

# Bylaws

of the

## SOUTH MILLS CHURCH of CHRIST

Adopted: February 1, 1987

Amended: February 7, 1988

Amended: August 25, 2002

### PREAMBLE

Whereas, the New Testament is the only perfect constitution for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church, we accept it as our only rule of faith and practice. We acknowledge no creed, confession, or articles of faith other than the Word of God as recorded by the apostles and prophets of His Church.

These bylaws exist merely as a written understanding of how the principles of the New Testament shall be applied to the administration of this local congregation. If in any point it is found to be inconsistent with or contrary to the Christian scriptures, it is, in that point, null and void.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

Section 1. The name of this body shall be the South Mills Church of Christ. Its members shall be called simply "Christians."

Section 2. Whereas, the Church established by the Lord Jesus Christ is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one, we shun the use of any sectarian or denominational names that might divide us from other members of the Body of Christ. Since Christ is the head of the Church, this congregation and its members wear His name. We do not claim to be the only Christians, but we are Christians only.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27); to worship God in spirit and in truth (Hebrews 10:19-25); to preach the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-11); to observe the ordinances of Christian Immersion and the Lord's Supper (Romans 6, I Corinthians 11); to supply instruction in righteousness (Ephesians 4:11-16); to exercise discipline (II Thessalonians 3:6-15); to provide fellowship and Christian growth (Romans 15:1-17, Ephesians 2:14-22); to minister to the unfortunate (James 1:27, Acts 6:1-6); to seek the lost (Matthew 28:16-20); and to promote the unity of all Christians in one body, under one head, Christ, with the word of God as the basis for that union (I Corinthians 1:10, Romans 14:19).

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERS

Section 1. Whereas the Lord Himself adds to His church such as should be saved (Acts 2:47), any penitent believer who confesses faith in Jesus Christ and is baptized (immersed in water) in His name for the remission of sins shall be eligible for membership in this local congregation. Any person who expresses his desire to affiliate with the church shall become a member upon his being baptized or, if he has already been baptized for the remission of sins, upon his public statement of his continued faith in Christ and his desire to become a member of this local congregation.

Section 2. Any member who is not present at the Lord's Table at least six times in six months shall be declared "inactive." No inactive member shall participate in any business of or hold office in the church. The elders of the church shall have power to make such exceptions to this section as they see fit.

Section 3. Only those members who have reached the age of eighteen years may participate in business meetings or hold office in the church.

Section 4. Though members of the church are responsible for their own character and conduct, they are also subject to the supervision and discipline of the church's elders. The elders of the church shall have power to conduct whatever disciplinary action they deem necessary to maintain the honor and integrity of the Body of Christ or the spiritual welfare of its members. When necessary, discipline shall be exercised with love and forbearance, according to the instruction of Holy Scripture. The elders may, at their discretion, refer any disciplinary action to the congregation. All cases involving the excommunication of a member shall be referred to the congregation for final disposition.

## ARTICLE IV. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1. The Church of Christ depicted in the New Testament is a glorious fellowship whose unity is realized not in any man-made extra—congregational ecclesiastical organization, but in Christ alone, to whom be the glory. Following the example of the New Testament church, this congregation is a self-governing body of professing Christians united under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We recognize no ecclesiastical body or authority beyond the local congregation and its duly elected officers.

Section 2. Though this particular congregation, as are all congregations organized after the New Testament pattern, is independent as to the management of its own affairs, we regard the universal Church, the Body of Christ, as one community. The congregation may, therefore, commune and cooperate with other congregations in endeavors that advance the Kingdom of God and the welfare of the churches.

## **ARTICLE V. OFFICERS**

Section 1. The church shall elect the following officers: ministers, elders, deacons, a church treasurer, a church clerk, a Bible school superintendent, and trustees. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed for them by the New Testament, these bylaws, and by any special rules adopted by the congregation.

Section 2. At least thirty days before the annual meeting, the elders shall receive candidate nominations for the offices to be filled at the annual meeting.

Section 3. Elders and Deacons shall be elected by ballot to serve at the pleasure of the church, and their term of office shall begin at the close of their ordination service held on the Lord's Day following their election.

