**PREFACE**

This recommend constitution and bylaws is an adaptation of the “Recommended Bylaws for Local Assemblies” provided by the General Council. It includes some items unique to Arkansas corporate law and items from the Arkansas District A/G constitution and bylaws. Churches that are under district supervision operate under the Constitution and Bylaws adopted by the District Presbytery.

The pastor is the under-shepherd, called of God, to minister to spiritual needs and to direct activities of the church in accordance with its bylaws. He should be respected as the leader. In the event he is elected to serve for an indefinite time, he should not presume that indefinite means permanent. The term “indefinite” merely means that the door is left open for unlimited ministry under the blessing of God, which can be terminated by the decision of the pastor or the congregation.

The church board is chosen to assist the pastor. When board members are elected they should be reminded that they have been chosen to serve, not rule.

**Instructions for Adopting Church Bylaws**

Churches shall seek the help of district officials when planning for the adoption of new bylaws. Contact the District Secretary’s office for assistance.

If this is the first time your church has adopted a constitution and bylaws you should contact the district superintendent in regard to whether or not he, the sectional presbyter or district secretary should be present at the meeting in which the proposed constitution and bylaws will be presented for adoption.

If you want to make changes to the suggested constitution and bylaws please contact the district secretary in regard to the proposed changes. This insures that any changes that are proposed would not be in conflict with other guidelines, etc. **NO CHANGES CAN BE MADE TO ARTICLE IV. TENETS OF FAITH.**

Copies of the constitution and bylaws should be made available to the constituents prior to the date of the meeting so all may be informed of the provisions to be adopted.

Please keep careful records of all the decisions made at the business meeting. Include elections, their term of office rotation etc.

Recommended Constitution/Bylaws for General Council Affiliated Churches

Revised as of June 2023

*(Items in italics are suggestions and are not mandatory requirements. There are some things that you cannot change but other items may be changed. Please contacted the district secretary for more information)*

Bylaws of the First Assembly of God, Inc. in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Arkansas, adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 2023

**PREAMBLE**

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of the responsibility and privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ, by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands; 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 Arkansas 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: (Church name), Incorporated in the city of ( ), State of Arkansas, herein after Church or assembly.

**ARTICLE II. PREROGATIVES AND PURPOSES**

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

**1. 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 Scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:3, 13) and in conformity with the bylaws of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God. This right shall specifically include such matters as the calling of a pastor, the election of the church board, the discipline of its members and the conducting of its own services and church program.

**2. 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 this state; all in accordance with its bylaws as the same may be hereafter amended.

**3. To Worship, Fellowship, and Propagate**

The purpose of this assembly shall be to establish and maintain a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; and to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands.

**4. 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 participate in District Council and General Council sessions through its chosen delegates and share in the support of the ministries of these bodies.

**5. 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 certificate of membership if deemed necessary.

**6. To Organize**

This Assemblies of God Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable and religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

1. Inurement of Income: No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.
2. Legislative or Political Activities: No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and the corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
3. Operational Limitations: Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), or (b) by any corporation, contribution to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).
4. Dissolution Clause: Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors (Deacons) shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all assets of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or religious purposes as shall be at the time qualified as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c ) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code as per these BYLAWS, ARTICLE XIII, Section 4.

**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 the assemblies of like precious faith, associated in the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, and the General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri; and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation. Officers of the District Council and the General Council shall be recognized and respected by the pastor and the 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 board, or a petition signed by at least one-third (33%) 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 deacons, and requirements for a pastor to those standards set by the District Council and the General Council.

By its affiliation, the assembly - directors, officers, and members - agree to submit to the authority of and be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of both the Arkansas 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.

**1. The Scriptures Inspired**

The Scriptures, both of 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; 2 Peter 1:21).

**2. 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 the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

**The Adorable Godhead**

1. Terms Defined

The terms "Trinity" and "persons," as related to the Godhead, while not found in 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).

1. 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 Ghost, 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).

1. Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Ghost which constitutes Him the Holy Ghost and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter; the Son is the begotten; and the Holy Ghost 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).

1. Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost 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 Ghost 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).

1. 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 Ghost. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God (Romans 1:1-3; 7; 2 John 3).

1. 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).

1. 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 (Matthew 1:21-23; 2 John 3; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 7:3; 1:1-13).

