

To: First Free
From: Elders and Bylaw Committee

June 17, 2020

Hallelujah Church! We serve a God that is alive, reveals Himself to us and provides all we need. One day the enemy will bow, darkness will run, idols will fall, sickness and COVID will be gone, and we will forever praise God – the Lord our Father – in eternity.

But, before that happens, we have work to do! After many hours of conversation, debate and editing we propose to you the final changes to First Free's Bylaws and Constitution started nearly 3 years ago. This completes the "modernization" of the main document which govern First Free. While this is a very important document, we want to recognize that not every decision or circumstance is to be contemplated in this governing document and God calls us to work together in unity in all decisions.

In our view, the best way to understand the changes would be to:

- (1) read through the following "Significant Changes from January 2017 Amended Version", and;
- (2) then read through either the attached blackline comparison version or simply review the proposed final version

A couple of notes on the blackline version. Green double strike or underline text has simply been moved from a different section. ~~Purple strikethrough text~~ is language proposed for deletion. Purple underline text is proposed new text.

We expect to have a number of Q&A sessions to address your questions. The Board will then consider your comments and make any additional changes, if appropriate. Finally, at a future Ministry Community Meeting, we plan to ask the Members to ratify the final document.

Please review these documents and gather your questions. Human as we are, we may not have gotten it perfectly right and we need all of you to come alongside us to get this to the finish line. Thank you in advance for extending us grace and patience in this process. To God be the glory!

At Your Service,

Steve Lepse
Elder Chair

Dan Tallacksen
Bylaw Committee Lead

Significant Changes from January 2017 Amended Version

Article II: Purpose and Mission

Reference	Change
Article II: Purpose and Mission	Updates mission statement to current adopted mission statement.

Article IV: Membership

Reference	Change
Section B: Member Qualifications	Adds that members are to be actively serving the Church.
Section C: Membership Application Process	Clarifies that membership classes are to be taught by a Pastor or an Elder. The intent is to ensure consistency in what is communicated.
Section E: Authority of Members	This section was moved from Article V (Congregational Meetings) and: a) clarifies that Members are to call any person with a Pastor title, and; b) changes the fixed \$25,000 for the sale, lease or purchase of property to 10% of the annual budget.
Section H: Other polices	New section clarifies that a Member is not required to “agree in full” with other established policies but are expected to adhere to such policies and not teach against such policies.

Article V: Congregational Meetings

Reference	Change
Preamble	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removes the term ‘business’ because it does not seem appropriate for all topics of discussion 2. Adds a statement conveying the intent to achieve consensus at meetings. 3. Changes the required threshold to pass any vote to three-fourths (75%) majority vote. <p><i>For comparison, current vote requirement is 50% majority with exception of following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Affirmation of Elders: 75%</i> - <i>Calling of senior pastor: 75%</i> - <i>Removal of members for disciplinary reasons: 75%</i> - <i>Affirmation of Deacons / Deaconesses: 75%</i> - <i>Amendments to Bylaws: 75%</i>
Section A: Purpose and Schedule of Meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moves purpose of meetings from old Section C 2. Clarifies process for agenda items not passed at the Annual Meeting which grants a one-month extension after Annual Meeting 3. Clarifies that Board may choose rule of meetings 4. Clarifies process for any Member to submit motions to the Board which is to submit motions in writing for the Board to consider prior to approval by the congregation.
Section B: Notice of meetings	Updates to reflect modern communication methods and approach to notification of meetings, generally consistent with current practices.

Section C: Quorum Requirements	Simplifies language. A quorum will be 10% of voting Members and a minimum of 3 Elders. Meetings may be held if quorum is not met so long as no votes are taken.
Section D: Motions and Manner of Acting	Modifies vote threshold to three-fourths from majority.
Section E: Absentee and Proxy Voting	Adds ability for one member to proxy for one other member.
Section F: Ballot Counting	New section to clarify the ballot counting process.

Article VI: Elder Board

Reference	Change
Section A: General Authority and Responsibilities	Updates and clarifies responsibilities.
Section B: Number, Term and Tenure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduces minimum number Elders from seven to five 2. Clarifies that Officers have a one-year term and are to be annually nominated and reaffirmed.
Section C: Qualifications and Nomination	Adds reference to document outlining Elder nomination process and timeline.
Section E: Vacancies	Adds process for filling Elder role if the number of Elders falls below the minimum required or if the Elder Board altogether resigns. This process largely follows the process which occurred in 2018 when the Board resigned.

Article VIII: Officers and Agents

Reference	Change
Preamble	Clarifies that the Board is to nominate a Chair and Secretary and the Members are responsible for affirming the nominee with three-fourths majority vote.
Section A: Chair	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes use of "Chairman" to "Chair" throughout 2. Other changes are modifications of wording but are insignificant in change of role and scope. (Mainly for formatting and consistency).
Section E: Agents	Adds clarification on use of Agents and examples.

Article IX: Senior Pastor

Reference	Change
Section A: Responsibilities and Authority	Removes the ex-officio status of the Senior Pastor on all other committees, ministries and task forces.
Section B: Selection, Hiring and Employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adds that if any Senior Pastor is married and hired, his wife is automatically granted membership. 2. Adds footnote clarifying that any Interim Pastor is not a voting member of the Elder Board.

Article X: General Leadership Expectations

Reference	Change
All sections	Simplifies language. No significant change in purpose.
Section C: Selection of Leaders	Removes 'casting lots' language and replaces with a pray and ask God concept.

Article XII: New Ministries

Reference	Change
None	Adds that the Board is to evaluate any new ministry against First Free's mission and vision.