

Constitution and Bylaws of Point of Grace Community Church

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Preface

Point of Grace Community Church held its first public worship service in a theater on the southwest side of Madison, WI on September 14th, 1998. After three years in rented spaces, we moved to our current location on Raymond Road thanks to the generous invitation of the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District (WNMD) of the Assemblies of God. The first 16 years of our existence have been filled with challenges, miracles, and an ever growing love for each other and God. While much has changed over the years, our commitment to God's word has been unwavering. God has been incredibly gracious and faithful to us. Our greatest desire has been to **glorify** Him through genuine **worship**, by inviting others to follow Christ (**evangelism**), through sacrificial and loving **service** to each other and our community, by becoming more and more like Jesus (**discipleship**), and building a **community** of believers who love each other deeply and well.

For our first 16 years, we existed under the legal and spiritual oversight of the WNMD for which we are very grateful. This constitution is intended to allow Point of Grace to grow stronger as a local body of Christ, to give increased ownership and responsibility to its members who compose this body, and to provide greater decision making power related to leadership and property especially. This step of growth is strongly advocated by the WNMD leadership because of their desire for God's glory through strong churches. This step is embraced by the members of Point of Grace for the same reasons.

From the beginning of our church, we have placed a high value on humility and love. Relatedly, we have adopted a casual style and avoided undue hierarchy and bureaucracy. After all, who wants "organized religion?" However, we understand the importance of having a constitution in that it allows us to move forward in unity of method and purpose, is especially important during periods of transition or confusion, and is legally required. This document is similar to a skeleton in the body—generally unseen but providing necessary structure for strength. This constitution is based primarily on the recommendations of the Assemblies of God and adapted for our particular context with help from the examples of other biblically functioning churches.

This document strengthens our support and commitment to a larger fellowship of churches (WNMD). We feel this is valuable and important for the sake of accountability and effectiveness. Just as a local body of believers can accomplish much more when they work together, so too can churches. The Assemblies of God, as a movement, has been one of the most effective agents of evangelism and discipleship around the world. We want to be a strong local church and also a part of a global community advancing His Kingdom.

Preamble

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may work and move without hindrance according to scripture; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ, by all available means, both at home and internationally; we, the members of this assembly, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local assembly in fellowship with, and as a part of, the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God; and that we do hereby adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

ARTICLE I. **NAME**

The name of this assembly shall be *Point of Grace Community Church of the Assemblies of God*

ARTICLE II. **PREROGATIVES AND PURPOSES**

The prerogatives and purposes of a General Council affiliated assembly shall be:

To Govern

This assembly shall have the right to govern itself and to conduct its own affairs according to the standard of the New Testament and of the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council and the General Council of the Assemblies of God. This right shall specifically include such matters as the calling of a pastor, the election of the Church Council, the discipling of its members, and the conducting of its own services and church program.

To Acquire and Dispose

In connection therewith, or incidental thereto, this assembly shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes, and to exercise all other powers conferred upon it by its charter or by the applicable nonprofit corporation law of Wisconsin; all in accordance with its bylaws as the same may be hereafter amended.

To Worship, Fellowship, Propagate, and Demonstrate Compassion

The purpose of this assembly shall be to establish and maintain a place for the worship of God, our Heavenly Father, to provide for Christian community for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may move and be active according to biblical teaching, and to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and internationally, and demonstrate the love of Christ through acts of compassion.

To Cooperate

This assembly shall cooperate with the District Council and the General Council to extend the work and kingdom of God throughout the world. It shall support the missionary program as agreed upon. It shall support the District Council and the General Council through its participation and share in the support of the ministries of these bodies.

To Recognize

This assembly shall recognize that the District Council and the General Council have the authority and right to approve scriptural doctrine and conduct; also to disapprove unscriptural doctrine and conduct and to withdraw their certificates of membership if deemed necessary. See Article IX of the Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

ARTICLE III. **AFFILIATION**

While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs as herein set forth, this assembly shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with assemblies of like precious faith, associated in the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, and the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation. Officers of the District Council and General Council shall be recognized and respected by the pastor and members of this assembly.

As a member of the General Council, this assembly has the right to request the assistance of both the General Council and the District Council in dealing with any of its problems, upon the request of the pastor, a majority of the church council, or a petition signed by at least twenty percent (20%) of the active voting members of the assembly. Only those members who have regularly attended services of, and supported, this assembly for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to signing the petition shall be counted.

