

ST. ROSE community church

Constitution & Bylaws, 2017



ARTICLE I.

Name and Affiliation

Section 1 – Legal Name

The name of this corporation is St. Rose Community Church. This corporation may be further referred to in this constitution as the “church.”

Section 2 – Location of Office

The principal office for business transactions of the church is 627 St. Rose Ave., St. Rose, Louisiana 70087. The church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

Section 3 – Affiliations

This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world mission, this church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state and local expressions.

Section 4 – Non-Profit Status

This church is a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Louisiana so long as such ruling remains valid and applicable to the church. The exemption is granted under the LA Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 5 – Dissolution and Mergers

In the event of a voluntary dissolution of the church, the net assets of the church shall be distributed to one or more non-profit organizations which affirm the church’s statement of faith. The distribution will be in accordance with a passing vote of two-thirds of the remaining church membership at a scheduled member meeting. In the event of a merger of the church with another church, then the net assets of the church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.

Article II.

Purpose

The mission of St. Rose Community Church is to glorify God by making disciples of all nations through our devotion to the word of God, the worship of God, and the people of God.

Article III.

Statement of Faith

The leadership and membership of this church affirms that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and are the only basis for our belief and practice. This church also affirms the 2000 version of the “Baptist Faith and Message,” an affirmation agreed upon by the Southern Baptist Convention, as an accurate representation of basic Christian beliefs.

Article IV.

Membership

Section 1 – Requirements for Membership

The local church by necessity consists of those who have been redeemed by their faith in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. The local church is united by their common belief and practice. In order to protect the church from mistakenly admitting members who do not genuinely follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the following qualifications are required for membership at St. Rose Community Church:

- Members profess their salvation by God’s grace alone, through faith alone in Christ Jesus alone.
- Members have publicly professed their salvation by way of the Biblical ordinance of baptism following his or her salvation.
- Members agree to submit themselves to the teaching of the Scriptures as expressed and interpreted in the Statement of Faith described in Article III.
- Members complete each session of the membership class as provided by St. Rose Community Church leadership.
- Members affirm and sign the Church Covenant, a document that outlines the covenantal commitment each church member is to make with the local church. This document is represented in Article IV., Section 4.
- Members are affirmed into membership by recommendation of the church elders and a congregational vote.

Section 2 – Admission Process for Membership

The elders of the church shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. To be admitted into church membership, prospective members must be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Responsibilities of Membership

Under the headship of Christ Jesus and the leadership of the elders, this church is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and the responsibility of each member to attend member meetings and to vote on the election of officers, the approval of the annual budget, decisions regarding membership status, and on other such matters as may be submitted to a vote by the elders. Having affirmed and signed the Church Covenant, members are also responsible to fulfill the commitments represented within the Church Covenant as represented in Article IV., Section 4.

Section 4 – Church Covenant

As sinners who have been made new and having become members of God's redeemed people by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and having publicly professed our salvation through baptism, we affirm this covenant together with ST. ROSE COMMUNITY CHURCH by God's Grace and for God's glory.

We have become the family of God the Father, thus we will love one another and will increasingly reflect our Father's image to the world. We have become the temple of God the Spirit, thus, we will strive for holiness and will house the very presence of God for the world to see. We have become the body of God the Son, thus, we will act as the hands and feet of Jesus in the world and we will serve the Lord and his church with the unique abilities and gifts He has blessed us with.

Together, we will engage in personal and corporate devotion to the Word of God through reading the Word, studying the Word, hearing the Word and ultimately sharing the Word. We will devote ourselves to the worship of God through our obedience, prayer, fasting and singing. We will worship through cheerful giving for the support of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel. We will also worship by remembering our redemption through the regular participation in the Lord's Supper.

We will devote ourselves to the people of God by meeting together consistently, praying for one another regularly, and serving one another selflessly. In our devotion to God's people, we will bear each other's burdens and share in each other's joys. We will seek unity in all things and

will outdo one another in showing honor. Motivated by our love, we will humbly and gently confront one another and will receive correction from one another according to the biblical understanding of church discipline and restoration.

