

Bylaws for Freedom Church Ministries, Inc. (FCMI)

Article I - Name

Section 1. The name of this corporation shall be Freedom Church Ministries, Inc. (FCMI). It is an Illinois nonprofit, religious corporation with its principal offices in Lansing, Illinois. FCMI was duly incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois on the 27th day of March 2015.

Section 2. FCMI recognizes itself as a body of Christian believers working together for the common purpose of spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and that under the laws of the State of Illinois, we may exercise all the rights and privileges granted to religious bodies.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this church is to worship and serve the true and living God, to proclaim the Word of God, to care for the saints, to administer the ordinances of the New Testament (i.e., Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and to be active in the propagation of Christianity throughout the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Article III - Statement of Faith

We believe that the holy scripture (Bible) is the fully inspired Word of God, both the Old and New Testaments, and without error in the original manuscripts written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (John 17:17; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21) (Constitution, Article III)

Article IV - Membership

Section 1. New Members

A person or family may be received for membership by any of the following ways:

- A. By Profession of Faith - Membership in FCMI is extended to all who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration; who renounce sin, seeking to follow Him in all areas of their lives; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully agree with FCMI's Statement of Faith; who agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein; who are at least eighteen (18) years of age; who complete prerequisite classes for membership; and who have been baptized by immersion subsequent to profession of their faith in Christ.**
- B. By Statement - An individual seeking membership at FCMI must attend and complete New Member's Class as developed and implemented by the church and submit a membership application that shall be approved by the Pastors and Deacons. New members will be presented to the congregation and accepted into the membership of the church during a designated worship service after all the above requirements have been duly satisfied and confirmed by the Pastors.**

Section 2. Active Members

Active members are the regular attendees and financial supporters who shall constitute the legal voting membership. Members that are absent for a period of six (6) months or more for reasons other than illness, military service, college, etc., will lose membership privileges. (Constitution, Article IV, Section 2)

Section 3. Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church, provided the member is present.

Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for the elective offices of the church.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership will be terminated due to death, transfer to another church, misconduct, or exclusion by action of church leadership.

Article V - Church Discipline

Any member, regardless of office, guilty of “non-scriptural conduct” (including actions of a sinful nature that are contrary to the Statement of Faith) shall be treated according to Matthew 18, and no public complaint shall be honored until this course has been pursued. Charges, when made, shall be in writing, signed by the complainant and submitted to the Deacons and Pastors for evaluation. Removal from the membership shall occur by simple majority vote only after scriptural action to “restore such a one,” in the judgment of the Deacons and Pastors, has failed (Galatians 6:1). Those steps are as follows:

- A. There shall be a Discipline Committee consisting of Deacons and Pastors who shall have sole authority in determining scriptural deviations from the Statement of Faith. (Constitution, Article IV, Section 3; see also Section 4 for Appeal of Membership Removal)**
- B. If the Deacons or Pastors are the subject of a disciplinary matter, they cannot sit as a member of the Discipline Committee. Deacons and Pastors are also entitled to the same process as other church members and will be subject to the same discipline. An Accountability Board will be formed by the Deacons and Board of Directors to investigate any infractions by any of the pastors. (Constitution, Article IX)**

Article VI - Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall regularly meet each Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings for the purpose of education, edification, evangelism, and the worship of almighty God. These meetings will be open to everyone and shall be conducted under the direction of the appointed Pastor. Exceptions can be made by recommendation of the Deacons.

Section 2. Special Services

All church meetings which are essential to the promotion of the objectives of the church must be communicated via the church website, church calendar, and Email, etc., when applicable, at least once prior to the meeting being held, and announced at all services on the Sunday prior to the special service being held.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

Board of Directors' business meetings shall be held quarterly on the second Tuesday evening of the month. Matters of a significant nature must be publicized to the congregation.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider matters of a significant nature. Notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be published on the church website at least one week before the meeting and announced at services on the Sunday prior to the event.

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum consists of a simple majority of those who attend the special or Board business meeting provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called. (Constitution, Article VIII)

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure and orderly conduct for all special meetings of the church in areas not addressed by the Constitution and

the Bylaws. The moderator, who will be the Board Secretary, shall appoint a parliamentarian whose responsibility will be to assure compliance with Robert's Rules of Order, the Constitution, and the Bylaws. A current edition of Robert's Rules of Order should be present at those meetings for reference.

