

Constitution & By-Laws
For Anchor Bible Church
Updated 2020

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ARTICLE I – CHURCH NAME

This church will be known as **ANCHOR BIBLE CHURCH INCORPORATED**, a non-profit corporation of Kentucky. Anchor Bible Church is an autonomous local church.

ARTICLE II – OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Anchor Bible Church exists to accomplish three primary goals for the glory of God as directed by the Bible. All ministries approved by the Elders must seek to promote at least one of these three objectives:

1. To worship God in spirit and truth.
2. To equip Christians for the work of ministry.
3. To evangelize unbelievers with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

Anchor Bible Church has a doctrinal statement that covers the major areas of biblical theology and doctrine, and which states our teaching position on various cultural issues. Anchor Bible Church's doctrinal statement can be found at www.anchorbiblechurch.org.

ARTICLE IV – LEADERSHIP

Anchor Bible Church is led by, and ultimately answers to, Jesus Christ, our Chief Shepherd. Jesus leads local churches by biblically qualified elders, who submit to the Bible's teaching. The Bible teaches that the congregation is to joyfully submit to their elders, who are referred to in the New Testament as pastors, elders, or overseers. Anchor Bible Church recognizes that all three terms can refer to elder, depending on the context.

ELDERS

Ideally, our eldership will be composed of both paid and unpaid elders. To be appointed to the office of elder, a man must be called, able to teach, trained, proven, desire the work of an elder, and be available to do the work of shepherding within the local church. Before being appointed, every elder candidate must have a life pattern of shepherding the flock and must meet the biblical qualifications of elder (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). It is the duty and responsibility of the elders

to lead the church by example and through the preaching and teaching of God's Word. The Council of Elders shall be the Board of Directors of Anchor Bible Church for purposes of the Kentucky State law. If there are not enough biblically qualified elders to fill each position necessary to make up a board of directors, deacons will be appointed to fulfill those positions. The Elders of Anchor Bible Church are also the ones who interpret the meaning of the constitution and by-laws of Anchor Bible Church and its doctrinal beliefs.

THE PASTOR-TEACHER

The Pastor-Teacher at Anchor Bible Church is to be a man uniquely called, gifted, and trained to lead a local church and the elder council by being an example and by working hard at preaching and teaching God's Word.

Should the Pastor-Teacher not be able to fulfill his responsibilities or if he needs to be removed, it is the responsibility of the Elder Council to make sure the Pastor-Teacher's ministry responsibilities are covered until a new, qualified Pastor-Teacher can be found and affirmed.

The Elder Council is responsible to seek out, examine, and bring to the congregation a Pastor-Teacher candidate who meets the biblical qualifications of an elder. The Elder Council must unanimously agree upon the candidate. The congregation will be asked to affirm the elders' choice of the new Pastor-Teacher candidate by vote (see Section X).

The Pastor-Teacher will enjoy all the rights and privileges of an elder of Anchor Bible Church and those accorded to licensed ministers under secular law.

The Pastor-Teacher shall remain in office an indefinite period of time, subject to the following reservations: 1) A majority of the elders reserve the right to dismiss the Pastor-Teacher giving him at least one month's written notice. The Pastor-Teacher must also give one month's notice to the elders if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor-Teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor-Teacher and the majority of the elders deem it wise. The Pastor-Teacher shall be an ex officio member of all councils and committees. The Pastor-Teacher shall be accountable to the board of elders, be responsible for all public and regular worship services, and for the general spiritual oversight of the church. In the absence of a Pastor-Teacher, the elders shall perform or see to it that the Pastor-Teacher's responsibilities are fulfilled.

LAY ELDER SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS:

1. Potential lay elder candidates must be men who are members in good standing at Anchor Bible Church (not under church discipline). They must have a strong commitment to the local church, be men of private and corporate prayer, Bible reading, study, and meditation. They must be recognized as disciplers, counselors, those who regularly practice hospitality, and who are gifted and experienced Bible teachers. They must be godly men whom the congregation recognizes as faithful shepherds of God's flock. Men will be considered for the office of elder who are already doing elder type work e.g., regularly teaching, discipling,

practicing hospitality, being an example in prayer, and who demonstrate the proven character of an elder. Men who do not have a long-term commitment to Anchor Bible Church will not be considered.