In our devotion to the people of God, we will humbly submit to the leadership of pastors who meet the biblical qualifications and who have been entrusted by God to shepherd, lead, teach and oversee St. Rose Community Church according to the authority of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. We will also affirm deacons who meet the qualifications as servant leaders in the church, as they firmly stand for truth, selflessly serve the church, relentlessly seek unity and consistently emulate Jesus.

In all that we do we seek to accomplish the mission of glorifying God by making disciples of all nations. We believe that every true disciple of Jesus is a disciple maker and we will actively seek ways that God might use us in this mission.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant us to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together we may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us, for the glory of God.

Amen.

Section 5 – Church Discipline

Any church member may be removed from church membership according to the Biblical practice of church discipline. Church discipline is the act of excluding someone from the privileges of membership because of one's ongoing unrepentant sin, the embracing and/or teaching of doctrine contrary to the church's statement of faith or the failure to abide by the church covenant.

Section 5.1 – Biblical Reasons for Church Discipline

- **Church discipline is a demonstration of love for the individual:** The purpose of church discipline is for the repentance, reconciliation and spiritual growth of the individual being disciplined. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul calls for the removal of someone from the local church because of their ongoing unrepentant sin. Paul assumes that this individual may not actually be a redeemed follower of Christ Jesus. Thus the most loving thing Paul could do for this individual is to take the extreme measure of removing the individual from the membership of the church, "so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:5).
- **Church discipline is a demonstration of love for the church:** In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul warns that unrepentant sin within the church spreads and spoils God's church. He writes,

“a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Corinthians 5:5) and to “purge the evil person from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:13). It is important to note that Paul is not speaking of those who are not Christians, but rather he is speaking of the danger of those who “bear the name of brother” (1 Corinthians 5:11) and who are “inside the church” (1 Corinthians 5:12). On other occasions, Paul calls for the removal of an individual because of their rejection of sound teaching (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20). Church discipline, therefore, protects the church from the spread of sin and the damage of false teaching.

- **Church discipline is a demonstration of love for the world:** The church is the corporate witness to the non-Christian world (Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35). The mission of the church is to glorify God by making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), but hypocrisy and false teaching within the church is a direct deterrent to this God-given mission (2 Peter 2:2). Church members who fail to represent Jesus rightly to the world can ruin the church’s witness to individuals and to the community at large, thus driving sinners away from the message of salvation.
- **Church discipline is a demonstration of love for God:** As mentioned above, the church’s mission is to glorify God by making disciples. Love for God compels us to represent God rightly so that He might be worshipped. Ongoing unrepentant sin and false teaching by those who claim to worship God is a grievous sin against God, thus the church lovingly confronts that sin because of its love for God.

Section 5.2 – Process for Church Discipline

Church Discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from an office, barring from the Lord’s Supper or the complete removal from church membership. Complete removal from church membership must follow the process of conflict resolution as outlined by Christ Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17. This process is reflected below:

- The individual in need of church discipline must first be approached by an appropriate church member or elder and lovingly confronted in regard to the specific grievance.
- If the individual refuses to repent, a small group of members or elders will lovingly confront the individual a second time.
- If the individual still refuses to repent, the elders will present the situation to the church at a members meeting for prayer and a final plea for the individual to repent.
- If the individual still refuses to repent, another members meeting will be scheduled at which the elders will recommend a vote be taken by the congregation to determine whether the individual should be removed from the membership of the church.

- A vote of at least two thirds of members present and voting shall be required for removal from church membership.
- Those who receive church discipline and are removed from membership may be reinstated to membership upon evidence of repentance, the recommendation of the elders and a vote of the church members.

Section 6 – Removal from Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death. Termination of a person's membership shall also be recognized after he or she has voluntarily resigned or has joined with another church. As mentioned in Section 5, membership can also be terminated, as an act of church discipline, upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

Article V.

Meetings

Section 1 - Corporate Worship

Corporate worship gatherings shall be held weekly as the church determines. These gatherings are open to both non-members and members.

