

church bylaws

The following bylaws constitute a framework for our fellowship and ministry together as Church with Walls.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be Church without Walls. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

ARTICLE II: THE CHURCH

A. The Universal Church

We believe that the true church consists of all who put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, throughout the world—past, present, and future (Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:9-10).

B. The Local Church

We believe that the local church:

1. is a local representative body of the universal church (1 Corinthians 12:27, Romans 16:3-5).
2. is autonomous, directly responsible to Christ, the head of the body and Chief Shepherd of the church (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
3. should, while maintaining its autonomy, fellowship and work together with other churches of harmonious biblical faith as needs and opportunities arise (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Colossians 4:16).

C. Purpose of the Local Church

1. We believe the purpose of the local church is to love God, grow spiritually and help others (Matthew 22:37-40, Colossians 2:6-7, Ephesians 4:12-16, Hebrews 10:23-25).
2. We believe that by fulfilling our purpose as his church, we bring glory to God (Ephesians 3:10-11).

ARTICLE III: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1. We demonstrate our commitment to the church body through our participation in the life of the church. Church without Walls does not have a formal process for joining our church nor do we keep a formal list of church members.
2. Church without Walls is Christ-ruled, elder-led and congregation-affirmed. We welcome the involvement of the church family in affirming the leadership of the church elders and in reaching

consensus regarding significant church decisions, but the local church is not a democracy. We do not hold elections; we seek a spiritual, biblically-informed consensus through the unity and wisdom of the Spirit.

3. As a church we are committed to the historic, biblical Christian faith. To share in the reaching of consensus and in the decision-making process of our church family, you must:
 - a. be committed to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.
 - b. be submitted to the authority of Scripture.
 - c. be committed to Church without Walls as your church family.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A. Elders

1. The elders constitute the governing body of Church without Walls.
2. The office of elder is understood to be synonymous with that of overseer, bishop or church pastor (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
3. The elders are to strive to ensure that no less than three elders serve at all times.
4. The elders are responsible for recognizing those whom the Holy Spirit is making overseers (i.e. elders) of the church (Acts 20:28), and for providing them with opportunities for training and service.
5. All elders must meet the scriptural qualifications, particularly 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
6. Potential elders must meet with the elders for a trial period of not less than six months. This time may be extended at the discretion of the elders.
7. Elder candidates must be announced to the church body. The church body must have adequate time to prayerfully consider the candidate and respond if necessary.
8. Elders serve continuously, until they resign or are relieved of their position by the other elders.
9. Each elder must be evaluated at least once a year.
10. The elders are responsible for all aspects of the hiring and termination of all church staff-members. Remuneration of staff-members is at the discretion of the elders and may be altered accordingly (1 Timothy 5:17-18).
11. All decisions by the elders must be by unanimous consensus. All elders must participate in each decision.
 - a. The only exception to the above is when a particular elder has become himself the subject of discussion and a possible decision. Without denying the elder in question the opportunity to express his perspective and viewpoints, it is appropriate at some point for this elder to be excused from further discussion and any subsequent decision.

B. Pastors

1. The elders will appoint pastoral leaders as needed. These pastors will oversee specific areas of ministry (Acts 6:1-7).
2. Pastors must meet the scriptural qualifications, particularly 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
3. Pastors serve at the discretion of the elders and may be relieved of their position at any time if deemed appropriate by the elders.
4. Pastors will report to and advise the elders concerning their areas of ministry, but are without authority to govern the church.

C. Communication with the Church Body

1. The church body of Church without Walls does not have a formal vote, but the input and counsel of the church family are vital to the health and growth of the church.
2. The elders will periodically inform the rest of the church body regarding significant decisions being considered and will seek the input and counsel of the church body.
3. The elders will call at least one meeting annually with the rest of the church body for:
 - a. the elders to share with the church concerning significant developments related to the life of the church.
 - b. the church members to ask questions and offer input and counsel.
 - c. the opportunity for the church body to affirm the leadership of the church elders.
 - d. the elders to lead the church family in reaching consensus regarding significant church decisions, such as the appointment of new elders and changes to the church bylaws.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH COUNSEL AND DISCIPLINE

A. Counsel and Discipline within Church Body

1. The church has the responsibility to counsel and discipline Christian brothers and sisters when necessary, under the leadership of the elders (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
2. Church discipline must be carried out according to scriptural guidelines (Matthew 18:15-17).
3. The goal of church discipline is always both the protection of the church and the repentance, healing and restoration of the individual.

B. Counsel and Discipline of Church Leaders

1. The elders have the responsibility to counsel and discipline church leaders when necessary.
2. The discipline of church leaders must be carried out according to scriptural guidelines (1 Timothy 5:19-22).
3. Serving as an elder or pastor constitutes agreement to submit to counsel and discipline by the elders when deemed necessary by the elders.
4. The discipline of a church leader may include, but is not limited to: required counseling, personal or public rebuke, temporary or permanent relieving of ministry position, termination of employment and disassociation from church body.

5. The goal of the discipline of a church leader is always both the protection of the church body and the repentance, healing, restoration to fellowship and, if appropriate, restoration to ministry of the church leader.

ARTICLE VI: REVISION OF CHURCH BYLAWS

1. The church bylaws must always be available for the church body.
2. The elders will revise the church bylaws as needed.
3. The church body must be informed whenever the bylaws are revised, and the church body must be given opportunity to offer input regarding the revised bylaws.

Last revised January 20, 2013.