1. 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 the 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).

1. 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 both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Ghost 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 might be all in all (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 14:11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

1. 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 Ghost 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).

**3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ**

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

1. His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).
2. His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
3. His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
4. His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
5. His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
6. His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

**4. 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).

**5. The Salvation of Man**

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

1. 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 Ghost, 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).

1. 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).

**6. The Ordinances of the Church**

1. 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).

1. 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!"

**7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost**

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost 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 enduement 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 Ghost 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).

**8. The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost**

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost 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.

**9. Sanctification**

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and a 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 Ghost 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).

**10. 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, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

1. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
2. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Corinthians 12:13).
3. 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).

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. The experience:

* 1. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:11-16; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
  2. Adds a necessary dimension to a wonderful relationship with God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Corinthians 12-14).
  3. 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 (Galatians 5:22-26; 1 Corinthians 14:12;Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Colossians 1:29).

**11. The Ministry**

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the threefold purpose of leading the Church in: (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) worship of God (John 4:23, 24), and (3) building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11, 16).

**12. 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).

**13. The Blessed Hope**

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).

**14. The Millennial Reign of Christ**

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).

**15. The Final Judgment**

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 (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

**16. 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**

# Section 1. 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).

# Section 2. Holy Communion

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

**ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP**

# Section 1. Membership Eligibility

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

1. A testimony to an experience of the "new birth." (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:18-25).
2. Having been baptized in water by immersion. (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-6).
3. Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13, 14; Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1, 2, 15; 1 John 1:6, 7).
4. Acceptance of the Tenets of Faith as set forth in Article IV of these bylaws.
5. Who is a total abstainer from alcoholic beverages and does not depend upon illegal physical stimulants. *(Please note, some churches add other items to this part.)*
6. An indication of a willingness to contribute regularly by tithes and offerings to the financial support of this church in its activities.
7. Having reached at least 18 years of age.
8. 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.
9. Maintain Sexual Purity as defined in scripture and our church’s beliefs. (1 Corinthians 6:18, I Thessalonians 4:3). We believe that adultery, sex outside of the marriage relationship, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, transgender behavior, and viewing pornography are sinful and immoral behaviors. We will not receive into membership anyone who has the active practice of such behaviors.  In no case shall a person be accepted into membership who is known to be living in a common-law state of matrimony. Neither will we receive anyone into membership who is married to a person of the same gender, known as same-sex marriage. Divorced and remarried persons who meet the other membership qualifications may become members.
10. Agreement to being governed by the bylaws of this assembly, and of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, as both may be amended from time to time.

**Section 2. Voting membership**

Legal voting membership of the church shall consist of all members who are 18 years of age and above, whose names appear on the assembly roll, who are above reproach and in good standing with the assembly, who have not willingly absented themselves fully from the regular services for a period of 30 days *(Note: some churches say 90 days*) prior to a business meeting, and who have not been active in any services which were of an opposing or antagonistic nature either in doctrine or spirit prior to the business meeting. No non-Assemblies of God credentialed ministers shall vote or participate in any business meeting. The officers of the assembly shall be chosen from the voting membership.

# Section 3. Procedure for Membership Recognition

Those individuals eligible for membership who shall desire to become members of this church shall make written application to the pastor or church board. The church board 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 board 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 an annual business meeting or a special business meeting.

# Section 4. 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 section 1 of this Article VI.

# Section 5. Transfer of Membership

A. Any member of this assembly desiring the transfer to another assembly shall ask for an official letter of transfer.

B. The letter of transfer shall be given following formal action of the church board and shall not be given by pastor's action only. An official letter of transfer shall be considered only as a recommendation, and any church may exercise the right to accept or deny such application.

C. A member in good standing of another Assemblies of God church, who satisfies the standards for membership eligibility specified in Section 1 of this Article VI, may apply for membership by submitting a letter of transfer from the pastor of the other assembly. The transfer of membership must be approved by a majority of the official board

# *Section 6. Junior Membership*

*Junior membership shall be available for young people under 18 years of age, who shall give evidence of the new birth, meet the scriptural standards for membership as specified in these bylaws, and are approved by a majority vote of the church board. Junior members shall not be eligible to vote according to Article VI, Section 2.*

# Section 7. Associate Members

The church board at any regular or special meeting may approve associate members by a majority vote. Eligibility for associate membership is available to any person who is a member in good standing of an Assemblies of God church in another community, who is in this community on a temporary basis, and who intends to return to his or her home church. Associate members shall be entitled to all the privileges of regular members, except that they shall not be eligible to vote and shall not be eligible for any of the offices described in Article VII of these bylaws.