Section 2 - Member Meetings

Member meetings shall be held at least quarterly, at some time apart from the corporate worship service at a time agreed upon by the membership. Special member meetings may also be called as required by the elders. The date, time, and purpose of any member meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

An elder shall preside as moderator at all member meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. At any regular or special member meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met. A passing vote will require a two-thirds majority vote of members and abstentions will not be counted vote.

Article V.

Church Officers

Section 1 – Summary

There are two biblical offices of the church: elders and deacons. Our church additionally recognizes the administrative positions of president, church secretary and trustees. All officers must be members in good standing of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 - Church Polity

St. Rose Community Church will operate with an elder-led and congregationally-governed church structure. This means that the elders will operate as a board of directors, but the congregation will participate through congregational voting on matters such as the election of officers, membership status, affirmation of the annual budget and any other matters that are submitted to a vote by the elders.

The New Testament, in some cases, portrays the congregation as the final court of appeal in circumstances of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8) and in the election of officers to particular tasks (Acts 6:3-5). Furthermore, many of the letters of the New Testament were written to churches as a whole for the confrontation of certain issues, thus, by implication the weight of responsibility falls on the collection of members at large. At the same time, churches are clearly commanded in Hebrews 13:17, *“obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”* These scriptures point to an organizational structure in which elders lead and the congregation follows and affirms their leadership - as long as their leadership is Spirit-led and Biblically informed.

Section 3 – Elders

All authority in the church is derived from the resurrected Jesus Christ and is exercised on His behalf. According to the Scriptures, Jesus is the “Chief Shepherd” of God’s church (1 Peter 5:1-5), but He has invested the authority and responsibility of church leadership to under-shepherds. These under-shepherds are referred to throughout the scriptures with three interchangeable words: elder, pastor and overseer (Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11). The Elders will serve as the Corporation’s Board of Directors, which shall exercise all such powers of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws.

Though there may be circumstances in which St. Rose Community Church is led by only one elder, the goal for that elder and the congregation should be a movement toward a plurality of

elders. This goal of a plurality of elders can be seen in the presence of multiple elders within congregations that are addressed in the New Testament (Acts 14:23; 15:22-23; 20:17; 1 Peter 5:1; James 5:14) and in the command to both Timothy and Titus to appoint a plurality of elders in the local churches (2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5-9). The model of multiple elders leading a congregation is both Biblical and practical. Multiple elders share the load of shepherding, teaching and administrating while they also hold one another accountable in leading the congregation.

Section 3.1 – Biblical Qualifications

Elders must be men who meet the Biblical qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. While no man is perfect, the descriptions found in these two passages of Scripture should consistently characterize any potential elder. In addition to the qualifications that require exemplary Christian conduct and attitude, each elder must have the ability to verbally communicate sound Christian doctrine to the church. He must also be able to recognize and refute false doctrine that opposes the church's statement of faith. These qualifications require deep Biblical understanding and the ability to convey that understanding to the congregation with clarity and power.

As prescribed in scripture, elders must be men. Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man." Teaching and authority are the exact functions that the elder is to fulfill according to the following passage in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. This instruction is given not because women are lesser in value, but rather they are different in role. God created both male and female equally to bear God's image to the world (Genesis 1:27). God also sent Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of both men and women without distinction (Galatians 3:28), but the role of men and women in God's redeemed community are different by His design. In the same way that God has called men to lead their families in the home (Ephesians 5:22-32), God has called men to lead the family of God in the local church.

Section 3.2 – Biblical Responsibilities

The responsibility of the elder is first and foremost to devote himself to the ministries of prayer and the teaching of the Word of God as portrayed in the pattern of Acts 6:1-7. The major qualification that differentiates the office of elder from the office of deacon is the requirement that an elder must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 1:9; 2:1). This means that elders will be responsible for the doctrinal integrity of the church. They will lead the church in Biblical teaching on various platforms and through various means including corporate preaching, small group teaching and discipleship of individuals. They will hold one another accountable in doctrinal integrity and will protect the church's membership from beliefs that are contrary to Biblical truth.

