



## Official Bylaws

This document outlines the guidelines The Church @ The Ridge employs in selecting key leadership and managing ongoing systems and procedures. In addition, this document provides accountability for ministry leaders and details key information for the church body. While impossible to anticipate all future contingencies, the intent of this document is to provide flexibility to meet long-term changing needs.

### ARTICLE I Statement of Beliefs

#### 1.1 What We Believe

- (a) About the Bible:** The Holy Spirit inspired human authors to write the books of the Bible. God Himself chose every word of Scripture. The Bible is God's love letter to all of humanity and is the final authority in every issue it communicates. It is complete Truth, and we can trust it for all matters in this life and eternity.
- (b) About God:** Scripture teaches that God created everything we can see (and even everything we can't see) out of nothing. Although it might be difficult for the human mind to comprehend, the Bible teaches that He is one, yet has existed since the beginning of time as three distinct and equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- (c) About Jesus:** Jesus Christ is God's Son and an equal of the Father. He has existed from the beginning of time, yet lived on earth during the first century A.D. Throughout His earthly life, He was completely God and completely human at the same time. After living a perfect, sinless life, Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for every human being who has ever lived by dying on a Roman cross. After three days in the grave, He defeated sin and death by rising from the grave. He then ascended to Heaven and will return to earth one day to reign as King.
- (d) About the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a full and equal part of the Trinity. He works in the world to make all people understand their need for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit lives inside every follower of Jesus from the moment they decide to follow Him. The Spirit is our power source for life, ministry and spiritual growth. To tap into that power, we must continually yield to the Holy Spirit.
- (e) About Salvation:** Our disobedient nature has eternally separated us from our Creator. No matter how hard we try, we can never earn our way back into God's presence. Our only hope is to trust Jesus as God's provision for our disobedience. Whenever you make that decision, you step into the eternal and abundant life Jesus promises for all believers.
- (f) About Eternal Security:** Your salvation is through the most trustworthy being in the universe – Jesus Christ! You didn't do anything to earn your salvation, and you can't do anything to lose it. Your salvation is maintained by God's trustworthiness and love not by what you do.
- (g) About Eternity:** God made you to exist forever. Heaven is a perfect place, and since none of us is perfect, we are all headed for an eternity of separation from God. That's why God sent Jesus: to pay the price for our sins so that we can spend eternity with Him. What you decide about Jesus Christ in this life will determine where you will spend eternity. If you reject Him, you'll be eternally separated from God in Hell. If you accept Him, you'll spend it eternally connected with Him in Heaven.
- (h) About the Church:** The Bible tells us that the church is the body of Christ in the world today. The New Testament tells us the church is a local body of baptized believers. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. The biblical purposes of the church are worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and ministry

to others.

- (i) **About Christ's Return:** God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth, the dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness.
- (j) **About Sanctity of Human Life:** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)
- (k) **Marriage:** Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, [the Church] will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the [pastors/ministers/clergy] and staff of [the Church] shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Church @ the Ridge shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.
- (l) **Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct:** These statements of faith do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Church @ the Ridge's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Advisory Elders & Management Team are Church @ the Ridge's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## ARTICLE II

### Mission, Strategy & Core Values

#### 2.1 The Church @ The Ridge's Mission:

*"To Impact Another Generation By Changing People's Perspective"*

- *Matthew 28:18-20*
- *Matthew 22:36-40*
- *Deuteronomy 6:4-7*
- *Psalms 78:1-7*

#### 2.2 The Church @ The Ridge's Strategy

*To Change People's Perspective About:*

- *The Church*
- *God*
- *Themselves*
- *Others*

*For the purpose of glorifying God and expanding His kingdom.*

#### 2.3 The Church @ The Ridge's Core Values:

- a) WATCHING FOR WHERE GOD IS WORKING AND JOINING HIM IN HIS WORK
- b) REACHING & RESCUING THE LOST IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND
- c) CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER
- d) TEACHING FOR LIFE-CHANGE
- e) GROWING & DEVELOPING DISCIPLES AND LEADERS FOR THE HARVEST
- f) BUILDING A HERITAGE OF FAITH IN FAMILIES
- g) UNLEASHING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY
- h) KEEP IT SIMPLE