# Section 8. Honorary Members

The church board at any regularly or special meeting may approve honorary members by a unanimous vote of the members present. Honorary membership is available to any member who has left the church indefinitely. Honorary membership recognition shall continue as long as the member maintains a consistent Christian life, remains sound in doctrine, and maintains a cooperative attitude toward this assembly.

# Section 9. Inactive Membership

Active voting members who shall without good cause absent themselves from the services of the assembly for a period of three (3) consecutive months or more, or who cease to contribute of their means of support for a period of three (3) consecutive months, may be declared inactive by action of the official board, and thereupon shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by the definite action of the assembly through its church board.

**Section 10. Discipline**

**A. 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 in the sole discretion of the church board. 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.

The Deacon Board of the church is authorized to developed expanded guidelines related to the grounds for church discipline.

**B. Procedure**

The assembly will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. This procedure consists generally of the following steps: (1) The pastor or a designated member of the church board 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 board or with a designated committee of the church board 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 board may submit the matter to the membership of the assembly in a special business meeting called for that purpose. Only active voting members of the church shall be permitted to attend such a special business 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.

**C. 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

# Section 1. Principles of Government

A. God's method by which the church of Jesus Christ has moved forward down through the centuries, is that God selected a person to be the leader (the pastor) and then gave the leader people (deacons) who serve as support to the leader and as fellow servants to the congregation.

B. The vote of the church is considered the highest authority in local church matters.

# Section 2. The Church Board

The government of this assembly shall be vested in the church board which shall consist of the pastor and at least three deacons, to the extent that such authority is not limited by district supervision as provided for under the bylaws of the District Council.

A. Official Board: The pastor and deacons shall be the official board of directors. There shall be a deacon board of not less than three well-qualified members. Deacons shall be elected only when they qualify according to the requirements set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3-7. They shall be members chosen from among the congregation to "serve the church" in practical, spiritual and temporal matters.

1. Trustees: The deacons shall serve as trustees. Trustees shall be the custodians of the church property and serve as signatories. If the assembly becomes district affiliated and has no deacon board, the trustees shall become an advisory board to the pastor subject to Section 3 of this Article.

B. Relationship of All Boards

1. To the pastor: The board member is the pastor's advisor, helper and prayer partner. In this position, he is a loyal supporter to the pastor, assisting him to fulfill the vision and goals God has given him for this assembly. The pastor is the chairman and a voting member of the official board.

2. To each other: Board members are a team, working together within the scope of their assignment with the view to achieving the successful advancement of the church. Board members should seek to develop a close relationship through mutual prayer, worship and cooperative co-laboring with the pastor and his staff.

3. To the congregation: Board members should promote goodwill in the congregation and should strengthen the people's confidence in the pastor and his leadership. The spiritual interest and welfare of the congregation are their concern and responsibility.

4. To the community: Board members should be this church's public relations men in the community. Their lives should be a testimony of true Christianity, and they should conduct themselves in a manner that will honor Christ.

C. **Duties of Officers**

SPECIAL NOTE: Elder or Eldership: The use of the word in the original Greek (Acts 20:17, 18; 1 Timothy 5:17; James 5:14, etc.) shows that the word "elder" or "eldership" refers to the same office as pastor, bishop or overseer. The pastor is God's gift to the church; board members are the church's gift to the pastor.

1. **Pastor**

a. There shall be a pastor who is a credentialed minister in good standing with both The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, holding a current fellowship card.

b. The pastor is the spiritual governor of the church and of its activities. He shall provide for all services of the assembly, and shall arrange for all special meetings, conventions or revival campaigns. No person should be invited to speak or preach in this assembly unless it is in full accord with the pastor's wishes.

c. The pastor is the chairman with voting privileges in all of the business meetings of the assembly and in the official board meetings. He shall appoint all standing committees, and shall serve as an ex officio member and supervisor of all committees, departments and visitation work.

d. The pastor shall be the leader in evangelism and in the disciplining of members. He shall examine all applications for church membership and shall present his recommendations to the official board.

