

Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of Sebastian Christian Church

Sebastian, Florida

Updated and Revised September 2019

sebastian

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Article I

The name of the corporation shall be *Sebastian Christian Church, Inc.* and shall be located in the city of Sebastian, in Indian River County, Florida.

Article II

Purpose:

The corporation shall be conducted not for profit and shall be organized solely for general charitable, educational, and/or religious purposes, pursuant to the Florida Corporations Not for Profit Law set forth in Part 1 of Chapter 617 of Florida statutes, as well as pursuant to Section 501 of the Internal Revenue code, 1954, including for such purposes as the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt under Section 501 (c 3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue laws).

The specific and primary purposes for which this corporation is formed are:

To perform all functions necessary for the reasonable practice, teaching, and advancement of the religion of Jesus Christ as specifically set forth in the New Testament and to perform all functions necessary for the reasonable practice and advancement of the charitable aspects of our religion. These functions may include, but are not limited to:

Raising and dispensing funds to provide places of worship, to publish periodicals and other church literature, to establish and maintain schools, clinics, hospitals, shelters, residences, and other useful and appropriate institutions, to ordain qualified persons to act as ministers of this religion, and to charter additional churches in other locations besides

that of the original congregation.

The general purposes for which this corporation is formed are:

To operate exclusively for such religious, charitable, and/or educational purposes, as will qualify it as an exempt organization under Section 501(c 3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1954, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws, including, for such provisions, the making of distributions to organizations which qualify it as tax exempt organizations under the code, as previously stated.

The corporation shall not, as a substantial part of its activities, carry out propaganda or otherwise attempt to influence legislation; nor shall it participate in or intervene (by publication or distribution of any statements or otherwise) in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Article III

Membership:

Membership shall consist of any person who desires membership, having been found to comply with the following terms as revealed in the pages of the New Testament:

- A. A belief in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the Living God, and the acknowledgement (public) of this;
- B. Shows the fruit of repentance following the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord of one's life and shows a willingness to obey God's revealed Will to the best of one's ability;
- C. Having been baptized (meaning only to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins) in obedience to Jesus Christ, and in keeping with the example and

teaching found in the pages of the New Testament.

D. Expresses a willingness to become involved in the life and ministry of the church as found in the pages of the New Testament, and be held accountable to the leadership of the church as outlined in Scripture.

E. Responsibilities of Membership

- a. The responsibilities of members are described by, but not limited to, the following:
- b. a regular presence in corporate worship
- c. encouraged to participate in a discipleship group (Life Groups, Bible study, etc.) for the purpose of connecting in relationships and growing spiritually.
- d. regular financial giving
- e. service in an area of their spiritual giftedness and calling
- f. commitment to and support of the vision of the Church
- g. being accountable and submissive to the leadership of the Church
- h. participation in the affirmation of decisions as presented by the elders at special meetings as deemed necessary by the elders. Active members who are 16 years of age and older may participate in such affirmation proceedings.
- i. furthermore, upon joining this Church, all members are in agreement that the consensus decision of the elders in matters of church discipline is final (see section 6)

F. Termination of Membership

- a. Membership shall be removed from the Church roll for the following:
- b. death

- c. transfer of membership to another church
- d. by the personal written request of the member
- e. removal by the elders based upon membership in-activity, or based on behavior that errs in biblical doctrine or conduct.

Article IV

Perpetual Nature of Corporation

This corporation shall exist perpetually, unless dissolved, under provisions of its constitution, by laws, and/or Florida statutes.

Article V

Church Polity (Governance)

The church shall be lead, as outlined in the Bible, by Scripturally qualified Elders.

Article VI

Dedication of Assets

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to charitable, education, and /or, religious purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, trustee, or member thereof, or to the benefit of any private individual.

This ends the section on Articles of Incorporation.

By- Laws of Sebastian Christian Church

Article I

System and Order

Since the purpose of this corporation shall be to establish and maintain a Christian church after the pattern set forth in the New Testament, we shall endeavor to provide public worship, instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and to promote and further the Kingdom of God both locally and through a program of missionary support. Our goal is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an effort to win a lost world to Christ. Members shall be known simply as "Christians" and the church shall be undenominational, that is legally and ecclesiastically independent of all denominational control.

In all things pertaining to the system and order of the church, our first rule of authority shall be the New Testament when it's teaching is clearly apparent. In matters not specified in the New Testament, and in no way an attempt to supersede the New Testament, but in keeping with the fact that according to 2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,". We will turn to the Old Testament for direction and instruction. In matters not expressly taught in the Scriptures, we shall seek to do that which is most expedient in accomplishing the purpose of the church.

