



SOJOURN CHURCH NORTH

# BYLAWS

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## *Article I*

### **Name**

This church will be known as Sojourn Church North, Inc. (also hereafter referred to as “Sojourn,” “Church,” or “Sojourn Church”). This is a non-profit corporation of the commonwealth of Kentucky. Sojourn is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and for the benefit of a wider association, this church will be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

## *Article II*

### **Beliefs**

The doctrinal outlook of Sojourn is reflected in the following statements:

**A WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WROTE THE BIBLE THROUGH MEN WITHOUT ERROR.**

The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are without error in the original manuscripts. They were written by men, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore fully authoritative, clear, sufficient, and necessary in all matters for the followers of Christ.

**B WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS ETERNALLY IN TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.**

There is one God, infinite and unchangeable in His being, knowledge, wisdom, sovereignty, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness, truthfulness, and faithfulness, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of these three persons is fully and equally God, but they are distinct in terms of their eternal relationships and roles. God desires that we should know Him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of His will and glory.

**C WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD WHO BECAME A MAN, LIVED A SINLESS LIFE, DIED ON A CROSS, WAS BURIED, ROSE BODILY FROM THE GRAVE, AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN TO REDEEM SINFUL PEOPLE.**

He is the second person of the Trinity, fully God, eternally begotten of the Father, not



created. He became fully human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and made His dwelling among his people, living a full life without sin. His perfect life and death on the cross provide the only atonement that satisfies the righteous requirements of God for sinful people. The death of Jesus Christ fully and finally paid for sin, and is redemptive, substitutionary, and effective. The historic fact of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead testifies powerfully to His deity, and is itself humanity's ultimate hope. Jesus Christ will make a personal return to the earth; this imminent return is a sanctifying hope having vital bearing on the life of all Christians.

**D WE BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SUPERNATURAL AGENT WHO APPLIES SALVATION TO SINFUL PEOPLE, REGENERATING, INDWELLING, SANCTIFYING, AND SEALING THEM UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN.**

He is the third person of the Trinity, fully God, eternally proceeding from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit bears persuasive testimony to the realities of Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences. He regenerates and brings repentance and faith to sinful people. He indwells believers, gives them assurance of salvation, and sanctifies them. Christ baptizes all Christians with the Holy Spirit, thus incorporating them into the body of Christ, and the Spirit gives gifts to them and unites them for mutual service within the church. The Spirit bears the fruit of Christian character in the lives of believers, and He guides, instructs, and empowers them for godly living and service.

**E WE BELIEVE THAT GOD CREATES ALL PEOPLE IN HIS IMAGE AS UNIQUELY FEMALE AND MALE.**

Because of creation in God's image, every human life is sacred, full of dignity and significance. In creating people as male and female, God communicated his image in harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of personhood and importance, with a distinction in role and authority. Gender is a fundamental given of human existence, with maleness and femaleness being congruent with human embodiment and being an unchangeable, stable, and consistent characteristic of each image bearer established by God's creational intent. To his image bearers, God gave the mandate to build society through procreation and vocation (Gen. 1:28). This means that most people will be married, though God also calls some to singleness (without loss or diminution of personhood, dignity, or contributive capability). Heterosexual monogamous marriage is God's design for men and women called to covenant together in matrimony. Homosexual behavior and same-sex attraction are a result of the fall to be redeemed through the gospel and the power



of the Holy Spirit. Gender identity confusion and expressions such as transgenderism, unigenderism, and pangenderism are a result of the fall to be redeemed through the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**F WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE SINFUL AND IN NEED OF SALVATION. SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD BROUGHT TO SINFUL PEOPLE BY GRACE ALONE, AND RECEIVED BY PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. TRUE CHRISTIANS WILL BE KEPT BY GOD’S POWER FOREVER.**

Though created in the image of God, all people have fallen into sin and are therefore lost, alienated from God and facing his judgment. Only through justification in Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can sinful people obtain salvation and spiritual life. The only ground of justification is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the only way to receive salvation is through faith in him and repentance from sin. Justification delivers sinful people from the wrath of God due to sin and grants them the perfect righteousness of Christ. The Spirit’s work of regeneration removes the old nature and creates a new nature that loves to please God. Salvation also includes adoption as sons and daughters into the family of God, union with Christ that brings to his co-heirs all spiritual blessings, and the promise of sanctification. All genuine believers will remain Christians throughout their entire life, being protected by the power of God through faith for the experience of the fullness of their salvation. Such perseverance, a mighty work of God, brings the assurance of salvation.