2. Those qualified as lay elders distinguish themselves by doing elder type work and will be widely known by the congregation. Such a man will normally be approached by someone on the Elder Council to see if he desires to serve as an elder. At times, a man may approach one of the elders to express his desire to become an elder someday. The elders will take it upon themselves to help disciple men who desire to be elders. The elders will help train, equip, and verify a man's spiritual giftedness, as they are able, in order to raise up future leaders in the church (II Tim. 2:15).
3. Elder candidates will be examined thoroughly to see if they meet the biblical qualifications and if they are currently doing elder type work. If unanimously approved by the Elder Council, a candidate will be presented to the congregation to be introduced and give their testimony. The congregation will be given three weeks to give any feedback to the Elder Council about the candidate concerning his character and perceived fitness to serve as an elder.
4. After the congregation is given three weeks to give input to the Elder Council concerning the elder candidate, the elders will weigh the input they have received and must unanimously agree to put the elder candidate forward to the congregation for a vote of affirmation (see Section X below). If affirmed by the congregation, the elder candidate will be installed by the laying on of hands, after which he shall be considered appointed to the office of elder.
5. Appointment to the office of elder does not necessarily result in contract rights as an employee.

ELDERSHIP SERVICE

Duration of Lay Elder Service. Lay elders will be able to serve indefinitely as long as they meet the following criteria:

1. Lay elders may continue to serve as long as they are available, qualified, and continue to do the work of an elder e.g., having faithful church attendance, regularly teaching at Anchor Bible Church, discipling men, giving biblical counsel to those in need, practicing hospitality, and being an example of one devoted to prayer.
2. Lay elders are to be confirmed every two years by a majority of the current eldership and a 75% vote of confirmation by the congregation (see Section X below).
3. Lay elders are to maintain a high level of commitment to love and shepherd the people at Anchor Bible Church according to the Word of God.

Voluntary Resignation of Lay Elders

It is expected that the elders of Anchor Bible Church be humble, godly men of integrity, who desire to be elders because they desire to do the work of an elder and believe they are qualified. It is not expected that a man would become an elder because he desires the title, position, or power that comes with being an elder. Thus, it is expected that an elder will voluntarily resign if:

1. He believes that he no longer meets the requirements of elder service at Anchor Bible Church as listed above.
2. Circumstances in his life prevent him from being able to do the work of an elder.
3. He desires to step down for personal reasons.
4. He is moving away from the area.
5. He has changed his doctrinal beliefs and no longer agrees with Anchor Bible Church's doctrinal statement and teaching position, the ministry philosophy of Anchor Bible Church, or a majority of the elders believe he is no longer competent to serve as an elder of Anchor Bible Church (see "Removing An Elder From Office" below).
6. He disqualifies himself by engaging in gross and/or unrepentant sin.

Lay Elder Sabbaticals. There are seasons and circumstances when an elder may not be able to do the work of an elder, but is still qualified in every other way. If this occurs an elder may ask for a sabbatical from serving. A majority of the elders must agree to grant permission for an elder to take a sabbatical and determine its duration. An elder on sabbatical will temporarily forfeit all rights, privileges, and responsibilities of an elder until his sabbatical is completed or the majority of elders invite him to return. The congregation will be notified when an elder is on sabbatical.

Lay Elder Resignations. Any Elder who desires to resign from being an Elder will speak with the Elder Chairman and Pastor-Teacher, or two other Elders appointed by the Elder council to explain his reasons for stepping down. He will also write a letter of resignation to give to the Elder Council. The Elder Council will notify the congregation of his resignation.

Lay Elder Removal. Any elder may be removed from serving as an elder by the majority vote of the elders, if the Elder Council believes an elder no longer meets the criteria for serving as an elder of Anchor Bible Church as described above under "Duration of Elder Service" or is biblically disqualified by failing to meet the biblical criteria for all elders (I Tim. 3:1-7 or Titus 1:5-9).

Lay Elder Disqualification. If at any time someone in the congregation (elders included) believes an elder is in sin or displays a pattern of disqualifying sin for any reason, they must first privately approach the elder they believe is disqualified and lovingly confront him in the fruit of the Spirit. If a woman is confronting an elder, she may bring her husband with her or ask that another elder or person be present during the confrontation.