Article II

Organization of Church Leadership:

Since God has appointed the church to be lead by Godly men, and since He has given specific direction as to roles for leadership in the church, the following is the pattern this congregation will

follow concerning leadership:

A. Roles & Duties

a. Elders/Pastors/Overseers

The primary responsibility for the oversight of the church has been placed in the hands of those men known as elders or pastors. According to 1 Peter 5:2ff they “shepherd the flock that Christ has placed under their care”. As the different names of this work imply, they are to be not only mature (elder) but also overseers and shepherds (pastors) who are “above reproach”.

The qualification of elder are clearly outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and these shall be used to determine the qualifications of the man who seeks the work. At all times when men are qualified and willing, the church shall have at least 2 elders who are non-paid.

Article III

Membership:

Membership shall consist of any person who desires membership, having been found to comply with the following terms as revealed in the pages of the New Testament:

- A. A belief in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the Living God, and the acknowledgement (public) of this;
- B. Shows the fruit of repentance following the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord of one's life and shows a willingness to obey God's revealed Will to the best of one's ability;
- C. Having been baptized (meaning only to be immersed

in water for the forgiveness of sins) in obedience to Jesus Christ, and in keeping with the example and teaching found in the pages of the New Testament.

D. Expresses a willingness to become involved in the life and ministry of the church as found in the pages of the New Testament, and be held accountable to the leadership of the church as outlined in Scripture.

E. Responsibilities of Membership

a. The responsibilities of members are described by, but not limited to, the following:

- i. a regular presence in corporate worship
- ii. encouraged to participate in a discipleship group (Life Groups, Bible study, etc.) for the purpose of connecting in relationships and growing spiritually.
- iii. regular financial giving
- iv. service in an area of their spiritual giftedness and calling
- v. commitment to and support of the vision of the Church
- vi. being accountable and submissive to the leadership of the Church
- vii. participation in the affirmation of decisions as presented by the elders at special meetings as deemed necessary by the elders. Active members who are 16 years of age and older may participate in such affirmation proceedings.
- viii. furthermore, upon joining this Church, all members are in agreement that the consensus decision of the elders in matters of church discipline is final (see section 6)

F. Termination of Membership

- a. Membership shall be removed from the Church roll for the following:
- b. death
- c. transfer of membership to another church
- d. by the personal written request of the member
- e. removal by the elders based upon membership inactivity, or based on behavior that errs in biblical doctrine or conduct.

G. Discipline of Members PURPOSE:

- a. The purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by:
- b. Maintaining purity in the Church (see 1 Corinthians 5:6)
- c. Protecting believers by deterring sin (see 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 2:11- 15)
- d. Promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her back to biblical standards of doctrine and conduct (see Galatians 6:1).
- e. PROCESS: Members and all other professing Christians who regularly attend and fellowship at SCC who err in biblical doctrine or conduct shall be subject to discipline according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such discipline reaches its final conclusion:
- f. It shall be the duty of any Church member who has knowledge of the erring person's unbiblical beliefs or misconduct to warn and to correct such erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person does not heed this warning; then,

- g. The warning member shall again go to the erring person accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct such erring person, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person still refuses to heed this warning; then,
- h. it shall be brought to the attention of the elders. The elders will appropriately investigate any allegation brought by one Church member against another. If these allegations are warranted, two or more elders will contact the erring person and seek his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person refuses to be restored, the elders may remove the individual from membership. If the erring person heeds the warning and demonstrates repentance, the individual may remain in membership and the elders will establish a process of restoration.

Article IV

Perpetual Nature of Corporation

This corporation shall exist perpetually, unless dissolved, under provisions of its constitution, by laws, and/or Florida statutes.

Article V

Church Polity (Governance)

The church shall be lead, as outlined in the Bible, by Scripturally qualified Elders. These men shall be brought forth in a timely and agreeable manner to lead the church.

Article VI

Dedication of Assets

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to charitable, education, and /or, religious purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this corporation shall be to the benefit of any director, officer, trustee, or member thereof, or to the benefit of any private individual.

A. Preacher/Lead Pastor/Elder/Minister

From 1 Timothy 5:17 we learn that the elder who “directs the affairs of the church” and who preaches is “worthy of double honor”. It is therefore seen that if the lead pastor qualifies according to the standard set forth for the work, he shall serve as one of the elders. This shall in no way place him as a ruling elder, but rather as one of the number serving an indefinite term. At some point, the church may call a man who does not qualify for the work, and who shall then serve the church as an evangelist, becoming a temporary member of the eldership.

B. The Official Board

The elders, including the lead pastor, shall make up the official board of the church and voting shall be in their hands only. In matters where there may be personal conflicts, it is understood that the lead pastor may be asked not participate in those decisions.

C. Deacons

Since the term deacon means “servant” or “minister”, and using Acts 6 as our example, deacons are men in a class of workers specifically designated for a specific task or ministry

in the church. With that in mind, they shall serve as assistants to the elders for a term of one year or longer, after evaluation, as determined by the ministries to which they are serving.