2. **Ministerial Staff**

Ministerial staff such as Associate Pastor, Youth Pastor, Music Director, Christian Education Director, etc., shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and ratified by the official board. All staff members shall be amenable to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor should give staff persons a job description in order to enhance working relationships. Upon the resignation of the pastor, the ministerial staff also shall tender their resignations to the official board.

3. **Duties of Church Board**

1. The church board shall have general charge and management of the affairs, funds, and property of the assembly. The church board shall have the authority to carry out the purposes of the assembly according to its charter and these bylaws.
2. The church board shall act in the examination of applications for membership and in the administration of discipline.
3. For so long as the church is temporarily without a pastor, the remaining members of the church board shall be empowered to select a temporary chairman of the church board.
4. The church board shall elect a secretary from among its members.
5. The church board shall elect a treasurer from among its members.
6. The church board is authorized to adopt policies and procedures for the operation of the church as long as those policies do not conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the assembly or General and District Council bylaws.

4. **Trustees**

a. Trustees shall act in the name of, and for the benefit of the assembly, to hold legal title to the church properties. The trustees shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents relating to the acquiring or disposing of the properties of this church.

b. The trustees, serving as custodians of the church property, shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and insurance, etc., of these properties.

1. The deacons shall serve as trustees.

5. **Secretary**

a. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the assembly. The secretary shall also be the custodian of the minutes of the official board meetings, as well as custodian for all other legal documents.

b. The secretary shall keep a record of the membership of the assembly and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of the office.

c. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be held jointly.

6. **Treasurer**

a. The treasurer shall be entrusted with all finances of the assembly, subject to the supervision of the church board, and shall deposit all funds in federally insured accounts the name of the assembly. Two officers as authorized by the pastor and official board must sign all checks issued on behalf of the church.

b. The treasurer shall keep an itemized account of receipts and disbursements and make a report at the regular meetings of the official board and at the annual business meeting.

c. The treasurer shall assist the assembly in acquiring and maintaining available tax exemptions under state and local law.

d. The treasurer shall provide a record of all identified giving to each donor by January 31, after the year in which the contribution was made.

e. The treasurer shall be the custodian of all the financial records of the church.

f. The offices of treasurer and secretary may be held jointly.

D. **Fiduciary Duties**

The law imposes several fiduciary duties on officers, deacons, 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.

E. **Qualifications of Church Officers**

1. Pastor

Only duly credentialed ministers in good standing with the Assemblies of God are eligible to serve as pastor. *(It is recommended that the pastor be either licensed or ordained.)*

1. Ministerial Staff

Ministerial staff, such as associate pastor, youth pastor, music director, Christian education director, etc., should hold credentials with the Assemblies of God or be a member in good standing with an Assemblies of God church.

1. Deacons

The deacons 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. Deacons shall be at least 23 years old. They shall have been baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. They shall be cooperative and active members of the local assembly for at least one year. They shall currently support the church with their tithes and offerings, have a cooperative spirit, and regularly attend church services. They shall abstain from alcoholic beverages. They shall not hold ministerial credentials. **(General Council and District Council policy allows deacons to be elected in cases in which either the deacon or the spouse of the deacon have a former companion still living. The church that desires to allow those individuals to be eligible to serve as deacons, must add the following to their bylaws.**) *Any married prospective deacon candidate who either the husband or wife has a former companion still living, may be considered for the office of deacon provided the divorce meets the exceptions allowed by the General Council of Assemblies of God for prospective ministerial credentials applicants. Those exceptions are: (1) pre-conversion divorce—the divorce took place prior to the first knowledgeable decision to follow Christ; (2) infidelity on the part of the of other spouse; (3) the spouse that left the marriage was an unbeliever and did not want to be married to a believer. (4) the divorce took place because a spouse was physically abusive to their spouse or the children. The church leaders should contact the Arkansas District Secretary for the process to follow to see if those individuals meet the necessary criteria for the divorce exceptions.”*

4. Secretary and Treasurer

They shall be cooperative and active members of the local assembly for a period of at least one year prior to their election. They shall be of honest report and possess the abilities to fulfill the duties of the office. (*A local assembly has the option of the same person serving in both roles or having two different people.)*

5. All leaders of the assembly shall be members in good standing, cooperating with the policies and standards of the local church and fellowship according to Article VI, Section 1.