1. If after being confronted, and the elder agrees that he is disqualified, he must notify the Elder Chairman and Pastor-Teacher to explain why and write a letter of resignation, so that the Elder Council can notify the congregation.
2. If an elder admits to having continued in unrepentant sin, he will notify the Pastor-Teacher, write a letter of resignation, and the elders will rebuke him in the presence of the church so that the church will be fearful of sinning themselves and understand that he is no longer an elder (I Tim. 5:20).
3. If an elder denies being disqualified, his accuser can approach one of the other elders and notify them. The accusation will not be considered by the Elder Council as valid unless the accuser has first confronted in private the elder they believe is in sin or disqualified, and if they can produce at least one other witness to the elder's sin or sufficient evidence of his sin (I Tim. 5:19). If the accusation is verified on the testimony of 2 or more witnesses or sufficient evidence, the rest of the Elder Council will investigate the accusation to determine its truthfulness. If after the elders investigate, and a majority of the Elder Council believe a fellow elder is disqualified, he will be asked to step down from serving as an elder. The Elder Council will inform the congregation that he is no longer an elder.
4. If a disqualified elder fails to repent of his sin, he will be dealt with by the Elder Council according to the biblical instructions for church discipline (see **Article VII**).

YEARLY REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The Pastor-Teacher, Elders, and Deacons of Anchor Bible Church shall be required to review the Constitution and By-Laws yearly, in order to remind themselves of their contents, to encourage accountability, conformity, and to keep these documents updated and current by making necessary changes.

ELDER OVERSIGHT AND PLURALITY

The Elder Council may oversee and organize Anchor Bible Church however they deem fit, as long as they remain in submission to the Scriptures and the Constitution and By-laws of Anchor Bible Church. A plurality of biblically qualified elders from within the membership of Anchor Bible Church will be sought to serve on the Elder Council. If a plurality of biblically qualified elders cannot be found from the membership of Anchor Bible Church, the deacons and/or other biblically qualified elders from other like-minded churches will be sought to help hold the current leadership accountable, help make decisions, and minister to the flock. This will continue until God raises up a plurality of biblically qualified elders from the membership of Anchor Bible Church itself.

The elders shall be the highest overseeing body at Anchor Bible Church. They shall appoint biblically qualified deacons and others in the congregation to assist them in shepherding Anchor Bible Church. The deacons, along with the rest of the congregation, shall serve in submission to the Elder Council.

The Elder Council will elect a chairman, treasurer, and secretary yearly. The elder chairman does not have authority over the other elders, but is responsible for organizing the affairs of the elders, elder meetings, and for leading elder meetings.

The elders of Anchor Bible Church will practice “unanimity” in decision making. What “unanimity” means is that all elders will agree to support the decisions made by the Elder Council. At times, one or more elders may disagree with the other elders, but still agree to support the majority decision so that all may unanimously stand behind decisions made. If unanimity cannot be reached, the proposal will be dropped, modified, or studied and prayed over more diligently until unanimity can be achieved. Exceptions to “unanimity” as described in this paragraph are when the Constitution and By-laws of Anchor Bible Church specify something different or in submission to the clear teaching of God’s Word.

DEACONS

Deacons are servants who assist the elders in shepherding the flock. Deacons, must meet the biblical qualifications of deacon (I Tim. 3:8-13). Deacons may be temporarily appointed by the unanimous decision of the elders for specific one-time tasks or be appointed to continue serving as deacons under the direction and oversight of the Elder Council. Elders can appoint or remove deacons at their discretion. The congregation will be notified at least yearly who the Elder Council has appointed as deacons and notify the congregation of their specific area of ministry service if they have one.

Deacon Service

Deacons serve under the direction of the elders in a wide variety of ways, as they are able and gifted. Normally, deacons work alongside the elders in order to free up the elders to focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. Some of the primary areas of deacon service are listed below:

1. Deacons will oversee the finances of Anchor Bible Church under the direction of the elders. This will include tasks such as financial accounting and reporting, collecting and depositing gifts and offerings, yearly budgets, and making sure there is a high level of financial accountability.
2. Deacons will oversee the facilities. This will include tasks such as cleaning, maintenance, and logistics for the facility.
3. Deacons will oversee helps ministries. This will include tasks such as distributing benevolent gifts, meals, exercising mercy, and assisting people in need.
4. If there are not enough biblically qualified elders from the membership of Anchor Bible Church to constitute a plurality of elders, the deacons will temporarily fulfill the necessary officer roles of Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary of Anchor Bible Church, as well as any other necessary duties or functions of elder as described above, as they are able, until such time as a plurality of paid and unpaid elders can be appointed.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

All who desire to commit to Anchor Bible Church as their local church are encouraged to become members. To become a member of Anchor Bible Church one must:

1. Be 18 years old or older.
2. Read Anchor Bible Church's Doctrinal Statement and Teaching Position.
3. Read the Constitution and By-Laws of Anchor Bible Church.
4. Answer the questions in the membership application.
5. Make an appointment to meet with an elder or one of their appointed representatives to discuss the completed membership application.
6. Be approved for membership by the Elder Council.
7. Be presented to the congregation for vote of affirmation and be welcomed into the family of Anchor Bible Church during a corporate worship service.