**G WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH IS BOTH UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL.**

The universal church, or Body of Christ, consists of all Christians in all times and in all places. The local church is an autonomous congregation that bands together for worship, instruction, service, fellowship, mission, and celebration of the ordinances. As a local church, Sojourn embraces the rich and vibrant traditions of the universal church. Only people who are members of the universal church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of believers by immersion and the Lord’s Supper are the only two ordinances to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

**H WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE AND TO RULE AND REIGN WITH HIS SAINTS FOREVER.**

At Christ’s return, all



people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. Believers in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. Unbelievers will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. The ultimate hope of all creation, and the final state of all that now exists, is the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

## I WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS IN HUMBLE CONVICTION.

### *Article III*

## Elders

The highest level of human leadership of Sojourn Church North, Inc. shall be vested in a governing team of qualified male elders, hereinafter referred to as the Full Council of Elders, which is responsible for teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding. The Council shall be composed of both paid and unpaid elders who follow the leading of Jesus, who is the chief Shepherd of Sojourn (1 Peter 5:1–4). Because the terms “elder” and “pastor” are used interchangeably in Scripture, they will be used similarly in these Bylaws.

**A QUALIFICATIONS.** To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Sojourn (Acts 20:28), exhibit the highest Christian character, demonstrate the requisite competencies of pastoral ministry, and display unity with the other elders, according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

*i Calling.* An elder possesses a godly ambition to serve in the office of elder. This aspiration comes from the Holy Spirit, who establishes leaders in the church (Acts 20:28). This internal sense of divine calling must be confirmed by the elders and members of Sojourn.

*ii Character.* An elder exhibits the character qualities as detailed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These qualities include being above approach, a mature Christian, a good husband (if married) and a good father (if he has children), temperate, self-controlled, without addictions, respectable and respected by others, and gentle and kind rather than contentious. While still sinful and needing to repent of sin when



his life does not manifest these qualities, an elder must exhibit these characteristics in increasing measure.

**iii Competencies.** An elder demonstrates the requisite competencies for this office, including the ability to teach (cherishes sound doctrine for himself, is able to communicate sound doctrine to others, and is able to refute false doctrine), lead (carry out governing responsibilities), pray (for all church matters, especially for the sick), and shepherd (exercise church discipline, protect the members, and provide stellar examples of faithfulness and obedience for members to follow).

**iv Chemistry.** An elder displays good chemistry with his fellow elders so that they are united in theological vision, core values, philosophy of ministry, and brotherhood.

**B ELDER SELECTION.** To be selected as an elder, the following process is generally followed: assessment of calling, character, competencies, and chemistry; successful completion of the elder-in-training process; approval by the Full Council of Elders; affirmation (through voting) by the members at his church; installation as an elder at his church. In the case of hiring an elder from outside of Sojourn, the investigation, interviews, and due diligence carried out by the elders doing the hiring constitutes the above process. Upon his hiring, he is installed as an elder.

**C ELDER SERVICE.** Elder service continues for as long as an elder is qualified to be an elder. Sabbaticals for various reasons may be granted for a season, during which the elder is inactive and does not vote. Resignation from the office of elder must be preceded by a letter of resignation, to be approved by the Full Council of Elders.

An elder shall be dismissed from office in the following instances (an illustrative, not exhaustive, list): moral impropriety, doctrinal error, bringing reproach to the name of Christ and/or Sojourn Church, incompetency, disunity with the rest of the elders, and any other failure that would fall under the category of actions that demand church discipline. A committee established by the Full Council of Elders shall investigate a credible charge against an elder, and shall follow the investigative process outlined in the Philosophy of Ministry document.



Service as an elder confers the authority to preach, oversee the administration of the ordinances, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under state law.

- D GOVERNANCE.** The Full Council of Elders may structure and organize itself however it deems necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of Sojourn Church and the size of the Full Council of Elders. Any such restructuring must preserve the plurality of elders and the calling, character, competencies, and chemistry requirements for elders articulated above. The Full Council of Elders is the “Board of Directors” unless a team is designated for the purpose of governance under applicable law. The team designated as such governing body shall be the Board of Directors of Sojourn.