## ARTICLE III Church Structure

### 3.1 The Church @ The Ridge System of Church Government:

- (a) *Christ* is head of His church
- (b) The *Advisory Elders* provide discernment, counsel, wisdom, encouragement, accountability and guidance to the Lead Pastor and Management Team. Advisory Elders set the Lead Pastor's salary and can fire the pastor
- (c) The *Lead Pastor*, provides vision and leadership to the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; also provides management and leadership to the Management Team (pastoral staff).
- (d) The *Management Team* who run the church, make decisions regarding ministry and vision, and manage and execute day-to-day operations and ministries.
- (e) The *Stewardship Team* who approves the budget and indebtedness and provides counsel and wisdom regarding financial matters, so that the Lead Elder Team can make wise financial decisions.
- (f) *Partners* (members) who share the vision and participate in the mission of the church.

**3.2 The Qualifications for Elders.** A candidate for Elders must be a Partner @ The Ridge or hold a Staff position in another like-minded Church or organization. The Elders @ The Ridge will be made up of a majority of Partners (members) @ The Ridge. Furthermore, all Elders are required to meet the qualifications for elder/overseer as outlined in the following verses:

*1 Timothy 3:1-11*

*It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?) and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

*Titus 1:5-9*

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*

**3.3 The Election for the Elders.** The Lead Pastor initially nominates members who meet the qualifications of an Elder/Overseer, as a candidate for the Elders @ The Ridge. All nominations will be evaluated by those currently serving on the Management Team. At least annually the Management Team will review the application and interview process. A three-fourths majority of the Management Team is required to elect an individual for an Advisory Elder position. If suitable replacements are not found, the position(s) will be left unfilled until such time as the current members of the Management Team are able to find and agree on a candidate. A member of the Advisory Elders serves for a three year term.

**3.4 The Dismissal of an Elder Member.** If it becomes apparent that an individual on Elders should not serve in that capacity, he may resign, or by three-fourths vote of the Management Team, excluding the member under consideration, be immediately retired from the office. His position will remain vacant until the next regularly scheduled election or until the current members of the team choose a suitable replacement.

**3.5 The Advisory Elders.** Members of the Advisory Elders have the authority to dismiss the Lead Pastor without organizational approval by a three-fourths vote. Any complaints or concerns regarding the Lead Pastor should be directed to and handled by the Advisory Elders. The Advisory Elders will determine the salary of the Lead Pastor, who will then determine the salary of all other staff. In so doing, the Advisory Elders may consider duties, performance evaluations, compensation comparability data, and other relevant information. The Lead Pastor shall not participate in the discussion and formulation of, or vote regarding, his salary and benefits, or any his family member's salary or benefits. The Advisory Elders will also function as a prayer support and spiritual advisory capacity to the Lead Pastor. Their job is to guard the Lead Pastor, the vision and seek God's wisdom regarding the overall direction of the church.

**3.6 Lead Pastor.** The Lead Pastor of the Church is responsible for leading the Church in accordance with Biblical principles as set forth in the New Testament. As such, the Lead Pastor shall be the leader of the Church congregation, the Church staff, all Church organizations, all Church ministries, and the Lead Team. The Lead Pastor is expressly authorized to do all things necessary and proper to fulfill the above-described leadership position. The Lead Pastor shall maintain ownership of all creative works. "Creative works" includes, but is not limited to sermons, Bible studies, sermon ideas, books and other writings. All Staff are accountable to the Lead Pastor and may have their employment terminated by the Lead Pastor (with the input and counsel of Elders)

**3.7 Management Team.** The Management Team is comprised of no more than seven individuals. It will include the Lead Pastor, as Chairman of the team, and representatives from the pastoral staff. All members are considered Elders and must meet the Elder qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Pastoral staff position does not automatically carry with it a position on the Management Team. The Lead Pastor will meet with the Management Team on a monthly basis, or no fewer than ten times a year, and serve as the leader of the team. This team's primary function is as guardians and overseers of the organization. The Management Team evaluates the effectiveness and direction of the organization according to three criteria:

- (a) The organization's mission.
- (b) The organization's resources.
- (c) The organization's doctrine.

The Management Team are responsible for evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the overall mission of The Church @ The Ridge. Any complaints or concerns regarding the Staff will be directed to and handled by the Lead Team. Members of the Management Team serve one-year terms. They are eligible to return to their position with the approval of the Chairman.