Elders are also responsible for the ministry of shepherding. They are to pay close attention to themselves and to all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. They must care for God's church (Acts 20:7-32). This shepherding involves the exercise of oversight that is willing, eager and clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:1-5). Elders, furthermore, lead by example in their disciple-making of the congregation through modeling Christlike character, engaging in pastoral care, counseling and carrying out Biblical church discipline. Elders are ultimately responsible for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry and for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Finally, elders are responsible for administering or overseeing the affairs of the church. Many of these more particular areas of oversight are mentioned in Article V, Section 3.3 below.

Section 3.3 – Practical Responsibilities

Elders provide spiritual oversight for both the operations of the church at large and the spiritual life of church members in particular. Through prayer, and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, matters such as new elder recommendations, doctrinal debates, budgeting, church discipline and other issues, deemed significant by the elders, will be voted on within the group of elders until a consensus is obtained.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members before a potential member signs the church covenant and is voted upon by the congregation. Elders will examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and/or paid positions. They will oversee the work of the deacons, appointed church agents and ministry teams. They will oversee and contribute to planning of worship services, administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, promoting the ministries of the church and mobilizing the church for world missions. The elders may establish ministry positions or ministry teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of any pastor, while the hiring of other paid staff, and the scope and approval of job descriptions shall reside in the hands of the elders. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members, but this responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year, the elders, after consultation with the deacons, deaconesses and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called members meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting.

Section 3.4 – Lead Pastor

While the role of "Lead Pastor" cannot be explicitly sighted in Biblical texts, one can infer from the Bible that particular elders did function in a leadership position that was unique to the others in their labor of preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Paul's pastoral writings (1, 2

Timothy and Titus) imply that both Titus and Timothy served unique leadership roles in their particular churches. Titus, for example, was charged to appoint other elders who he discerned met the qualifications (Titus 1:5-9) and Timothy was charged to entrust Paul's teaching to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2). On both occasions, Timothy and Titus are charged to take particular leadership in the appointment of other elders.

The Lead Pastor of St. Rose Community Church shall be an elder and shall meet all the qualifications of an elder as described in the above sections. In the exercise of pastoral plurality within the Church, the lead pastor shall be a first among equals; one man among the many whose gifted influence may exercise a greater leadership role than that of the others. He shall be responsible to lead the pastoral team in ministering the Word of God. He shall be an equal among his fellow elders in the exercise of authority, but shall have a distinct role in that he serves as the leader of his fellow elders.

The precise nature of the role of the Lead Pastor in the church may vary depending on the maturity of the eldership, the range of gifts on the team, the level of specialization on the team and various other factors. Generally, the Lead Pastor of the church shall be expected to provide doctrinal leadership through a prominent teaching role, ensure the development of the eldership into a cohesive leadership team, facilitate decision-making by serving as Chairman of the Board of elders and act as the normal spokesman for the elders. For purposes of wise leadership and compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Louisiana, the Lead Pastor shall serve as the president of the corporation.

In the case of the church having only one elder, that elder will, by default, serve the role of lead pastor. In this scenario, the lead pastor should begin actively working toward the training, ordination and election of other elders so that a plurality of elder leadership may be obtained. He must, however, heed the warning of 1 Timothy 5:22 to not be hasty in the laying on of hands. During this period of time, the lead pastor may establish temporary advisory teams for different purposes until God supplies the church with men who can serve along side him in shepherding of St. Rose Community Church.

Section 3.5 - Election of Elders

No limitations or requirements will be set in regard to the size of the elder board since this will largely depend upon the availability and aspiration of qualified men within the church in relation to the amount of members that God brings into the church.

Potential elders must both meet all of the qualifications and be recognized by the congregation as someone whose leadership should be followed. Potential elders will first be considered and prayed about by the elders. Upon significant consideration and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that man will be approached and his interest in serving such a position will be inquired of. If the man aspires to serve the local body of believers in this position, and after an interview process

set by the elders, the elders must unanimously agree upon him as a potential candidate. Upon agreement of the elders, the candidate will be recommended to the church as a potential elder.