1. No person associated with the Masonic Lodge or any other secret order shall in any way hold a leadership position within any Assemblies of God church in the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God.

**Section 3.** **Temporary Church Board**

1. Should irreconcilable differences arise between the pastor and other members of the church board, 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 board 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 board, (3) reclassify the church as a District Council affiliated church, and (4) appoint and establish a temporary church board 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 District Superintendent shall appoint someone to take the place of the sectional presbyter on the investigating committee in his place.
2. Should the church membership fall below the twenty (20) members required to be a General Council affiliated assembly or should there not be at least three (3) qualified members to fill the deacon leadership positions, the church shall revert to District Council Affiliated status. The District Superintendent, Sectional Presbyter and pastor shall serve as the board of the church and they may appoint a temporary church board invested with the authority to manage both the secular and ecclesiastical affairs of the church. If the pastor is also the sectional presbyter, the District Secretary shall serve in the place of the sectional presbyter according to District policy.

**Section 4.** **Indemnification of Directors, Officers, Trustees and Pastoral Staff**

1. The church corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceedings, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal (other than the action by or in the right of the church corporation) by reason of the fact that he is or was director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent of the church corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the church corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorney’s fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action, suit or proceedings if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceedings, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceedings by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.
2. The church corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the church corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact he is or was a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of pastoral staff, employee or agent of another church corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expenses (including attorney’s fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or opposed to the best interests of the church corporation and except that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duty to the church corporation unless and only to the extent that the court of the state of Arkansas or the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnify for such expenses which the court of the state of Arkansas or such other court shall deem proper.
3. To the extent that any person referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Article has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceedings referred to therein or in defense of any claim, issue or manner therein, he shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorney’s fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection therewith.
4. Any indemnification under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the church corporation only as authorized in the specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of pastoral staff, employee or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article. Such determination shall be made (a) by the board of directors by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of directors who were not parties to such action, suit, or proceedings, or (b) if such quorum is not obtainable, or, even if obtainable a quorum of disinterested directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.
5. Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding may be paid by the church corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding as authorized by the board of directors in the specific case upon receipt of a written undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member or the pastoral staff, employee or agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the church corporation as provided in this article. The director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, staff member, employee or agent must also furnish the church corporation with a written affirmation of his good faith belief that he has met the standard of conduct described herein, and a determination is made that the facts known at the time to those making the determination would not have precluded indemnification.
6. The indemnification provided by this article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under any statute, bylaw, agreement, vote of stockholders or disinterested directors or otherwise, both as to action in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.
7. The church corporation shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent of the church corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the church corporation as a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the church corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of this article.
8. For the purpose of this section, references to “the church corporation” include all constituent corporations absorbed in consolidation or merger as well as the resulting or surviving corporation so that any person who is or was a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent of such a constituent corporation or is or was serving at the request of such constituent corporation as a director, officer, pastor, deacon, trustee, member of the pastoral staff, employee or agent in another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise shall stand in the same position under the provisions of this section with respect to the resulting or surviving church corporation as he would if he had served the resulting or surviving church corporation in the same capacity.

**ARTICLE VIII CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

Section 1. Christian Marriage

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18, 21-25) and confirmed by Jesus Christ to be a permanent relationship between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). Because marriage is not only a commitment to a spouse, but also to God (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:9; Ephesians 5:31), a believer should marry only another believer (2 Corinthians 6:14). Christian marriage is a reflection of the love, purity, and permanence between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:23-33).

Even though some marriages may fall short of the biblical ideal (see Article IX, B, Section 50, husbands and wives who devote themselves to God (Ephesians 5:21) and find nurture and instruction in the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:25) can realize the strength and blessing of God in their marriage.

Section 2. Children

Children “are a heritage from the Lord”; therefore, rearing them is to be treated as a sacred trust. God’s strength and wisdom are available on a daily basis in order to bring up children to love and obey God (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

**ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS, VACANCIES AND REMOVALS**

# Section 1. Elections

All officers of this assembly shall be elected by secret ballot at the annual business meeting or at a duly called business meeting for that purpose.