The Management Team also assist in running the day-to-day operations of the organization, including, but not limited to, giving vision to the various ministries of the church, determining programming, planning events, and expanding ministries. The Lead Pastor selects the Staff with the prayerful advice of select members of the Lead and Advisory Elders. The Staff is accountable to the Lead Pastor. All Staff are required to meet the character qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Staff report to the Lead Pastor and may only be fired by the Lead Pastor. Staff may serve on the Lead Team on a voluntary basis.

When the position of Lead Pastor is vacated, the Advisory Elders along with the Management Team will take appropriate action to find, nominate, and secure a qualified candidate to serve as Lead Pastor. The candidate for Lead Pastor will be approved by The Church @ The Ridge's membership and require a minimum participation of 25 percent of the total membership (this will constitute a quorum) and a three-fourths affirmative vote.

**3.8 Stewardship Team.** The Stewardship Team is comprised of no fewer than three and no more than five individuals. It will include the Lead/Executive/Administrative Pastor, as Chairman of the team, and all members must meet the character qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Lead Pastor will meet with the Finance Team on a quarterly basis, but no fewer than five times a year, and serve as the leader of the team. The Stewardship Team's primary function is as guardians and overseers of the finances of the organization and their responsibilities are as follows:

- (a) Give recommendations to the budget to help money get allocated appropriately and make accommodations for any ministries that were grossly under/over budgeted.
- (b) Review and assess what changes need to be made to the financial procedures and policies of

the church.

- (c) Recommend a plan to incur indebtedness that is equal to or exceeds 10% of the annual budget, before it is sent to the Elders for final approval.
- (d) Give recommendations for a salary package for any new staff members, before it is approved by the Management Team and Lead Pastor.
- (e) Guarding the financial integrity of the Lead Pastor and the church by providing accountability.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Membership**

**Membership.** The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Church Constitution, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The Advisory Elders & Management Team of this Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Bylaws.

The church shall have two classes of membership, hereby referred to as Partnership. These classes will be held at least once a semester and no more than once a quarter. A newcomer Small Group will also be offered which can be in lieu of the Partnership 1 class. The Partnership process will include an interview with one of the Management Team or Advisory Elders or other members as trained and approved by the Management Team.

#### **4.1 Qualifications for Membership:**

- (a) Be at least twelve years old
- (b) A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation
- (c) Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation
- (d) Financially supporting the church through regular tithes & offerings
- (e) Actively participating in the discipleship process
- (f) Completion of the Partnership 1 & 2 classes
- (g) A commitment to the Membership covenant
- (h) Sign a Church membership Agreement

Partners will have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a member of the church. The Lead Team may adopt and amend application procedures for partnership.

**4.2 Termination of Membership.** A Member of The Church @ The Ridge may have their Membership terminated for any of the following reasons:

- (a) Personal request of the partner
- (b) Transfer of membership to another church
- (c) Death
- (d) Failure to comply with the Membership Covenant
- (e) A majority decision by the Lead Team

The Lead Team can restore membership according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 and Galatians 6:1, when their lifestyles are judged to be in accordance with the Membership Covenant.

**4.3 Congregational Decisions.** The Partners @ The Ridge will be kept informed by the Advisory Elders and Management Teams regarding personnel needs and changes. The Stewardship Team and Management Team (with input from the Advisory Elders) will present a budget annually to the Partners for their affirmation by their commitment. During major decisions regarding the purchase of land or the hiring of Lead Pastor, the Partners will be looked to by the Elders for prayer to seek God's will together and for overall public affirmation of the decision, then the Elders will take the responsibility to make decisions based upon that affirmation and through prayer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

**5.1 Organizational Ministry Meetings.** The Management Team will schedule an annual organizational meeting. This will provide a forum for handling the business of The Church @ The Ridge not otherwise reserved for the Staff. In order to make decisions in the annual business meeting, it will require the presence of 25 percent of the total membership of The Church @ The Ridge. This will constitute a quorum. All issues decided upon

in an official organizational meeting requires a three-fourths affirmative vote of the membership to pass. The Management Team will appoint a moderator for all organizational ministry meetings. Any matters properly brought before and passed at organizational meetings shall be binding on the organization. The Management Team has the authority to call special ministry meetings. The Management Team will schedule the special meetings, annual meetings and publish the agenda at least one week in advance.

**5.2 Ministry Meeting Procedure.** Organizational business meetings will be conducted in an orderly, loving, Christ-like manner as set forth by the Advisory Elders and Management Team, except as this constitution conflicts.