To promote efficient handling of its matters, the Full Council of Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Full Council of Elders.

All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Full Council of Elders and serve under its authority.

## *Article IV*

### **Licensure and Ordination**

- A LICENSURE.** Any male member who in the judgment of the Full Council of Elders fulfills the requirements of a deacon or elder and is called of God to the work of ministry may be granted permission for licensing according to the regulations of the commonwealth of Kentucky. Licensing shall be ongoing until cancelled by the Full Council of Elders.
- B ORDINATION.** The church shall have authority to ordain any of its members who give evidence of divine call to ministry. Ordination is considered to be for life, unless there is good cause to terminate an ordination.





## Article V

### Deacons

Deacons are qualified men and women who serve Jesus Christ by leading the many ministries of Sojourn Church. These ministries include, but are not limited to, community groups, children's ministries, mercy ministries, women's ministries, men's ministries, missions, connect ministries, worship and arts ministries, and care ministries. Because this office is not one of authority in areas of teaching and leading, male and female deacons serve in it. (Female deacons are not in violation of Paul's prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12).

- A QUALIFICATIONS.** To be considered as a deacon, they must meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They must be of sound doctrine and character, not duplicitous in speech so as to deceive people, without addictions, a good husband or wife (if married), a good father or mother (in the case of having a family), faithful, and full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3). A deacon is first tested for the competency to serve as a leading servant and, having been found blameless in life and ministry, is installed in this office.
  
- B SELECTION.** To be selected as a deacon, the following process is generally followed: nomination by a ministry leader at their local church; assessment of the above qualifications and passing the test of service; successful completion of the deacon-in-training process; approval by their local church elders; installation as a deacon at their local church.
  
- C SERVICE.** Deacon service continues for as long as they are qualified to serve and actively serve. Resignation from the office should come by way of a letter of resignation sent to the Elders at their local church.

A deacon shall be dismissed from office in the following instances (an illustrative, not exhaustive, list): moral impropriety, doctrinal error, bringing reproach to the name of Christ and/or Sojourn Church, incompetency, disunity with the rest of the deacons and elders, and any other failure that would fall under the category of actions that demand church discipline.



## *Article VI*

### **Meetings of the Members**

At the annual meeting of the members, the elders are required to submit a budget to the church members of Sojourn for approval.

The elders may call other meetings of the members, as deemed necessary.

## *Article VII*

### **Church Membership**

Church membership is an important and formal process based on a confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

There are both privileges and duties associated with church membership. See the Philosophy of Ministry document for more details on church membership.

## *Article VIII*

### **Officers**

**A STATE-REQUIRED OFFICERS.** The elders shall designate the following state-required officers:

- i* President, who is also the Chairman (unless otherwise determined) and Lead Pastor.
- ii* Secretary of the corporation from the active church membership.
- iii* Treasurer of the corporation from the active church membership.

**B OTHER OFFICERS.** The Board of Directors may also choose other officers and agents as it deems necessary. Any number of offices may be held by the same person, except that the office of president and secretary may not be held by the same person.



**C OFFICER FUNCTION.** All officers are to function in line with the Statement of Faith, Core Values, and Mission Statement of this church.

**D THE PRESIDENT**

- i* The office of President is filled by the Lead Pastor of the church.
- ii* The President shall be the presiding officer for Sojourn Church and shall, subject to the provisions of these Bylaws,
  - a* have general and active management of the affairs of Sojourn Church and have general supervision of its officers, agents and employees;
  - b* preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors; and
  - c* perform those other duties incident to the office of president and as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors.
- iii* The President's term is indefinite.
- iv* The President shall chair an annual Sojourn Church members' business meeting that includes a report of the financial state of the church.

**E THE SECRETARY**

- i* The Secretary of the Corporation shall be selected annually from among the active Board of Directors during the first meeting of the year. The term of office shall be for one year, and may be successive.
- ii* The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings of the church and the Board of Directors. Execution of these duties may be fulfilled personally or delegated as agreed to by the Board of Directors.



- iii* The Secretary shall be custodian of all legal documents and shall be authorized to sign all official and legal documents, to conduct church correspondence where required, and to perform any other functions as are customary or as may be directed by the Board of Directors.