A. **Pastor**

1. The pastor shall be nominated by a two-thirds majority of the board for the first election. Recommendations may be made to the official board by any member of the assembly. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.
2. Subsequent elections on an incumbent pastor can be by nomination of the official board or by the request of the pastor with or without the endorsement of the official board.
3. The term of office will be for at least two years at the first election. *(However, it is recommended that the pastor be elected for an indefinite period of time.)* The term of office shall be agreed upon by the pastor and the board before the election.
4. Majority to elect. The first election will require a two-thirds majority vote to elect the pastor. Subsequent elections will require a simple majority vote to retain the pastor. It requires a two-thirds vote for the pastor to be elected to an indefinite term.
5. 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 Superintendent of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God and sectional presbyter. An appeal of their decision may be made to the Executive Presbytery and their decision shall be final.

B. **Deacons**

1. There will be a deacon nominating screening committee made up of the pastor, the deacons whose terms are not expiring *and at least two active members*.
2. The nominating committee will use the following procedures to determine those eligible and available to serve as deacons:
   1. The congregation may suggest names for consideration by the nominating committee for the position of deacon. Nominations will be either be placed in a nominating box set-up or submitted to the Church Secretary at least six weeks prior to the election.
   2. Spiritual qualifications shall be considered as stated under "Qualifications" ARTICLE VII., Section 2, paragraph E, sub-paragraph 3.
   3. The nominee shall be an active member who faithfully supports the local church with attendance and finances.
   4. The nominee should understand Assemblies of God doctrine and church government.
   5. In the event any nominee or a nominee’s spouse has a former companion still living, the pastor and current board members should investigate the circumstances of the divorce to see if the divorce meets the criteria for the exception rules provided by the Assemblies of God. (The Arkansas District Secretaries office can provide detailed guidelines on determining in the exception rule applies to the individual.
   6. Before the nominee is presented, the pastor should share his philosophy and vision and determine the person's willingness to serve.
3. Deacons shall be elected for a three (3) year term staggered appropriately so that one term would expire each year. The term shall expire when another person is elected and qualifies according to the Scriptural qualifications.
4. A simple majority vote is required to elect.

C. **Secretary and Treasurer**

1. The Official Board of the church shall appoint *a member of the board* to serve as the secretary and treasurer. That appointment is ratified at the annual business meeting by the voting membership of the church. (*If the church chooses to have a secretary and treasurer that is not a member of the board then the above would need to be reworded. Plus, provision would need to be made so that the secretary could audit board meetings for the purpose of taking minutes of the meeting.)*

2. In the event of a vacancy, the official board will appoint a replacement to be ratified at the next annual business meeting.

3. A simple majority vote is required to ratify.

# Section 2. Vacancies and Removal

A. Pastor

1. When a vacancy in the office of the pastor shall occur, a temporary replacement shall be arranged for by the official board until a pastor can be chosen as prescribed in ARTICLE IX. Section 1, A. The counsel of the district superintendent will be sought before filling the vacancy.

2. Should a pastor's credentials be withdrawn by the District or General Council, the pastor's term of office shall be automatically terminated.

3. In the event a special business meeting is called by petition as provided in ARTICLE X., Section 4, 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 XII Section 3. C.

B. All other vacancies

1. Any office, other than pastor, may be declared vacant by an act of a majority of the official board in an official meeting. An appeal of the board's decision can be made to the membership in a special called meeting for that purpose. The appeal must be in writing and presented within ten days of the official board's decision.

2. All vacancies shall be under the supervision of the official board except in such cases where the district officiary has the oversight of the church.

3. Any office, other than pastor, may be declared vacant by an act of majority membership at any regular or special business meeting of the church.

C. Filling vacancies

Any office or position of leadership in the church (other than pastor) may be filled by appointment of the official board for the unexpired term.

**ARTICLE X. MEETINGS**

# Section 1. 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 board if there is no pastor.

# Section 2. Annual Business Meeting

There shall be an annual business meeting of the assembly, at which time the election of officers shall take place and the report of all officers shall be presented. The meeting date to be selected by the pastor and deacon board, at which time the election of officers shall take place. The election shall be for the next year or term as designated in these bylaws. The date, time and place of all business meetings must be announced at least two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting.