**5.3 Amending the Bylaws.** Amendments to the Bylaws require a three-fourths majority vote by the Management Team.

**5.4 Budget.** The Staff will develop the budget annually under the guidance and advice of the Stewardship Team. The Staff will present the budget to the Management Team & Elders for approval.

**5.5 Ordination, Licensing and Commissioning.** The Church @ The Ridge reserves the right to ordain, license, or commission individuals as ministers of the Gospel to perform the ordinances and ceremonies of the church including, but not limited to, marriage, baptism, communion, and funerals.

**5.6 Facility and Property Use:** The church's facilities were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice. But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's constitution and bylaws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. The pastor, or his official designee, is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities. This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22.)

Second, it is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may

church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Col 3:17.)

#### **Approved Users and Priority of Use**

The pastor or official designee must approve all uses of church facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to church members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church. Church facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the church's faith and practice.
2. The group or person seeking facility use must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form, and pay any applicable fees and deposits.
3. The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated in this document and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.

**5.7 Church Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality:** We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.)

Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of [the organization] as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Church at the Ridge members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Church at the Ridge in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Church @ The Ridge.

**5.7 Employment Policy:** To be considered for employment for any Church @ the Ridge position the following criteria will be followed.

- All employees will be evaluated based on the job description as developed by the Management Team
- Employees will sign a statement that they are in agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith.
- Employees will sign a statement that they will abide by the Church's Standards of Conduct
- All employees will dress in conformance to their biological sex; using restroom, changing, locker room and any shower facilities accordingly.
- Abstain from intimate sexual conduct outside the marital union of one man and one woman in accordance with the church's statement on Marriage, Gender, & Sexuality according to Biblical teaching.
- Behavior not abiding with the example of Christian character, ie lying, cheating, stealing, lack of respect for authority will not be tolerated.

- Must pass a personal background check.
- Any violation of the Church employment policy will be subject to potential disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**5.8 Marriage/Weddings** Due to changing circumstances in our culture, it is sometimes necessary to clarify certain issues. Therefore we make these biblical clarifications regarding marriage and weddings:

- In keeping with our constitution and our confession, we believe Scriptures define marriage as a covenantal union between one man and one woman. This means that marriage is the only legitimate and acceptable sexual relationship. We deny that the state has the authority to impose a definition of marriage that is in direct violation to the teaching of Scripture including, but not limited to, so-called same- sex marriage, polygamy, polyamory, incest, zoerasty, or cohabitation.
- We reserve the right to host and perform wedding ceremonies only for those who are members of our church and/or willing to submit to the policies of the church as they relate to marriage.
- All weddings performed by pastors and elders at The Ridge and/or hosted using our facilities require 6 months or pre-marital covenant counseling. This must be done by one of The Ridge’s pastors. All weddings hosted at The Ridge must be officiated by one of our pastors/elders.

**ARTICLE VI  
Affiliation**

**6.01 Affiliation.** The Church @ The Ridge maintains the right to affiliate and/or partner with other like-minded ministries, organizations and associations (who are in agreement with CATR’s statement of beliefs). The Management Team may begin or dissolve partnerships with a three-fourths vote.

**ARTICLE VII  
Advisory & Ministry Teams**

**7.1 Establishment.** The Management Team may, at its discretion, establishing one or more short-term Advisory or Ministry Teams. Any and all teams shall conform to rules established by the Management Team.

**7.2 Dissolution.** The Management Team may, at its discretion, dissolve short-term Advisory or Ministry Teams as they see fit.

**7.3 Delegation of Authority.** No short-term Advisory or Ministry Team shall have the authority to: (a) amend the Articles of Incorporation or Constitution; (b) adopt a plan of merger or a plan of consolidation with another church; (c) authorize the sale, lease, exchange, or mortgage of any or substantially any of the property and assets of the Church; (d) authorize the voluntary dissolution of the Church; (e) revoke proceedings for the voluntary dissolution of The Church @ The Ridge; (f) adopt a plan for the distribution of the assets of the Church; (g) amend, alter, or repeal the Bylaws; (h) approve any transaction to which The Church @ The Ridge is a party and that involves a potential conflict of interest; (i) take any action outside the scope of authority delegated to it by the Lead Team.

**CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION**

These Amended and Restated Bylaws were duly adopted by the unanimous consent of the Advisory Elders & Management Team of The Church @ The Ridge dated \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_