## **F THE TREASURER**

- i* The Treasurer of the Corporation shall be selected annually from among the active Board of Directors during the first meeting of the year. The term of office shall be for one year, and may be successive.
- ii* The Treasurer's duties may be delegated to a bookkeeper or accountant, and shall include being the overseer and custodian of all church funds, which shall be deposited into bank accounts as designated by the Board of Directors.
- iii* The Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks and make disposition of funds as may be required in the accurate conduct of church business under the supervision of the Board of Directors and consistent with this or any other provision of these Bylaws.
- iv* The Treasurer, or a designee, shall give a financial report to the Board of Directors at its regular meeting and help prepare reports that may be given to the church.
- v* The Treasurer shall perform any other functions that may be customary or as may be directed by the church or the Board of Directors.
- vi* The Board of Directors may delegate all the duties of the Treasurer to others following consultation and consensus.

**G REMOVAL OF OFFICERS.** Removal of officers for good and sufficient cause shall be by action of the Board of Directors, and reported to the congregation. No officer shall be removed from office until positive effort has been made to assist that officer in correcting the problem, except in the case of gross moral, civil or criminal misconduct, in which case removal will be immediate.



**H RESIGNATIONS OF OFFICERS.** Resignations of officers shall be in writing to the President, effective on the date specified in the resignation or as determined by the Board of Directors. (The resignation of the President shall be in writing to the Board of Directors.)

## *Article IX*

### **Church Discipline**

God involves his church in every aspect of his redemptive work. This holds true even when God disciplines his children out of his love for them so they can share in his holiness (Heb. 12:4-11). In what is commonly referred to as church discipline, God invites his church to participate with him as he carries out his loving, redeeming discipline. God carries out his discipline in and through the body of Christ (Matt. 18:15-20).

Church discipline makes membership meaningful—members and leaders care about one another and commit to encourage each other to follow Christ, enabling the church to enjoy life with God and participate in his mission.

**A PURPOSE.** Church discipline has four broad purposes:

*i* restoring relationships,

*ii* removing wickedness,

*iii* renewing God's people and

*iv* revealing God's love and glory.

**B PEOPLE.** Church discipline involves members and regular attenders who refuse to seek and obey God as well as those who seek to encourage them to turn back to Jesus Christ for mercy and forgiveness (Isa. 55:1-7). God's discipline is accomplished as the people of God seek to fight the good fight of faith together as a community of believers (1 Tim. 6:12). The elders oversee church discipline as they seek to shepherd the church.



- C PROCESS.** Jesus offers a general process for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-20. God's discipline expands (involving more people, to include elders) and escalates (involving increasing efforts of warnings, telling the church and removal). As agreed to in the church covenant, if a person is the subject of pending disciplinary action, the person consents and submits to the elders' continuing authority to complete the disciplinary process and not withdraw from membership. See the Philosophy of Ministry Document for more details on church discipline.

## *Article X*

### **Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of Sojourn shall be July 1 – June 30.

## *Article XI*

### **Budget**

On an annual basis, the elders must submit a budget to the members for approval (see Article VI). During the course of the fiscal year, the elders may need to make amendments to the approved budget. The following are guidelines for making such amendments:

- A** Adjustment to accommodate giving growth: The elders may increase the budget if giving exceeds the amount estimated in the annual budget. The elders may make such amendments and member approval is not required.
- B** Adjustment to accommodate ministry needs: The elders may increase the budget for expanding the scope of ministry up to 5% of the originally approved annual budget. Increases in excess of 5% to the annual budget must be approved by majority vote of the members.
- C** Reallocation of the budget: The budget may be amended by reallocating funds from one primary fund to another (e.g., transferring staffing dollars to missions funds) by the elders up to 5% of the annual budget. Reallocation of funds that result in a change of greater than 5% must be approved by majority vote of the members.



## Article XII

### Voting

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute corporate members, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon Sojourn, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of Sojourn, or rights to vote on its disposal, except any vote specifically provided in these Bylaws or as specifically provided by the Elders. Said property of Sojourn is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation. Member voting shall occur in the following instances:

- A BUDGET AFFIRMATION.** Affirmation of the annual budget and significant increases to the budget arising from increased ministry needs or significant reallocation of funds which exceed 5% of the existing annual budget - see Article XI(B)-(C) of these Bylaws.
- B ELDER AFFIRMATION.** Affirmation of elder candidates from within Sojourn for installation according to local congregation.
- C PURCHASES OF LAND AND REAL ESTATE**
- D AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

A quorum shall be necessary only in the case of the rejection of any of the above instances. A quorum is not necessary for a vote of affirmation.

