

# By-Laws for Vista Assembly of God

Revised March 2020

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**BYLAWS OF**  
**VISTA ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

Adopted this 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2020

**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 responsibility and the 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 Southern California Network\_ 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 Vista Assembly of God

## **ARTICLE II. PREROGATIVES AND PURPOSES**

The prerogatives and purposes of a General Council 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 and of the Southern California Network 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 board, and 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 Southern California Network 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 Network 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 Southern California Network 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 Southern California Network 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 Network 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 Network 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 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 deacons, and requirements for a pastor to those standards set by the Network and the General Council.

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 Southern California Network 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 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 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

### **The Adorable Godhead**

#### **(a) 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).

#### **(b) 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).

### **(c) 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).

### **d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead**

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).

**(e) 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).

**(f) 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).

**(g) 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).

**(h) 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).

**(i) 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).

**(j) 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).

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

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

- (a) His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
- (b) His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
- (f) 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.

### **(a) 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).

### **(b) 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**

### **(a) 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).

**(b) 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 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 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 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).

### **8. 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.

### **9. 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).

### **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, 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:

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

- a. 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).
- b. Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Corinthians 12-14).
- c. 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).

## **11. 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 (Ephesians 4:11,16), and (4) meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

## **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 burneth 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 dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21 and 22).

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Membership Eligibility**

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

- a. A testimony to an experience of the "new birth."
- b. Having been baptized in water by immersion.
- c. 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).
- d. An indication of a willingness to contribute regularly to the financial support of  
Vista Assembly of God.
- e. Acceptance of the Tenets of Faith as set forth in Article IV of these bylaws.
- f. Having reached at least 18 years of age.
- g. 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.

h. Agreement to being governed by the bylaws of this assembly, and of the Southern California Network of the Assemblies of God, as both may be amended from time to time.

## **Section 2. Procedure for Membership Recognition**

Those individuals eligible for membership who shall desire to become members of this church shall submit a 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 as active members. No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before an annual business meeting or within 10 days before a special business meeting.

## **Section 3. 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 9 of this Article VI.

#### **Section 4. 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 financial means to its support for a period of 3 consecutive months, may be declared inactive members by a majority vote of the church board, 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 board.

#### **Section 5. 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 Southern California Network and General Council of the Assemblies of God.

## **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) by changing their status in the church from active member to inactive member.

## **C. Resignations**

Resignations from membership are possible only by those members in good standing who are not under any disciplinary action.

## **ARTICLE VI. GOVERNMENT**

### **Section 1. The Church Board**

#### **A. In General**

The government of this assembly shall be vested in the church board which shall consist of the pastor and at least six board members, to the extent that such authority is not limited by Network supervision as provided for under the bylaws of the Southern California Network.

#### **B. Qualifications of Church Board Members**

See qualifications for pastors and board members below.

#### **C. 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 and a treasurer from among its members.
- (5) All associate and assistant pastors; directors of youth, music, and education; and any other members of the pastoral or church staff and all other church employees shall be appointed by the Pastor, subject to prior ratification by the Board.

## **Section 2. Officers**

### **A. In General**

There shall be a chairman, secretary, and treasurer. The pastor, by virtue of office, shall be the chairman of the church board. The offices of secretary and treasurer will be held separately by different board members. No employee or their spouse, nor pastor of the church/school (except Senior Pastor) or their spouse, nor spouse of a Board member, may serve on the Board.

### **B. Qualifications**

*(1) Pastor*

The pastor shall be in good standing with both The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Southern California Network, holding a current fellowship card.

*(2) Secretary*

The secretary shall be an active voting member of this assembly for at least 1 year immediately preceding election to office, and shall be a member of the church board.

*(3) Treasurer*

The treasurer shall be an active voting member of this assembly for at least 1 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.

**C. Duties of Officers**

*(1) Pastor*

(a) Shall be the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall direct its activities.

(b) Shall be recognized as a member of the church board, and shall act as Chairman of all

the business meetings of the assembly and of the church board.

(c) Shall provide for all services of the assembly and shall specifically arrange for all special meetings, conventions, and revival campaigns. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the assembly without his approval.

(d) Shall, as chairman of the church board, be chairman of the nominating committee for the selection of Board nominees. The pastor shall privately interview those nominated, ascertaining their eligibility and availability to serve as Board members.

(e) Should conduct a training class at least once a year on the responsibilities of the church board, secretary, treasurer, and other church leaders. Such a training course shall be based upon the scriptural directives for church leadership and the church bylaws.