The church will then have a period of at least four weeks to examine the man's life and provide any concerns to the current elders in regard to his qualification for the position. The man will deliver a corporate teaching of the Word at some point during this four week period so that a final check of his doctrinal integrity and his ability to teach may be considered. After the completion of four weeks, the congregation will vote at a members meeting whether the man should be ordained and affirmed as one of the church's elders. A two-thirds majority vote by church members present will be necessary for affirmation of the elder. Upon the congregation's affirmation, the current elders will publicly pray for and lay hands upon that man to symbolize the affirmation of his new place of responsibility and authority.

Section 3.6 - The Term of an Elder

As long as an elder of St. Rose Community Church is meeting the Biblical qualifications, fulfilling the expected responsibilities, is aspiring to serve the church in this role and is affirmed by the congregation, he may choose to remain on the elder board. No term limit or requirement can be found in Scripture for this office, but for the purpose of wise leadership and accountability, elders of St. Rose Community Church will serve 3 year terms at the end of which they may choose to step down from the office or be reaffirmed by congregational vote at a members meeting. This reaffirmation will be an opportunity for the congregation to celebrate faithful service in full affirmation or it may give the elder an opportunity to step down from his role if God would so lead.

Section 3.7 The Removal of an Elder

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any member meeting of the church as proposed by the current elders.

Section 4 – Deacons

In Acts chapter 6, a dispute arose within the church regarding the distribution of food to widows who were in need. The twelve apostles recognized the dispute to be a serious matter, but could not devote themselves to the administration it would require without ceasing their current work of preaching and praying (Acts 6:2). The solution was to pick from among them men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom whom they could appoint to this duty. This situation laid the groundwork for what would become the second of the two offices (Philippians 1:1) within the church - the deacon.

The word deacon is the greek word for “servant”. These servants of the New Testament served the church in a variety of ways that may have included any task necessary for the work of the ministry to carry on. Deacons prioritized the centrality of the word and prayer by serving the congregation in such a way that allowed church elders to focus on the task of teaching and praying.

Section 4.1 - Biblical Qualifications

Deacons may be men or women who meet the Biblical Qualifications of a deacon as represented in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. Two primary differences exist between the qualifications for elders and the qualifications for deacons. Deacons are not required to be “able to teach” and they are not required to be male. Evidence for female deacons can be found within 1 Timothy 3:11 where Paul address women in the context of deacon qualifications and in the ministry of Phoebe, a female deacon referenced in Romans 16:1.

Section 4.2 - Biblical Responsibilities

- **Deacons stand for Truth in the Church:** Deacons were expected to be full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. They were appointed in Acts 6 to serve in such a way that assisted the teaching and praying ministry of the elders. This does not mean that these servants prioritized service over the Word of God, but rather, their love for the Word of God drove them to engage in their service. Deacons are expected to hold the mystery of faith with clear conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).
- **Serve the Needs in the Church:** The office of deacon exists to serve the church in tasks that would otherwise divert the pastors from their primary tasks of teaching the word, prayer and oversight of the church. Deacons are responsible for disciple making as are all Christ followers, but they may also serve the church in a wide variety of tasks including but not limited to: welcoming and hospitality ministries, child-care, compassion ministries for those in need, building and grounds upkeep, administration, finance, etc. (1 Peter 4:10-11; Acts 6:1-5).
- **Seek the Unity of the Church:** In addition to their service, deacons are responsible for maintaining unity within the church. This can be seen when the servants were appointed to, through their serving, bring peace between opposing parties in Acts 6. This responsibility of seeking unity is also implied by the qualifications of a deacon that emphasize sincere and honest speech in the local church.
- **Symbolize Jesus to the Church:** In general, deacons are official models of Christ’s servant leadership to the world and to the local church through the use of their God-given gifts. All Christians are called to be servants, but deacons are models of that universal calling (Matthew 20:26-28; Mark 10:45).