It is understood and agreed that this assembly shall conform its standards of membership, qualifications for elders, and requirements for a pastor to those standards set by the District Council and the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

By its affiliation, the assembly—directors, officers, and members—agree that no provision of these bylaws shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of both the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God and the General Council of the Assemblies of God as now in effect or hereafter amended.

ARTICLE IV. **TENETS OF FAITH**

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This statement of fundamental truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, 1 Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

The Scriptures Inspired

The scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Hebrews 4:12).

The One True God

The one true God has revealed himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

The Adorable Godhead

Terms Defined

The terms trinity and persons, as related to the Godhead, while not found in the Scriptures, are words in harmony with Scripture, whereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many." We therefore may speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is One Lord, as a Trinity or as one Being of three persons, and still be absolutely scriptural (examples, Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16,17).

Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

Christ taught a distinction of persons in the Godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that this distinction and relationship, as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because unexplained (Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Matthew 11:25-27; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 1:3,4).

Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Father which constitutes Him the Father and not the Son; there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitutes Him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter; the Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Spirit is the One proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one (John 1:18; 15:26; 17:11, 21; Zechariah 14:9).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are never identical as to person; nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the Godhead; nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and the Father is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son, but the Son is from the Father, as to authority. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority. Hence no person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others (John 5:17-30, 32, 37; 8:17, 18).

The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation Lord Jesus Christ is a proper name. It is never applied in the New Testament either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God (Romans 1:1-3, 7; 2 John 3).

The Lord Jesus Christ, God with us

The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father, but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of Man. He is, therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man; who because He is God and man, is "Immanuel," God with us (Matthew 1:23; 1 John 4:2, 10, 14; Revelation 1:13,17).

The Title, Son of God

Since the name Immanuel embraces both God and man, in the one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title Son of God describes His proper deity, and the title Son of Man,

His proper humanity. Therefore, the title Son of God belongs to the order of eternity, and the title Son of Man to the order of time (Mat. 1:21-23; 2 John 3; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 7:3; 1:1-13).

Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title Son of God solely from the fact of the Incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father, and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God; a denial of the Father and Son; and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (2 John 9; John 1:1,2,14,18,29,49; 1 John 2:22,23; 4:1-5; Hebrews 12:2).

Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Spirit that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 14:11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Spirit to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of deity, and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the Godhead except those which express relationship (see paragraphs b, c, and d), and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father (John 5:22,23; 1 Peter 1:8; Revelation 5:6-14; Philippians 2:8,9; Revelation 7:9,10; 4:8-11).

The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).

His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).

His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).

His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).

His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

The Salvation of Man

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Conditions to Salvation

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

The Evidences of Salvation

The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

The Ordinances of the Church

Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Romans 6:4).

Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements--bread and the fruit of the vine--is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-11,13; 8:1,2,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Peter 1:5).

The Church and Its Mission

The Church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her Great Commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

- To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Mat. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
- To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:12).
- To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason for being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

- Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
- Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (1 Cor 2:10-16; 1 Cor 12-14).
- Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ and care for the poor and needy of the world (Galatians 5:22-26; Matthew 25:37-40; Galatians 6:10; 1 Corinthians 14:12; Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Colossians 1:29).

The Ministry

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in: (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) worship of God (John 4:23,24), (3) building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph. 4:11,16), and (4) meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Ps. 112:9; Gal. 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

Divine Healing

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the Atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

The Blessed Hope *(be ready)*

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52).

The Millennial Reign of Christ *(be ready)*

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27,30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 22; Zephaniah 3:19, 20; Romans 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 72:3-8; Micah 4:3, 4).

The Final Judgment *(hell is real and real people go there)*

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Mat. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

The New Heavens and the New Earth

"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21 and 22).

ARTICLE V. **ORDINANCES**

Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered to all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

Holy Communion

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 and Cor. 11:23-26) shall be observed the first Sunday of each month unless adjusted to a specific alternative week for a specific theme or purpose.

ARTICLE VI. **MEMBERSHIP**

Our desire is for *everyone* to feel accepted and valued at Point of Grace regardless of where one might be on their spiritual journey. Our hope is that many who don't know Christ or are immature in their faith will be part of our fellowship, that they will feel loved by God and his people, and take every opportunity to grow in Him. Even though all are welcome to attend, the standard for membership is high because Jesus' standard and calling are high and we wish to promote and safeguard a devotion to God and the body of his Son that approximates the obedience and devotion to which Jesus himself calls us.