(f) Shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

*(2) Secretary*

(a) Shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the church board and of the

annual and special business meetings of the assembly.

(b) Shall keep a record of the membership of the assembly and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of their duties.

(c) Shall have oversight of all legal documents.

(d) Shall have oversight of filing annual corporation reports with the secretary of state as may be required by state law.

*(3) Treasurer*

(a) Shall have oversight the finances of the assembly, subject to the supervision of the church board, and shall cause the deposit of all funds as a prudent investor would under the circumstances. All checks issued on behalf of the church must be signed by two Board members other than the pastor.

(b) Shall have oversight of receipts and disbursements, shall ensure that a report for each regular meeting of the church board is presented, and shall present or ensure that an annual report to the assembly is presented in its annual business meeting.

- (c) Shall have oversight and assist the assembly in acquiring and maintaining available tax exemptions under state and local law.
- (d) Shall have oversight of or provide a record of all identified giving to each donor at least annually.
- (e) Shall have oversight of all the financial records of the church.

### **Section 3. Board Members**

The board members 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. Board members shall be at least 26 years old, and shall have been members of the assembly for at least one year. They shall currently support the church with their tithes and offerings, be willing to serve where needed, have a cooperative spirit, and regularly attend church services. They may or may not hold ministerial credentials.

### **Section 4. Fiduciary Duties**

The law imposes several fiduciary duties on officers, and board members, 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.

## **Section 5. Temporary Church Board**

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 Network supervision. The term "Network 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 Southern California Network 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 assistant sectional presbyter shall be a member of the investigating committee in his place.

## **Section 6. Local Church Credential**

As a General Council affiliated church, this assembly may grant a local church credential to persons wishing

to pursue ministerial recognition pursuant to guidelines established by the General Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the Southern California Network with which this assembly is affiliated. It is understood that this credential is to endorse ministry which is undertaken under the auspices of this church and implies no certification by the district council or the General Council, and is not transferable to other churches or ministries.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS, VACANCIES, AND REMOVALS**

### **Section 1. Elections**

#### **A. Pastor**

- (1) The pastor shall be nominated by the church board. Recommendations may be made to the church board by any member of the assembly.
- (2) The pastor shall be elected to serve for 1 or more years or for an indefinite period of time as may be determined at time of election.
- (3) Election shall be by secret ballot at the annual business meeting of the assembly or at a special business meeting called for that purpose. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.

- (4) 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.
- (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 District Executive Presbytery, or any three persons of its choice, and its decision shall be final.

## **B. Secretary**

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

## **C. Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be elected by the church board from among its members. The term of office shall be 1 year, and the treasurer may serve consecutive terms without limitation.

## **D. Board Members**

Board members shall be nominated by the church board (see Article VI, section 2C, paragraph [1][d]), and they shall be elected by a majority vote of those active voting members present at an annual business meeting

of the assembly at which an election is to be conducted. Active voting members may recommend nominees to the church board, however, nominations for board members shall not be accepted from the floor during any business meeting. Board members shall be elected for a 3-year term, and shall hold office until the annual business meeting at which their successor is elected. Board members may not serve more than two consecutive 3-year terms. The terms of board members shall be staggered appropriately.

## **Section 2. Vacancies and Removals**

### **A. Pastor**

When a vacancy in the office of the pastor shall occur, a temporary replacement shall be arranged for by the church board until a pastor shall be chosen as prescribed in Article VII, section 1A. The counsel of the Network superintendent will be sought. When a pastor's credentials are withdrawn by the Network or General Council, the pastor's term of office shall be automatically terminated. In the event a special business meeting is called by petition as provided in Article VIII, Section 3, 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 X, section 3C.

### **B. 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.

### **C. Board Members**

The office of board member shall be vacant upon the expiration of the term of office, or upon the termination of a board member's active membership, whichever shall occur first.

### **D. 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 business meeting called for the limited purpose of removal of such member from office or position of leadership which he holds.

### **E. Filling Vacancies**

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

## **ARTICLE VIII. 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. This meeting shall be held within 90 days of closing of the fiscal year. The Board may for good cause extend this an additional 30 days. The time and place shall be announced by the pastor. Notice of the date, time, and place of each annual business meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during morning worship services on each of the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting at a minimum, and may also be announced by electronic mail, SMS, or website.