The qualifications of the deacons are clearly outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8- 12 and shall be used to determine the qualifications of the man who seeks the work.

D. Other Paid Staff

From time to time in the normal growth of the church, additional paid staff will be necessary to carry out the work and mission of the church. In reference to any specific ministry (ie youth), the eldership shall determine the needs of the church and the qualifications for the role.

E. Additional Church Staff of the Church

From time to time in the normal growth of the church, additional church staff may be deemed necessary to carry out the work. These shall be specific ministry areas and be set by appointment by the eldership. Based upon the needs of the church, the qualifications and duties for the role shall be laid out in a written job description and given to the candidate.

F. Methods of Selecting Leaders

Since Scripture allows for there to be diverging opinions on the methodology in selecting and placing men and women into positions of leadership, SCC will follow the policy manual.

G. Elders

- a. Elders will be selected based upon the following; first as to their biblical qualifications, second as to their

willingness, and third as to their availability. Those who are found fit to serve will be returned by the elders to the congregation for affirmation.

H. Lead Pastor

- a. In the event that the position becomes vacated, the elders, other staff members, or a group designated by them shall serve in the capacity as a search committee with the express purpose of searching for a man to be set before the congregation for affirmation.
- b. At no time shall more than one man be brought before the congregation for consideration.
- c. He will assume the position following a congregational affirmation.
- d. The term of service to the church by the lead pastor shall be for an indefinite time period and may be terminated by either party upon a written, 60 day notice. The notice may be reduced upon mutual agreement of both parties.
- e. It shall be noted that while he may choose otherwise, or may not be qualified for the office, the lead pastor may serve in the capacity as a fully recognized elder of the church. His authority shall be the same as that of all the elders of the church.
- f. A written statement setting forth terms of compensation and benefits as well as any conditions of employment shall be given to the candidate prior to the affirmation and a copy of which shall be made available to any member of the congregation upon request.

I. Other Paid Staff

- a. Basically the outline above for calling a lead pastor shall be used here to call someone to a specific

ministry.

- b. Once hired, all staff members having direct influence upon SCC's mission shall be responsible first to the lead pastor and then to the rest of the eldership in that order. All others come under the oversight of the eldership as a whole.
- c. A written statement setting forth duties, terms of compensation, and benefits as well as any conditions of employment shall be given to the candidate prior to the vote and a copy of which shall be made available to any member of the congregation upon request.
- d. The term of the staff member shall be for an indefinite time period and may be terminated by either party upon a written 60 day notice. The notice may also be reduced upon mutual agreement of both parties.

J. The Dismissal Process

- a. Elders/Lead Pastor/Pastors/Preaching Elders/Ministers

In keeping with the direction of 1 Timothy 5:19-20, elders or preachers who are found no longer fit for office due to some sin which affects the whole congregation, shall be asked to resign. This shall then be explained to the congregation in a manner to protect them and yet set an example. If that elder or preacher refuses to step down he may be removed from office by a vote of "no confidence" from the congregation.

- b. Other Paid Staff/Other Officers of the Church

In these two categories, it will be left to the discretion of the eldership and contractual agreement.

Article VII

Meetings

a. Special Congregational Meetings

May be called by the eldership, or by a written petition to the elders by no less than 1/3 of the eligible voting members of the church.

b. Notice of Congregational Meeting

Notice of all regular and special congregational meetings shall be given at a regular Sunday morning service at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

c. Meeting Procedures

An appointed Elder shall conduct all Church membership meetings. Official minutes will be recorded and filed in the permanent records of the Church. Church membership meetings will be open to active members only. Non-members may be excused prior to the meeting being called to order.

Article VIII

Affirmation

- a. Affirmation (i.e., described as "voting" in the Articles of Incorporation, Article V, Sec. 3) is the process of expressing support for the decisions of the elders (see By-Laws, Article II: Membership, Section 4, Item 6 "Responsibilities of Members"). Decisions the elders have made will be presented to the members for their affirmation. Affirmation of elder decisions must be by two-thirds of the active Church members present, 16 years of age and older. All affirmations

shall be by those physically present at the membership meeting and no proxy affirmations shall be allowed.

Article IX

Amendments

- a. Periodically, the constitution/by-laws of SCC may need to be amended and or changed. If this becomes necessary, it will be left up to the purview of the eldership to make said changes. The elders must have a plurality (2/3 vote of the elders present) within their board to make any changes. This plurality applies only to the editing of the constitution/by-laws of SCC.

Article X

Church Property

- a. Uses

The church property may be used by church groups or members provided that the activity has been approved by the staff and/or eldership.

The primary support of the church shall come from voluntary contributions in the form of tithes and offerings of the church.

As to the issue of fund raising, please refer to the current SCC policy manual.

- b. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution , the residual assets of the organization of SCC will be turned over to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations as described in sections 501(3c) and 170 (c2)

of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.