Membership Eligibility

Active voting membership in this assembly is open to all those who possess the following qualifications:

- A testimony to an experience of the "new birth."
- Having been baptized in water as an act of decisive obedience to Christ.
- Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Ro 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13, 14; Ep 4:17-32; 5:1-2, 15; 1 Jo 1:6, 7).
- Willingness to contribute generously and regularly to the financial support of the church. We believe the tithe (10% of one's income) is a very healthy start that God blesses; however, we understand and respect different interpretations of this Old Testament law.
- Acceptance of the Tenets of Faith as set forth in Article IV of these bylaws. Most of the beliefs are in complete agreement with biblical teaching in all evangelical churches. None are without strong biblical support. Some in our body may hold different beliefs at some points—especially in regard to the reality of hell and the details of eschatology. For membership, it's important to have a positive view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the believers experienced in Acts, believe that God still baptizes in the Holy Spirit today, and to desire everything God deems best for us. In regard to hell, members must accept that hell is real and unsaved people face eternal judgment. Regarding eschatology, members must believe that Jesus will return and can return at any given moment and we are to live accordingly.
- Having reached at least 18 years of age.
- Having regularly attended services of, and supported, this assembly for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to the date of application for membership.
- Agreement to being governed by the bylaws of this assembly, and of the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, as both may be amended from time to time.
- "Previous members who have withdrawn their membership may have their membership restored by expressing their desire to become members again & signing the membership covenant accompanied by Church Council approval."

Responsibilities of Membership

We affirm that to be a member of this spiritual family is to be committed to developing a growing relationship with Jesus and growing relationships with other members of His body. In the context of these relationships, we commit to God and to one another that we will earnestly endeavor to do the following under the leadership of the Holy Spirit:

We will prize and protect the unity of our church family by:

- Acting in love toward other members (Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:2-3, 32, 1 Peter 1:22)
- Refusing to gossip or stir up dissension (Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 6:16, 19; Proverbs 16:28)
- Honoring and following our leaders (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17)
- Resolving conflicts by biblical guidelines given us, his church (Mat 18:15-17; Gal 6:1).

We will participate in the ministry of our church family by:

- Regularly worshiping with the large group on weekends and participating in a small group or some other intentional, consistent, welcoming, group of POG members/constituents for the sake of friendship, discipleship and commitment to biblical community (Heb 10:25).
- Giving generously and systematically (Malachi 3:6-12; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14)
- Developing a servant's heart (Matthew 20:26-28; Galatians 5:13)
- Discovering our gifts and serving the body with them (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12)

We will partner in the mission of our church family by:

- Praying for its health and growth (Philippians 1:4-5; Colossians 1:9-10)
- Inviting others to attend (Luke 14:23)
- Warmly welcoming those who visit (Romans 15:7)
- Sharing Christ as we have opportunity both here and around the world (1 Peter 3:15)

Divorce and Remarriage

Membership for those having marriage entanglements previous to following Christ. There are now among Christian people those who become entangled in their marriage relations in their former lives of sin who do not see how these matters can be adjusted. We recommend that these persons be received into the membership of local assemblies and that their marriage complications be left in the hands of the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24).

Common-law marriages. We recommend that in no case shall persons be accepted into membership who are known to be living in common-law state of matrimony. This recommendation is given in light of our culture's very low commitment to marriage both statistically and attitudinally and the increasing social ills related to the breakdown of marriage and the family.

Remarriage. Low standards on marriage and divorce are very hurtful to individuals, to the family, and to the cause of Christ. Therefore, we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. We positively disapprove of Christians getting divorces for any cause except fornication, adultery, and abandonment (Matt. 19:9). Where these exceptional circumstances exist or when a Christian has

been divorced by an unbeliever, we recommend that the question of remarriage be resolved by believers as they walk in the light of God's Word (1 Corinthians 7:15, 27, 28).

Local church leadership. We recommend that divorced and remarried believers be restricted from serving in the office of elder (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17), prior to a biblical understanding of marriage and divorce, or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15).

Marriage and Sexuality

Biblical definition. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 2:22-25).

Sexual intimacy. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

Sexual immorality. We believe that adultery, pornography, transgenderism, homosexuality, and other types of sexual expression outside of the biblical description of marriage is not God's will (Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, and 1 Timothy 1:8-11).

Involvement. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of our church as the local body of Christ, it is important that members, all persons employed directly by the church (not a contractor), and those who serve as volunteers in positions of spiritual leadership, should agree with this statement on marriage and sexuality and live accordingly.

Forgiveness. We believe that God's love for the sexually immoral is great and He offers forgiveness and restoration to all who believe, confess, and follow Him. Every member of this body is utterly dependent on God's mercy and grace—often in the area of sexual immorality as well as others. We love each other with God's grace while pursuing in his power the life to which he has called us.