Section 4. Ministers shall be elected by ballot to serve at the pleasure of the church, and their terms of office shall begin at the close of their installation service.

Section 5. The treasurer, church clerk, and Bible school superintendent shall be elected by ballot for a period of one year. Their term of office shall begin on the first day of the calendar year following the annual congregational business meeting. The elders shall make appointments when necessary to fill vacancies until elections are held at the next congregational business meeting.

Section 6. Trustees shall be elected by ballot for a period of five years. Their term of office shall begin on the first day of the calendar year following the annual congregational business meeting. The elders shall make appointments when necessary to fill vacancies until elections are held at the next congregational business meeting.

Section 7. The congregation may remove any officer of the church from office for cause by a two-thirds vote of the active membership present at a congregational meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI. MINISTERS**

Section 1. The church shall elect a preacher and such other salaried ministers as it deems necessary. Ministers shall serve ex officio as members of the board of elders.

Section 2. All salaried ministers of the church shall serve at the pleasure of the church under written contract specifying their duties and compensation.

Section 3. Following the New Testament's teaching on the priesthood of all believers, and against the man-made distinctions between clergy and laity, this congregation affirms that its salaried ministers are to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 14:11—12).

Section 4. The principle duty of the preacher shall be to preach.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELDERS**

Section 1. A board of at least two elders elected by and from the church shall be charged with shepherding, instruction, discipline, and spiritual direction of the church. The elders shall have general supervision of the affairs of the congregation and full power and authority to act for the congregation between its business meetings.

Section 2. Any man who has been a Christian for at least five years, has been a member of the local church for at least a year, and who meets the scriptural qualifications for the office of elder is eligible for that office.

Section 3. Regular meetings of the board of elders shall be held each month. Special meetings of the board of elders may be called by any elder or minister.

Section 4. If at least two men cannot qualify and be elected to the office of elder by the congregation, a committee consisting of the active adult male members of the church shall discharge all duties of the board of elders.

## **ARTICLE VIII. DEACONS**

Section 1. Deacons shall be charged with providing for the physical and financial needs of the church, its benevolent ministry to the needy, and such other duties as the elders may assign to them.

Section 2. Any man who has been a Christian for at least two years, has been a member of the local church for at least six months, and who meets the scriptural qualifications for the office of deacon is eligible for that office.

Section 3. Deacons shall give an account of the actions they have taken in their ministry each month to the elders.

## **ARTICLE IX. TRUSTEES**

Section 1. A board of at least three trustees with a maximum of five shall be elected by and from the church and shall act on the congregation's behalf in regards to current and future legal matters. The trustees will be under the general supervision of the eldership.

Section 2. Any man who has been a Christian for at least three years and has been a member of the local congregation for at least one year is eligible for the office of trustee.

Section 3. Unless otherwise ordered by the board, the regular meeting of the board of trustees shall be held at least thirty days prior to the annual congregational meeting. Special meetings of the board may be called by any trustee or by the elders.

## **ARTICLE X. MEETINGS**

Section 1. The church shall meet for worship each Lord's Day and at such other times as the elders shall deem appropriate.

Section 2. The church shall hold an annual business meeting on the first Lord's Day in December for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports of officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the ministers, the elders, or by one-fifth of the active membership of the church. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call and, except in cases of emergency, at least ten day's notice shall be given to the congregation at the regular services of the church, through an announcement, and through the bulletin.

Section 4. The active members of the church present shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE XI. COMMITTEES**

Section 1. The elders shall appoint such committees, standing or special, as they or the church shall from time to time deem necessary to carry on the work of the church. The ministers shall be ex officio members of all committees.

Section 2. All committees shall be subject to the orders of the elders and of the congregation. No action of any committee shall conflict with action taken by the elders or by the congregation.

## **ARTICLE XII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of *A Parliamentary Guide for Church Leaders* shall guide the church in all matters to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the New Testament, these bylaws, and any special rules of order the church may adopt.

## **ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any business meeting of the church, by a two-thirds vote of the active members present, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing to the congregation at least thirty days prior to the meeting.