# Section 3. Official Board Meetings

The official board will meet monthly or at the call of the pastor for the transaction of business for the assembly, time and place to be announced by the pastor. A majority of the board members present shall constitute a quorum if each member of the board has been informed in due time of the meeting.

## Section 4. Special Business Meeting

A. Special business meetings of the assembly may be called by the pastor, or by a majority of the church board, or by a petition signed by not less than one-third 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. The petition must show clearly the nature and need of such a meeting. The meeting that is called by petition shall be chaired by the district superintendent or other district official assigned or designated by the district superintendent.

B. No business other than that specified in the notice of meeting shall be transacted at any special business meeting of the assembly.

C. During the interval between pastors when the church is conducting a pastoral search, the official board can declare the church in a continual "state of business" in order to vote upon a candidate minister either the weekend of their ministry or within the next few days.

# Section 5. Appeals

A. Failure to give due notice of any business meeting would bring it under question and may classify it as "out of order" provided the complaint is duly filed before the sectional presbyter within ten days after such a meeting has been held and provided that sufficient evidence accompanies such complaint to justify action in the matter.

B. Appeals made to the church board, sectional presbyter and/or the district superintendent must be made within ten (10) days after the meeting in question. Sufficient evidence must accompany the complaint to justify district involvement in the matter.

# Section 6. Absentee Voting Privileges

A. Absentee ballots may be accepted in business meetings of the assembly from active voting members who are unable to attend by reason of illness, infirmity, workers on duty, or those out of town for valid reasons. Absentee ballots shall be qualified if; (1) The ballot is sealed in an envelope enclosed in another envelope with the voter's signature on the outside envelope: (2) The ballot shall denote the decision or position being voted on with the vote listed thereinafter.

B. The ballot shall be in the hand of the pastor, church secretary or deposited in the church office, at least 24 hours prior to convening of the business meeting. Such ballot may be delivered by mail or by person.

C. The official secretary of the Assembly, the deacons, and the pastor shall check all absentee ballots to see if they are qualified. If so, they shall be counted on the initial vote only taken on the decision or position being considered in that meeting,

D. If the validity of an absentee ballot is in question, the active voting membership present shall make the final decisions as to its validity.

E. Absentee ballots shall not be accepted for meetings called by petition for the removal of officers or other church leaders.

# Section 7. Parliamentary Order

All business 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.

# Section 8. Voting Constituency

A. Qualifying of Voters

The voting constituency at all business meetings of the assembly shall consist of all active voting members who are present and who are 18 years of age or older (ARTICLE VI. Sections 1 and 2).

B. New and Transfer Members

No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before an annual business meeting or a special business meeting.

C. Members Under Process of Discipline

No member under the process of discipline shall be entitled to a vote until the process is completed.

# Section 9. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of all members present at any duly called business meeting.

# Section 10. Order of Business

The regular order of business for the annual business meeting this assembly shall be as follows:

1. Devotional
2. Reading of previous minutes
3. Report of treasurer
4. Report of committees
5. Unfinished business
6. Election of officers
7. New business
8. Adjournment

**ARTICLE XI. DEPARTMENTS**

# Section 1. In General

This assembly shall create and maintain such departments and sub-organizations as may be necessary and advisable for the extension of its work. All such departments and organizations shall be subordinate to the assembly and shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole. They shall be under the general supervision of the pastor and official board, and the pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees or departments.

**ARTICLE XII. FINANCE**

# Section 1. In General

The voluntary contributions, tithe, and offerings of the members and friends of this organization shall provide all funds for the maintenance of the assembly. Offerings shall be accepted by the assembly as such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the official board and shall be administered by the treasurer under their direction (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

# Section 2. Handling of Offerings

All offerings shall be counted by at least two authorized persons before the funds are removed from the church building. An offering receipt form shall be signed in duplicate by those counting the offering, with one copy going to the treasurer and the other to the pastor. A record shall be kept of all receipts and disbursements of this assembly and of all individual giving. All funds shall be deposited in either a federally insured account or in an endorsed financial institution such as Assemblies of God Financial Services or Church Extension Plan.