Respect. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. 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 the Church.

Steps to Becoming a Member

The Newcomers Small Group. The first step toward membership is participation in the Newcomers Small Group. This short-term group is offered at least yearly and presents what the Bible has to say about God, salvation, the body of Christ, and its mission.

Application for membership. Those individuals who desire to become members of this church shall make written application to the pastor or Church Council. The Church Council shall have the right and authority to determine the eligibility and acceptability of all applicants for membership by majority vote. Those approved for membership by the Church Council shall be received into the

church publicly at any of its regular services, and their names thereupon added to the church membership roll. No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before the annual State of the Church meeting or special stewardship meeting.

Pastor and spouse. By virtue of office the pastor shall be considered an active voting member of the church during his tenure. The pastor's spouse shall become an active voting member simultaneously with the pastor, subject to Article VI.

Transfer members. A member in good standing of another Assemblies of God church, who satisfies the standards for membership eligibility specified in Article VI (other than the attendance and support requirements), may apply for membership by submitting a letter of transfer from the pastor of the other assembly, upon the approval of a majority of the Church Council.

Inactive membership. Active voting members who shall without good cause absent themselves from the services of the assembly for a period of 3 consecutive months or more, or who cease to contribute of their means to its support for a period of 3 consecutive months, may be declared inactive members by a majority vote of the Church Council, and thereupon shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by action of the assembly through its Church Council.

Discipline

Grounds. Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3; John 20:23; Acts 16:4; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 13:17). The purpose of discipline is to promote repentance and restoration through exposing sinful behavior. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of the assembly is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Tenets of Faith of this assembly, as determined by the discretion of the Church Council. The discipline of ministers who hold credentials with the Assemblies of God is administered by the District Council and General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Procedure. The assembly will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. This procedure consists of the following steps: (1) The pastor or a designated member of the Church Council discusses the charges with the member in an effort to resolve the matter privately; (2) if the first step does not resolve the matter, then the member shall meet with the pastor and Church Council or with a designated committee of the Church Council in an effort to resolve the matter privately; (3) if the first or second steps do not resolve the matter, then the member or the Church Council may submit the matter to the membership of the assembly in a special stewardship meeting called for that purpose. Only active voting members of the church shall be permitted to attend such a special stewardship meeting. The decision of a majority of the voting members present at such a meeting shall be final. A member found guilty may be dismissed from membership in the church (Matthew 18:17). However, lesser disciplinary sanctions may be imposed as appropriate, depending on the circumstances of each case. The overriding principles for such a process are gentleness, respect, love, redemption, as-private-as-possible, and objective (rather than subjective).

Resignations. Members who are under discipline by this assembly forfeit and waive the right to resign from membership in this assembly. Resignations from membership are possible only by those members in good standing who are not under any disciplinary action.

ARTICLE VII. **GOVERNMENT**

The Church Council

In General. The government of this assembly shall be vested in the Church Council to the extent that such authority is not limited by district supervision as provided for under the bylaws of the District Council. The Church Council shall consist of the pastor and two to four elders while the church has less than 100 members. As the church grows, the maximum number of elders will increase by one per 100 members (i.e. 300 or more members would call for seven qualified elders on the Church Council) up until a maximum of twelve. The upper limit of twelve remains no matter the size of the church. The number of members should be established in anticipation of the annual stewardship meeting. The Church Council is the same as what has traditionally been called a “Church Board” or “Deacon Board”. We simply prefer using biblical rather than corporate verbiage to describe this group of leaders.

The Church Council is chosen by the congregation (see Article VIII) and is ultimately responsible for the ministry, finances, strategy, and vision of Point of Grace.

Ministry Teams are formed as needed to assist the pastor and elders in carrying out the ministries of the church. The structure of each team varies according to function. It is important that team leaders maintain a servant’s heart and desire to work with other ministries in the church and submit appropriately to the Church Council for the sake of love, unity of purpose, and real effectiveness in regard to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Qualifications of Church Council members. See qualifications for pastors and elders below.

Duties of the Church Council

- The Church Council shall have general charge and management of the affairs, funds, and property of the assembly. The Church Council shall have the authority to carry out the purposes of the assembly according to its charter and these bylaws.
- The Church Council shall act in the examination of applications for membership and in the administration of discipline.
- For so long as the church is temporarily without a pastor, the remaining members of the Church Council shall be empowered to select a temporary chairman of the Church Council.
- The Church Council shall elect a secretary from among its members.
- The Church Council shall elect a treasurer from among the active voting members who meet the qualifications for such office.
- The Church Council shall provide overall spiritual leadership by pursuing wisdom through prayer, training, reading, learning, and discussion so that our body can continue to grow (avoid stagnation).