If a vote is taken resulting in the rejection of one of these items, an attendance record is to be taken. If the number of church members present is less than 50% of all the church membership, the elders are to communicate in writing to all members the result of the vote, and within 45 days, a time for either:

- E SECOND VOTES.** A second vote on the same issue, with the goal to have a quorum present at that meeting.
- F A MEMBERSHIP MEETING TO PRESENT AN ALTERNATIVE (IN THE CASE OF A BUDGET)**



### *Article XIII*

## **Prohibited Activities**

Sojourn is prohibited from engaging in activities that violate its written doctrines. Sojourn is also prohibited from condoning, promoting, or allowing any of its assets to be used for activities that violate its written doctrines.

### *Article XIV*

## **Mutual Interest**

- A BEHAVIOR.** The behavior of anyone in fellowship with Sojourn is of common interest to the Full Council of Elders and members. (Galatians 6:1). Further, Sojourn requires every elder, deacon, staff member, and church member to adhere to a lifestyle that is consistent with the doctrines of Sojourn as taught in the Bible.
  
- B RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE.** Therefore, Sojourn reserves the right to refuse service to any individual, whether member or not, that is not submitting their lifestyle to this scriptural mode of conduct. This refusal would include services, benefits, and any use of church assets.

### *Article XV*

## **Dissolution**

Sojourn may be dissolved by a three-fourths' majority vote of the Full Council of Elders. The quorum required is 100%. In the event of dissolution, all outstanding debts will be retired, including any severance of current employee(s) granted by the Full Council of Elders. The remaining church property (or properties), both real and personal, and all proceeds there from, shall be given without cost to one or more likeminded churches and/or non-denominational, evangelical, or tax-exempt religious organizations. The Full Council of Elders shall choose the recipients.





## Article XVI

### Indemnification

- A POWER TO INDEMNIFY.** Sojourn has the power to indemnify (including the power to advance expenses to) its elders, officers, employees, and agents made a party to a proceeding, provided, however, that no such indemnity shall indemnify any such elder, officer, employee, or agent from or on account of:
- i* Acts or omissions of such elder, officer, employee, or agent finally adjudged to be intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law.
  - ii* Conduct of the elder, officer, employee, or agent finally adjudged to be in violation of Kentucky law.
  - iii* Any transaction with respect to which it was finally adjudged that such elder, officer, employee, or agent personally received a benefit in money, property, or services to which such person was not legally entitled.
- B INSURANCE.** Sojourn may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any elder, officer, employee, or agent or any person who, while as an elder, officer, employee or agent of Sojourn, is or was a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not Sojourn would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under the Kentucky Nonprofit Corporation Acts.
- C REPEAL OR MODIFICATION.** Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.
- D SEVERABILITY.** If any provision of this Article or any application thereof shall be invalid, unenforceable, or contrary to applicable law, the remainder of this Article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it



is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

### *Article XVII*

## **Amendments**

Sojourn bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed by the affirmative vote of a 100% quorum of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Full Council of Elders, in addition to the requirements of Article XII.

### *Article XVIII*

## **Books and Records**

Sojourn shall keep correct and complete books and records of account including, but not limited to, the following:

- A ARTICLES AND BYLAWS.** Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws shall be kept indefinitely.
- B LISTS OF PERSONS.** Lists of members, elders, and officers shall be kept current.
- C MINUTES.** Minutes shall be kept for a minimum of three (3) years.
- D FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RECORDS.** Complete financial books, records of account, and legal documents shall be maintained for such a length of time as deemed appropriate by the Full Council of Elders. Records shall be available to be inspected by any active member for reasonable purposes at any reasonable time. Requests to view records must be made to the Full Council of Elders.



## Certificate of Secretary

I certify that I am the duly elected and acting secretary of Sojourn Church North, Inc., and that the foregoing Bylaws constitute the Bylaws of the Church. These Bylaws were duly adopted by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of approval by the Full Council of Elders of the Church, dated \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

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**DATED**

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**BY**

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**NAME**

SECRETARY

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**TITLE**