### **Section 3. Special Business Meetings**

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 twenty percent (20%) of the active voting members of the assembly. Only those active voting members who have regularly attended services of, and financially supported this assembly for a period of at least 3 consecutive months prior to signing the petition shall be counted. Petitions pertaining to the business affairs of the church shall be submitted to the pastor or the secretary of the church board. A petition pertaining to the status of the pastor shall be directed to the Network superintendent, who shall arrange for a special business 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 business 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 business other than that specified in the notice of meeting shall be transacted at any special meeting of the assembly.

#### **Section 4. 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 5. 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.

## **B. Members Under Process of Discipline**

No member under the process of discipline shall be entitled to a vote until the process is completed (Article V, Section9).

## **Section 6. Quorum**

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

## **Section 7. Order of Business**

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

- a. Devotional
- b. Reading of previous minutes
- c. Report of treasurer
- d. Report of committees
- e. Unfinished business
- f. Election of officers
- g. New business
- h. Adjournment

## **Section 8. The Church Board**

The church board shall meet monthly or at the call of the chairman for the transaction of business for the assembly, time and place to be announced by the chairman. A majority of the board members present shall constitute a quorum.

## **Section 9. Membership Roll**

The church board shall review the list of active voting members at least annually, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the board immediately preceding the annual business meeting, and compile a current list of active voting members.

## **ARTICLE IX. DEPARTMENTS**

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 church board, and the pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees or departments. The assembly may have as many other ministries or departments as it determines necessary to carry out its mission, visions, and values authorized by the church board.

## **ARTICLE X. FINANCE**

### **Section 1. 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 board and shall be administered by the church staff in collaboration with the treasurer (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. Offerings collected by ushers shall be separated by denomination in a separate room by at least two people of the same gender, and once separated, placed in a security envelope and then placed in a safe that has a drop box. An offering receipts 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 the local assembly and of all individual giving.

## **Section 3. Remuneration**

### **A. Regular Remuneration**

The pastor shall be remunerated for his services by a salary or by other means agreed upon by the church board and himself. The church board shall review the pastor's remuneration at least annually. The remuneration to all members of the pastoral staff and other full- and part-time employees shall be set by the Board with the advice and counsel of the Pastor. All salaries and benefits shall be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis or more frequently as the Board desires.

### **B. Reimbursement for Expenses**

The pastor shall be given consideration by the church board for expenses incurred by his attendance at Network, General Councils, and other Network 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 board.

### **C. Severance Pay**

In the event a pastor is removed from office by a vote of the active voting membership of the church, 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 2 months regular or average remuneration

as severance pay, except in the case of moral turpitude, or if the church does not have the funds to do so..

#### **Section 4. Budget**

The Board shall prepare, annually in coordination with Church staff, a unified budget for the Church. Said unified budget shall include all monies received or expended by or for any and all departments of the Church.

#### **Section 5. Audit**

The Board shall audit (or cause to be audited) the books annually or more often as necessary. They shall review monthly income and disbursement statements and the state of the budget.

#### **Section 6. Missions**

Regular financial support to missionaries, missionary projects, and other person(s) and causes related to missions shall be decided upon by the Board.

#### **Section 7. Benevolence Fund**

The Benevolence Fund is to assist persons in financial need. The administration of the fund, including all disbursements, is subject to the exclusive control and

discretion of the Board. The Board may consider suggested designations, but is not bound to honor them. Contributions to the fund are welcome and are tax deductible.

## **ARTICLE XI. PROPERTY**

### **Section 1. Title**

All property of the assembly shall be deeded to the assembly and held in its name.

### **Section 2. Purchases and Sales of Property**

All purchases of furnishings, equipment, and other items of tangible personal property, exceeding \$10,000 in cost shall be authorized by a simple majority vote of the church board. All purchases and sales of real property shall be authorized by a vote of at least two-thirds of the voting members who are in attendance at a regular or special meeting of the assembly.

### **Section 3. 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 Network Council, it shall be dissolved and its properties disposed of according to Article XI, section 4, of these bylaws.

#### **Section 4. 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 Southern California Network 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. 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 Southern California Network, 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.

## **Section 5. Dissolution**

Upon the dissolution of the assembly, none of its funds or assets shall be distributed to any officer, board member, or any other individual. The church board 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 Southern California Network of the Assemblies of God, for the purposes of the assembly, and provided that said Network 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 XII. 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 XIII**

### **AMENDMENTS**

The 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 herein. Articles III, XI, and XIII 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 business 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 Southern California Network.