Officers

In General. There shall be a president, elders, secretary, and treasurer. The pastor, by virtue of office, shall be the president and chairman of the Church Council. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be held simultaneously by the same individual.

Qualifications

Pastor. The pastor shall be in good standing with both the General Council of the Assemblies of God and the District Council. Such standing represents fulfillment of biblical and spiritual qualifications confirmed annually by the WNMD. Of course, the pastor must fulfill all that is fairly and biblically asked of membership of Point of Grace as well.

Elders. The elders shall be persons of mature Christian experience and knowledge, who shall be expected to meet the requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6. He/she shall be at least 23 years old, and shall have been members of the assembly for at least one year. He/she shall currently support the church with their tithes and offerings, have a cooperative spirit, and regularly attend church services. In general, they shall not hold ministerial credentials; however, exceptions can be made if a credentialed nominee is approved by a majority of the Church Council.

Divorced and remarried believers shall be restricted from serving in the office of elder (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Tim. 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion or accurate understanding of biblical truth regarding marriage, (2 Cor. 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse’s marital unfaithfulness (Matt. 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:10–15).

Secretary. The secretary shall be an active voting member of this assembly for at least one year immediately preceding election to office, and shall be a member of the Church Council.

Treasurer. The treasurer shall be an active voting member of this assembly for at least one year immediately preceding election to office, and shall currently support the church with tithes, and shall have a cooperative spirit, and shall be faithful in attendance at church services.

Duties

Pastor.

- Shall be the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall direct its ministries.
- Shall be recognized as a member of the Church Council, president of the assembly, and shall act as chairman of the State of the Church meeting and special stewardship meetings of the assembly and of the Church Council.
- Shall provide for all services of the assembly and shall specifically arrange for all special meetings. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the assembly without his approval. The pastor, with the appropriate checks and balances afforded in these bylaws, is responsible for safeguarding the truthful biblical teaching of the body.
- Shall, as chairman of the Church Council, be chairman of the nominating committee for the selection of elder nominees. The pastor shall privately interview those nominated, ascertaining their eligibility and availability to serve as elders.
- Should conduct a training class at least once a year on the responsibilities of the Church Council, elders, secretary, treasurer, and other church leaders. Such a training course shall be based upon the scriptural directives for church leadership and the church bylaws.
- Shall be an ex officio member of all committees and teams.

Secretary

- Shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Church Council and of the annual State of the Church meeting and special stewardship meetings of the assembly.
- Shall keep a record of the membership of the assembly and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of his duties.
- Shall be the custodian of all legal documents.
- Shall file such annual corporation reports with the Secretary of State as may be required by state law.

Treasurer

- Shall be entrusted with all the finances of the assembly, subject to the supervision of the Church Council, providing supervision of the bookkeeper and all involved in recording donations and making deposits as a prudent investor.
- Shall keep an itemized account of receipts and disbursements, shall present a report for each regular meeting of the Church Council, and shall present an annual report to the assembly in its annual State of the Church meeting.
- Shall assist the assembly in acquiring and maintaining available tax exemptions under state and local law.
- Shall provide a record of all identified giving to each donor at least annually.
- Shall be the custodian of all the financial records of the church.

Fiduciary Duties

The law imposes several fiduciary duties on officers, elders, and trustees, including the duties of due care and diligence, loyalty, avoidance of self-dealing, expending designated contributions for the purposes specified, and not commingling personal and corporate funds.

Temporary Church Council

Should irreconcilable differences arise between the pastor and other members of the Church Council, destroying the unity and the successful ministry of the local assembly, the District Executive Presbytery along with the sectional presbyter (the investigating committee), upon request from the pastor or a majority of the Church Council members, shall investigate such differences. Upon a two-thirds majority vote of the investigating committee they may declare the church under district supervision. The term "district supervision" means that the investigating committee has the authority to (1) suspend the constitution and bylaws of the church, (2) suspend the Church Council, (3) reclassify the church as a District Council affiliated church, and (4) appoint and establish a temporary Church Council invested with the authority to manage both the secular and ecclesiastical affairs of the church until such strife shall cease. If the pastor is also the sectional presbyter, the assistant sectional presbyter shall be a member of the investigating committee in his place.

