the annual congregational meeting.

Section III *Number Serving in Each Office*

- A. The Elders shall determine the number of persons serving in each office based on scriptural teachings and on the needs of the congregation.
 - 1. Ministers – in addition to the Senior Minister, other individuals may be called to serve as Youth Ministers, Music Ministers, Education Ministers, etc.
 - 2. Elders – the number of men set apart to serve as Elders shall always exceed one. The responsibility of the office, along with scriptural teaching, indicates that a plurality of Elders is always appropriate.
 - 3. Deacons – A sufficient number shall be maintained to meet the needs of the congregation.
 - 4. Trustees – Three (3) shall serve in this capacity.
 - 5. Treasurer – One, and at least one assistant, shall serve in this capacity.
- B. The same person may hold more than one office.

Section IV *Other Positions*

From time to time, or as the need arises, the Elders may create and fill other positions to facilitate the smooth operation of the Church. Examples of these positions include the Bible School Superintendent, VBS Coordinator, TEAM leaders, fiscal agent, etc.

ARTICLE V METHOD OF ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section I *Selection and Election of Minister(s)*

- A. Full-time minister(s) shall be called upon the recommendation of the Elders and the approval of the congregation.
- B. The election shall be held in keeping with the relevant rules governing congregational meetings as set forth in these by-laws.
- C. A two-thirds majority vote of eligible voters present at a congregational meeting shall be necessary before a call is extended to a full-time minister.

- D. Part-time minister(s) shall be called by the Elders.
- E. At the time of the call of any full-time or part-time minister, a written agreement regarding salary, benefits and terms of employment will be provided.

Section II *Selection and Election of Elders, Deacons and Trustees*

- A. From time to time, or as deemed necessary, the Elders will interview men who express the desire to serve as an Elder, Deacon or Trustee. Qualified men will be presented to the congregation for approval.
- B. These men shall be voted on at the annual, year-end congregational meeting by secret ballot. A two-thirds majority vote shall be necessary to elect a person to office.

Section III *Selection and Election of the Treasurer(s)*

The treasurer(s) shall be elected by a two-thirds majority vote of the joint Board of Elders and Deacons.

Section IV *Other Rules Governing the Selection and Election of Officers*

- A. Nominations for Church offices may not be made from the floor at a congregational meeting.
- B. The number of candidates presented to the congregation for a vote of approval shall not exceed the number of positions open for any office.

ARTICLE VI: TENURE IN OFFICE

Section I *Ministers*

- A. Ministers shall remain in office until their services are terminated.
- B. A Minister's service may be terminated at the discretion of the Minister, or at the discretion of the Church with a thirty-day written notice from either party.
- C. Church initiated termination of services must be approved by the Elders and subject to a two-thirds majority vote of the eligible members present at a congregational meeting before the termination is effective. In extraordinary cases involving Church discipline, the Elders may choose to terminate a Minister "for cause" without bringing the matter to a congregational vote.
- D. The time between the notice and the termination may be shortened by mutual agreement.

Section II *Elders, Deacons and Trustees*

- A. A newly elected, first-term officer shall be in office for a term of one year. Subsequent terms of office shall be three (3) years.
- B. An officer shall serve for the full term for which he was elected unless:
 - 1. He fails to discharge his duties in keeping with New Testament scriptures.
 - 2. He resigns from office.
 - 3. He ceases to be a member of the local congregation.
- C. When an officer's term in office has expired, he may serve for another three-year term subject to the approval by the Elders and a two-thirds majority vote of eligible voters at the annual congregational meeting.

Section III *Treasurers and Other Board Elected Positions*

The joint Board shall elect a Chairman of the Board, Vice Chairman, Board Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer at the first joint Board meeting of each fiscal year. Term length shall be one year for each position.

Section IV *Vacancies*

In case of a vacancy in any office, the Church, at the discretion of the Elders, may elect a successor at a congregational meeting called upon due notice. In an emergency, the Elders may appoint a temporary officer(s) to serve until a new officer can be properly selected and elected as set forth in these by-laws.

ARTICLE VII: MEETING OF OFFICERS

Section I *Church Boards and Ministry TEAMS*

- A. The Elders shall constitute a Board of Elders, meeting as often as necessary for the discharge of duties pertaining to this office. The minister(s) shall also serve on the Board of Elders.
- B. The Minister(s), Elders and Deacons shall constitute a joint Board. The joint Board:
 1. Shall meet to report on various TEAM activities.
 2. Shall meeting during the first week following the annual December congregational meeting for the purpose of electing the Board officers for the next fiscal year, and for the purpose of organizing the various ministry TEAMS for another year of service. The joint Board shall meet as necessary during the remainder of the year. Meeting dates shall be effectively communicated to all members in advance.
 3. Shall not conduct a meeting without a quorum. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
 4. Shall vote on certain business matters as set forth in these by-laws and as deemed appropriate by the Elders.
- C. Ministry TEAMS may consist of Ministers, Elders, Deacons, members of the congregation of any age and/or any other regular church attendee. The Elders shall appoint TEAM leaders annually. TEAM responsibilities may be redefined as deemed appropriate by the Elders. TEAMS shall meet as often as necessary to carry out their work.
- D. Various other temporary committees may be organized by the Elders as needs arise and shall meet as often as necessary to complete their assigned work.

ARTICLE VII CHANGES TO THE BY-LAWS

Section I *Amendments to the By-laws*

- A. Growth of the congregation may, from time to time, necessitate certain changes in these rules and regulations.
- B. Amendments to these by-laws require the approval of the Elders and a three-fourths majority vote by eligible voters present at a properly called congregational meeting as set forth in Article III of these by-laws.
- C. Proposed by-laws amendments shall be made available to the Church membership at least one week prior to the congregational vote.

Section II *Abolition of the By-laws*

- A. Abolition of these by-laws in their entirety requires approval of the Elders and a three-fourths majority vote of the eligible voters present at a properly called congregational meeting as set forth in Article III of these by-laws.
- B. The reason for the abolition of the by-laws shall be drafted by the Elders and made available, in writing, to the entire Church membership at least one week prior to the vote.

Certification of By-laws:

I certify that these by-laws have been approved by the Elders of this Church, and by three-fourths majority vote of the members at the congregational meeting held on December 4, 2005.

Signed: _____

Date _____

Signed: _____

Date _____

Signed: _____

Date _____