Article VII - Officers

Board of Directors – The Board is the administrative and financial arm of the church and shall be as follows. (Constitution, Article V)

- 1. Senior Pastor/President – Unlimited term***
- 2. Secretary - 5-year term**
- 3. Treasurer - 5-year term**
- 4. 2 Deacons - 2 years (rotating)**
- 5. 2 Congregational Members - 2 years (rotating)**
- 6. Ex-Officio Members: Associate Pastors**

***(Constitution, Article VI, Section 1 – Senior Pastor)**

Article VIII - Church Employment

When a vacancy occurs in the position of a pastor, a Search Committee is to be formed (using similar criteria as the Accountability Board). Representatives must include two (2) members from the Deacon's Ministry, Women's Ministry, and Men's Ministry. Two (2) youth (18 years of age or older) should be included on the Search Committee when searching for youth and children's pastors. The committee will present only one (1) candidate at a time. To be elected, a candidate must receive a majority vote.

Ministerial and pastoral church staff will be recommended by the Senior Pastor and the Deacons. Candidates must receive a majority vote for approval. Should dismissal of a pastor or ministerial staff member

become necessary, a majority vote will be necessary. This consideration can only be made when all attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted. Proper notice of this vote will be made known to members of the congregation at least two (2) weeks in advance of the vote. Reasons for dismissal are outlined in detail in the church Constitution, Article 4, Section 3. Support staff's work is evaluated by the Board and the Deacons with recommendation from the Pastors.

Article IX - Ministries (As of 2023)

All ministries of the church shall be under church control—all ministry officers report to and are under the authority of the Pastors and Deacons. The current church ministries are as follows:

- Bereavement
- Children's Ministry (Awana, Nursery, and Children's Church)
- Coffee Fellowship
- Counters
- Evangelism
- Greeters
- Health
- Hospitality
- Marriage Ministry
- Media
- Men's Ministry
- Praise & Worship Team
- Praise Dancers
- Prayer (Sunday Morning, Monday/Wednesday Evenings)
- Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Security Ministry
- Senior Ministry
- Sunday School (Adult and Children)
- Ushers
- Women's Ministry

- **Youth Ministry**

The church shall evaluate, plan, organize and implement such ministries as deemed necessary.

Article X - Committees

The church shall elect such committees as deemed necessary. Committee members must be members of the church and will serve on a rotating basis for a 3-year term.

Article XI - Accountability Board

There shall be an Accountability Board made up of no less than five (5) people. The Accountability Board shall be made up of individuals nominated by the Associate Pastors and the Deacons and confirmed by a simple majority of the Board of Directors. (II Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 15). The Board of Directors shall consider the nominations and vote to have each nominee appointed.

Section 1. The purpose of the Accountability Board is to:

Provide spiritual covering by prayerfully giving necessary aid, instruction, guidance, protection, and correction as well as counsel, wisdom, and fellowship to the Pastors (Senior and Associate(s)). (II Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 15)

Hear accusations against the Pastors (Senior or Associate(s)) brought to them unanimously by the Board of Directors, excluding any disqualified Board member, and make a determination as to whether a Pastor (Senior or Associate(s)) has committed any of the infractions listed below.

Section 2. The Board of Directors may call the Accountability Board into session to investigate, adjudicate (to hear and decide and to serve as a

judge), and/or dismiss a Pastor if they find him guilty of any of the following accusations:

- Adultery
- Compulsive lying
- Embezzlement
- Found not to be above reproach (I Timothy 3:2-5)
- Mental, physical, financial stress or duress
- Not acting in the best interest of the church
- Sexual immorality (pornography, homosexuality, and sexual harassment)
- Spousal/Child physical abuse and verbal abuse
- Substance abuse (drugs/alcohol)
- Suspicion/Conviction of a felony that is a violation of Scripture

Article XII – Amendments

These Bylaws adopted on this day make null and void all prior addenda and supersede and replace all previous Bylaws voted on prior to this day.

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by a simple majority vote of the church membership.

Date approved: _____

Signed: _____
Senior Pastor, Church Secretary