ARTICLE VIII. ELECTIONS, VACANCIES, AND REMOVALS

Elections

Pastor

- The pastor shall be nominated by the Church Council. Recommendations may be made to the Church Council by any member of the assembly.
- The pastor shall be elected to serve indefinitely.
- An election shall be by secret ballot at the annual State of the Church meeting of the assembly or at a special stewardship meeting called for that purpose. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.
- A two-thirds majority vote of all votes cast shall be required to constitute an election. Where a pastor succeeds himself, only a majority vote is necessary.
- In the event either the pastor or any other member or members of the assembly shall challenge the validity of an election, the validity of the election shall be arbitrated by the District Executive Presbytery or any three people of its choice, and its decision shall be final.

Secretary. The secretary shall be elected by the Church Council from among its members. The term of office shall be one year, and the secretary may serve consecutive terms without limitation.

Treasurer. The treasurer shall be elected by the Church Council from among the active voting members of the assembly. The term of office shall be one year, and the treasurer may serve consecutive terms without limitation.

Elders. Potential elders shall be nominated by a nominating committee appointed by the Church Council (see Article VII), and they shall be elected by a majority vote of those active voting members present at an annual State of the Church meeting of the assembly at which an election is to be conducted. Active voting members may recommend nominees to the nominating committee; however, nominations for elder shall not be accepted from the floor during any stewardship meeting without prior proof that the nominee meets the qualifications for an elder. Elders shall be elected for a 3-year term, and shall hold office until the annual State of the Church meeting at which their successor is elected. Elders may not be elected more than twice consecutively unless the minimum number of elders is not met and there is no qualified candidate available to be elected at the end of elder's second term. The elder that has reached the term limit may be elected to one-year terms until there is an elder elected at the next State of the Church meeting. The terms of elders shall be staggered appropriately.

Vacancies

Pastor. When a vacancy in the office of the pastor shall occur, a temporary replacement shall be arranged for by the Church Council until a pastor shall be chosen as prescribed in Article VIII). The counsel of the District Superintendent will be sought. When a pastor's credentials are withdrawn by the District or General Council, the pastor's term of office shall be automatically terminated. In the event a special stewardship meeting is called by petition as provided in Article IX for the purpose of considering the status of the pastor, a majority vote of all voting members present and voting shall be required to remove a pastor from office before his term expires. Severance pay shall be governed by Article XI).

Secretary and Treasurer. The offices of secretary and treasurer shall be vacant upon the expiration of the term of office, or upon the termination of the officer's active membership, whichever shall occur first.

Elders. The office of elder shall be vacant upon the expiration of the term of office, or upon the termination of an elder's active membership, whichever shall occur first.

In General. Any office or position of leadership in the church (other than that of the pastor) may be terminated by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at a special stewardship meeting called for the limited purpose of removal of such member from office or position of leadership which he holds.

Filling Vacancies. Any office or position of leadership in the church (other than that of pastor) may be filled by appointment of the Church Council for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

Meetings for Worship

Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under direction of the pastor or the Church Council if there is no pastor.

The Annual State of the Church and Special Stewardship Meetings

The Annual State of the Church Meeting. There shall be an annual stewardship meeting of the assembly, at which time the election of elders shall take place and the report of all officers shall be presented. This meeting shall be held on a Sunday in January or February. The time and place shall be announced by the pastor. Notice of the date, time, and place of each annual stewardship meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during morning worship services on each of the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. Proposed amendments to the bylaws must be submitted and communicated to all members one week prior to the annual meeting.

Special Stewardship Meetings. These may be called by the pastor, or by a majority of the Church Council, or by a petition signed by not less than thirty percent (30%) of the active voting members of the assembly. Only those active voting members who have regularly attended services of, and supported, this assembly for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to signing the petition shall be counted.

- Petitions pertaining to the stewardship affairs of the church shall be submitted to the pastor or the secretary of the Church Council.
- A petition pertaining to the status of the pastor shall be directed to the district superintendent, who shall arrange for a special stewardship meeting of the assembly.
- No more than one petition on a given subject shall be recognized in any 12-month period. Notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of each special stewardship meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during morning worship services on each of the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.
- No agenda items other than that specified in the notice of meeting shall be transacted at any special meeting of the assembly.

Parliamentary Order

The annual State of the Church Meeting and all special stewardship meetings of the church shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Revised*, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

Voting Constituency

Qualifying of Voters. The voting constituency at all stewardship meetings of the assembly shall consist of all active voting members who are present and who are 18 years of age or older (Art. VI).

Transfer Members. Transfer members shall have voting privileges after 30 days of transfer of membership (Article VI).

Members under Process of Discipline. No member under the process of discipline shall be entitled to a vote until the process is completed (Article VI).