# Section 3. Pastoral Remuneration

1. Regular Remuneration

The pastor shall be remunerated for services by a salary or by other means mutually agreed upon by both he and the official board. This financial support should include salary, business expenses, parsonage expense, medical expense and Minister's Benefit Association Retirement. The official board shall review the pastor's remuneration at least annually.

1. Reimbursement for Expenses

The pastor shall be given consideration by the official board for expenses incurred by his attendance at District Councils, General Council, and other district functions by reimbursement of such expenses, according to the ability of the church as determined by the official board.

C. Severance Pay

In the event a pastor is removed from office by a vote of the active voting membership of the assembly, or shall fail to be sustained by a vote of the active voting membership at the end of a term, he shall be given a minimum of two months regular or average remuneration as severance pay and shall have use of the parsonage for 30 days. An exception can be made in the case of moral turpitude.

# Section 4. Support of District and General Council

1. It is recommended that this assembly send a monthly contribution to the Arkansas District Assemblies of God general fund.
2. The General Council recommends that each church send at least one offering per calendar year toward the administrative offices of the General Council. This offering shall be called a Fellowship Partnership offering, and shall be included with the Annual Church Ministries Report.
3. This assembly shall provide a regular monthly missions offering for Assemblies of God World and U. S. Missions and Arkansas District Home Missions.
4. This assembly shall share in the support of all district department ministries.

**ARTICLE XIII. PROPERTY**

# Section 1. Title

All property of the assembly shall be deeded to the assembly and held in its name, with the responsibility and benefits thereunto.

# Section 2. Purchases and Sales of Property

1. The purchase or sale of any property shall be under the supervision of the official board of this assembly, but no property shall be mortgaged, leased, sold or otherwise disposed of, without authorization 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. If this assembly ceases to function as an Assemblies of God church, the title of said property shall revert to the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, and the executive presbytery shall be authorized to dispose of the property for the benefit of the Assemblies of God. With this reversion clause in the bylaws and/or in the deed to any church property, this assembly shall have the right to mortgage or sell such property, and the executive committee of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God shall execute the proper documents.
2. All church property shall be deeded so as to make it safe for an Assemblies of God church organization in times of crisis or division, and to prevent its being diverted by any portion of the church body to other church interests or organizations. In the event of an affiliation with such interest, or should it for any reason fail to function as an Assemblies of God church, all property rights are to come under supervision and into the hands of the executive presbytery of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters now at Little Rock, Arkansas, until an Assemblies of God church can properly function or the proceeds be used to promote the Assemblies of God church interests elsewhere. In case the church property shall revert to the district and a decision is made by the executive presbytery to dispose of it, the executive committee shall execute the proper documents.
3. The church property shall be conveyed to the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God with the superintendent, assistant superintendent and the secretary-treasurer as trustees, and their successors in office. The property thus secured, shall be conveyed by the trustees of the district back to this assembly with the following reversion clause: "In the event this property should cease to be used by said Assemblies of God organization, or in the event said congregation should ever sever affiliation with the said Assemblies of God organization, this property shall revert to the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God with headquarters at Little Rock, Arkansas.

# Section 3. Disaffiliation

Title to all real property now owned or hereafter acquired by this 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, of Springfield, Missouri, and the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God. In the event that this 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 will remain with those members, whatever their number, desiring continued affiliation with the Assemblies of God and adheres to its Statement of Fundamental Truths. 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 Arkansas 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 this assembly shall revert to the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God 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.

# Section 4. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of this assembly, none of its funds or assets shall be distributed to any officer, deacon, trustee, or any other individual. The official board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the assembly, dispose of all of the funds and assets of the assembly by conveying the same to the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, who may apply the proceeds in any manner consistent with its stated purposes.

**ARTICLE XIV. 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 5 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 XV. AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the assembly by a majority vote of the membership present, except as otherwise indicated herewith. ARTICLES III, XIII, and XV of these bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of 100 percent (100%) of the active voting members present at any annual or special business meeting called for the exclusive purpose of amending these bylaws. ARTICLE IV of these bylaws is not subject to amendment. All amendments must be consistent with the constitution and bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God. The official board of the church shall serve as an editing committee to incorporate into the bylaws the changes that have been adopted by the General Council and the District Council in their regular sessions. The membership shall be notified of these changes by letter, bulletin board announcement or pulpit announcement.