Section 4.3 - Practical Responsibilities

The practical responsibilities of each deacon may differ according to their particular giftings and the ministry in which they are involved. The deacons at St. Rose Community Church who possess particular gifts of service and meet the Biblical qualifications may be charged with oversight over any one of a variety of ministries. Most deacons will serve as volunteers over particular ministries, but others may become paid staff of the church if the the ministry in which they oversee requires particular skill sets and/or considerable time. Deacons may establish and oversee ministry teams of church members to carry out their particular ministry, but they must keep the elders informed at meetings that are called by the elders as needed.

Section 4.4 Election of Deacons

Potential deacons must meet all of the qualifications and they must be recognized by the church as already being a model servant. Potential deacons will first be considered and prayed about by the elders. Upon significant consideration and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the candidate will be approached and his or her interest inquired of. If the individual aspires to serve the local body of believers in this position, an interview process set by the elders will begin. At the completion of the interview process, the elders must unanimously agree upon the potential candidate. Upon agreement of the elders, the candidate will be recommended to the church.

The church will then have a period of at least four weeks to examine the individual's life and provide any concerns to the elders in regard to the candidate's qualification for the position. At the end of four weeks, the congregation will vote at a member meeting whether the individual should be ordained and affirmed as one of the church's deacons. Upon the congregation's affirmation, the current elders and deacons will publicly pray for and lay hands upon the candidate to symbolize the affirmation of his or her new place of responsibility (Acts 6:6).

Section 4.5 - The Term of a Deacon

As long as a deacon of St. Rose Community Church is meeting the Biblical qualifications, fulfilling the expected responsibilities, is aspiring to serve the church in this role and is affirmed by the congregation, he or she may choose to remain in their position. No term limit or requirement can be found in Scripture for this office, but for the purpose of wise leadership and accountability, deacons of St. Rose Community Church will serve 3 year terms at the end of which they may choose to step down from the office or be reaffirmed by congregational vote at a members meeting. This reaffirmation will be an opportunity for the congregation to celebrate faithful service in full affirmation or it may give the deacon an opportunity to step down from his or her role if God would so lead.

Section 4.6 The Removal of a Deacon

A deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of Matthew 18:15–17. Any of the deacons may be dismissed from their office by a two-thirds vote of the members at any member meeting of the church as proposed by the elders.

Section 5 – Church Secretary

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Louisiana, a secretary of the corporation shall be elected. The secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all regular and special member meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders, the deacons, or the church members.

The secretary shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation for this place of service. The secretary may or may not be ordained as a deacon or elder of the church, but must be a church member in good standing. In the absence or incapacity of the secretary, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church secretary. The church secretary can be replaced at any time with a nomination of the elders and a vote of the congregation.

Section 6 - Trustees

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Louisiana, St. Rose Community Church shall have no less than three trustees at any time. Trustees serve the church by acting as legal representatives of St. Rose Community Church. Trustee nominees must be nominated by the elders and affirmed by the congregation and can be replaced at any time with an elder nomination and a congregational vote.

Article VI. Operational Policies

Section 1 - Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church may, as determined by the elders, provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim. This is contingent upon the elders finding that this person: acted in good faith, with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church given the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

If a council of elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the indemnification determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Section 2 - Conflict Resolution Policy

Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall rely on the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or outsiders and whether individuals or corporate entities. (Matthew 18:15–20; I Corinthians 6:1–8) The church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves using these principles, saving reliance on secular courts as a last resort. Every attempt shall be made to resolve conflicts via these means, except in such matters as involve criminal implications. In such cases legal due process may be mandated by civil law and shall be deemed permissible by the elders, if not required. If no legal process is mandated, church members will be expected to ask the church for mediation in all personal disputes. This includes such matters as alleged breaches of contracts, sale of real or personal property, and/or loss of employment or employment discrimination.

Section 3 - Amendment Policy

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous member meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a member meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous member meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members.