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of all voting members present at any duly called stewardship (business) meeting. At least 30% of all voting members of Point of Grace must be present to constitute the meeting.

Order of the Annual State of the Church Meeting

The regular order for the annual State of the Church Meeting (business meeting) of this assembly shall be as follows:

- Prayer for guidance and unity
- Devotional
- Reading of previous minutes
- Report of treasurer
- Report of teams
- Unfinished issues
- Election of elders (elders may be re-elected for second term)
- New issues
- Prayer of thanks
- Adjournment

The Church Council Meeting

The Church Council shall meet monthly or at the call of the pastor for the transaction of issues for the assembly, time and place to be announced by the pastor. A majority of the council members present shall constitute a quorum.

Succession: If one or more of the elders or pastor is incapacitated and the minimum number of elders or pastors is not able to be met due to the incapacitation, then the current number of elders on the Elder Board will operate on an emergency contingency and the minimum quorum requirement will be eliminated until such time as an emergency meeting of the congregation can be held and another elder or pastor is elected to be the minimum requirements for a quorum.

The Membership Roll

The Church Council shall review the list of active voting members at least annually, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the council immediately preceding the annual stewardship meeting, and compile a current list of active voting members.

ARTICLE X. **MINISTRY TEAMS**

In General

Scripture clearly teaches that each believer has been gifted to serve in a way that builds up the body of Christ (Romans 12; 1 Peter 4; 1 Corinthians 12). As part of the Newcomers Small Group (or a similar way of assimilating newcomers), each prospective member will have opportunity to assess his/her own God-given gifts. Often, but not always, the opportunity to express these gifts occurs in the context of a ministry team. These teams are established to by the Church Council for the ministry of Point of Grace.

Some of our most established teams include worship, facilities, missions, hospitality, tech, children's ministry, prayer, and outreach. Teams can be added or discontinued depending upon the needs and resources of Point of Grace. For example, we have benefitted from teams devoted to service planning, teaching, drama, and special events in the past. They shall be under the general supervision of the pastor and Church Council, and the pastor shall be an ex officio member of all teams.

The Church Council is responsible for establishing wise policies regarding the qualifications of leaders and the guidelines of ministry. These policies are part of the *Point of Grace Ministry Guidelines* manual and strive to protect everyone involved with Point of Grace without hindering the work of real ministry by unnecessary rules.

ARTICLE XI. **FINANCE**

In General

All funds for the maintenance of the assembly shall be provided by the voluntary contributions, tithes, and offerings of the members and friends of the organization. Offerings shall be accepted by the assembly at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the Church Council and shall be administered by the treasurer under their direction (Mal 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

Pastoral Remuneration

Regular Remuneration. The pastor shall be remunerated for his services by a salary or by other means agreed upon by the Church Council and himself. The Church Council shall review the pastor's remuneration at least annually.

Reimbursement for Expenses. The pastor shall be given consideration by the Church Council for expenses incurred by his attendance at District Councils, General Councils, and other district functions by reimbursement of such expenses, or by an offering to help defray such expenses, according to the ability of the church as determined by the Church Council.

Severance Pay. In the event a pastor is removed from office by a vote of the active voting membership of the church, he shall be given a minimum of two months regular or average remuneration as severance pay, except in the case of moral turpitude.

ARTICLE XII. **PROPERTY**

Title

All property of the assembly shall be deeded to the assembly and held in its name or, if required by law, to trustees acting on behalf of the assembly and their successors in office. Should the assembly choose to do so, it may request the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God to act as its trustee to hold title.

Purchases and Sales of Property

All purchases of furnishings, equipment, and other items of tangible personal property, exceeding \$30,000.00 in cost, and all purchases and sales of real property shall be authorized by a vote of at least two-thirds of the voting membership who are in attendance at a regular or special meeting of the assembly.

Discontinuation of Church Services

Should this assembly cease to maintain a weekly worship service for a period of 3 months under the direction of a leader duly authorized by and in good standing with the District Council, it shall be dissolved and its properties disposed of according to Article XII of these bylaws.

Disaffiliation

Title to all real property now owned or hereafter acquired by the assembly shall be held in trust as a place of divine worship in full cooperative fellowship and affiliation with The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri, and the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God. In the event that the assembly shall be divided over doctrinal or any other issues, or shall vote to disaffiliate from the Assemblies of God, all property of the assembly shall remain with those members, whatever their number, desiring continued affiliation with the Assemblies of God and adhering to its Statement of Fundamental Truths (a.k.a. our "Tenets of Faith"). The determination of which group of members desires continued affiliation with the Assemblies of God and adheres to its Statement of Fundamental Truths shall be arbitrated by the District Presbytery of the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, and its decision shall be final and binding. If all of the members of the assembly shall vote to disaffiliate from the Assemblies of God for doctrinal or any other reasons, then all of the property of such assembly shall revert to said District Council and shall be used by the District as an Assemblies of God church if possible, and if not possible, the District may sell the property and apply the proceeds in any manner consistent with its stated purposes.

Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the assembly, none of its funds or assets shall be distributed to any officer, elder, trustee, or any other individual. The Church Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the assembly, dispose of all of the funds and assets of the assembly by conveying the same to the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God, for the purposes of the assembly, and provided that said District Council at the time qualifies as an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). Any such funds or assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Circuit Court of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, to such organization as said Court shall determine, which is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes.

ARTICLE XIII. ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES

Inasmuch as the Scriptures require Christians to take their disputes to the saints and not to the civil courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-8), all disputes which may arise (1) between any member of this church and the church itself, or (2) between any member of this church and any pastor, officer, director, employee, volunteer, or other worker of this church, shall be resolved by binding arbitration if efforts to mediate or conciliate the dispute have failed. Either party to the dispute may initiate the arbitration process by filing with the other party a written request for arbitration within a reasonable time after the dispute has arisen and efforts to mediate or conciliate have failed. In such a case, the member and the church shall each name an arbitrator, and the two so selected shall name a third. All arbitrators must be born-again, Spirit-filled believers who are members of an Assemblies of God church. The third arbitrator chosen by the other two shall disclose, before accepting the appointment, any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the arbitration, and any existing or past financial, professional, family, or social relationships which are likely to affect impartiality or which might reasonably create an appearance of partiality or bias. Either of the parties to the arbitration, on the basis of such disclosures, may disqualify such a candidate from serving as the third arbitrator. A third arbitrator who serves without objection from either party has a continuing duty to disclose relationships or interests which may impair his impartiality. Either party, regardless of the stage of the arbitration process, may on the basis of such disclosures disqualify such a person from further participation. The arbitration process shall not proceed until the third arbitrator is selected. The arbitrators shall appoint the time and place for the hearing and cause notification to the parties to be served personally or by registered mail not less than 30 days before the hearing. Appearance at the hearing waives such notice. The arbitrators may adjourn the hearing from time to time as necessary and, on request of a party and for good cause or upon their own motion, may postpone the hearing to a later date. The arbitrators may hear and determine the controversy upon the evidence produced notwithstanding the failure of a party duly notified to appear. The parties are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by all the arbitrators, but a majority of them may determine any question and render a final award. If during the course of the hearing an arbitrator for any reason ceases to act, he shall be replaced in the same manner in which he was originally selected. The arbitrators may in their absolute discretion admit as evidence any affidavit or declaration concerning the matters in dispute, a copy thereof having been given at least five days previously to the party against whom the same is offered, but the person whose

evidence is so taken shall be subject to cross-examination by such party. The arbitrators shall have the power to order and direct what they shall deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. Cost of the arbitration shall be determined and assessed by the arbitrators. Any submission of a dispute to arbitration shall not be revoked by the death of any party to the dispute, and any award will be binding upon such person's heirs and successors. The decision of the arbitrators shall be binding on both parties, and both parties submit themselves to the personal jurisdiction of the civil courts in this state (including federal courts), as well as the courts of any other state which may have jurisdiction over any dispute contemplated by this Article, for the entry of a judgment confirming the arbitrators' award. The arbitration process is not a substitute for any disciplinary process set forth in the constitution or bylaws of the church, and shall in no way affect the authority of the church to investigate reports of misconduct, conduct hearings, or administer discipline. Any matter not provided for herein shall be governed by the provisions of the Uniform Arbitration Act. If a dispute may result in an award of monetary damages, then use of this arbitration procedure is conditioned on acceptance of the procedure by the liability insurer of the church, and the insurer's agreement to honor any arbitration award up to any applicable policy limits.

ARTICLE XIV. **AMENDMENTS**

The bylaws may be amended at the annual State of the Church Meeting or any special stewardship meeting of the assembly by a majority vote of the membership present, except as otherwise indicated herein. Articles III, XII, and XIV of these bylaws may be amended only by the affirmative vote of 100 percent (100%) of the active voting members present at any annual or special stewardship meeting called for the purpose of amending these bylaws. Article IV of these bylaws is not subject to amendment, except to conform to any amendments made to the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God. All amendments must be consistent with the constitution and bylaws of the District Council.