Dual Membership

There are persons such as students, military personnel, or those temporarily relocated by their employer to the Louisville area who are members of another church, yet desire to become members of a church in the area where they are temporarily living. Those who desire to have dual church membership will be required to follow the same process for membership as stated above.

Termination of Membership

Church members shall be removed from the membership roll for the following reasons:

1. A person may request to have their membership revoked for any personal reason, but not if they are under church discipline.
2. Death.
3. Transfer of membership to another church.
4. Excommunication by the elders after church discipline.
5. Lack of participation. Periodically, the elders will examine the church membership roll. Those who are inactive and not participating will be contacted to see why they are absent from corporate worship and service. If the absentee member desires to attend, but cannot because of physical infirmity or life circumstances, they will be allowed to remain members of Anchor Bible Church. If, however, they have no legitimate excuse for not attending, the

elders may choose to remove them from membership. They will be sent a letter telling them their membership at Anchor Bible Church has been revoked.

ARTICLE VI – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

MARRIAGE

We believe that God created and defines marriage as:

- 1) A holy, lifelong covenant between one biological man and one biological woman.
- 2) We believe that marriage creates a new family unit that takes priority over both the man's and woman's other family relationships.
- 3) We believe that both the man and the woman must agree to enter into the marriage covenant.
- 4) We believe that marriage requires physical consummation.

GENDER

We believe God permanently assigns everyone their gender. Our God-given gender is determined by our male or female biology at birth. We cannot change our God-given gender.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

We believe God created sexual relations to be enjoyed in the context of marriage only and that every sexual thought or deed engaged in outside of the covenant of marriage and which is contrary to the Bible is sin and condemned in the Bible as sexual immorality.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline has multiple stages and is a critical component of every healthy local church. Most think of "church discipline" as the last step of excommunication, yet every other step of church discipline is also an act of "church discipline." In a healthy church, church discipline happens all the time. Most church discipline happens when someone lovingly confronts a fellow believer in private. It is only in rare instances that a person is brought before the church for the third stage of

church discipline, having refused to repent of their sins after two previous confrontations. If the person in unrepentant sin still refuses to listen to the church and turn from their sin, they will be excommunicated, their membership will be revoked, and they will no longer be allowed to fellowship with Anchor Bible Church.

RECIPIENTS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline shall be performed on any member or professing believer who regularly attends Anchor Bible Church.

PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline is required in the Bible for multiple reasons:

1. To show love to and restore to obedience and fellowship any brother or sister in Christ who is living in unrepentant sin.
2. To make the entire congregation fearful of sinning.
3. To be a testimony to the world of our desire to live holy lives.
4. To maintain holiness in the Church.
5. To express our love to Jesus Christ by obeying His commands.

METHOD OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline shall be practiced in accordance with the instructions and principles of the Word of God as indicated in such texts: I Sam. 15:22-23; II Sam. 12:1-15; Ezek. 33:1-20; Mt. 18:12-14; 18:15-20; Mark 8:31-33; Lk. 9:51-56; 15:1-32; Acts 5:1-11; Rom. 16:17-18; I Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 2:11-14; 6:1; I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6-16; I Tim. 1:18-20; 5:1-2; 5:19-20; Titus 1:10-16; 3:9-11; Heb. 12:12-17; James 5:19-20; Jude 17-23; Rev. 2:2-5, 14-16, 18-23. Normal cases of church discipline follow the instructions given in Matthew 18:15-20:

1. Someone is witness to another person's unrepentant sin. They shall go to that person in private, in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and lovingly confront them, stating both the sin that they see and why it is sin, according to the Bible. If the person repents and turns from their sin, the matter is dropped.
2. If the person refuses to repent, the person who initially confronted them shall bring one or two other people with them as witness to a second confrontation. Again, the specific sin

and biblical violation will be stated. If the person repents, the matter is dropped. The Elder Council may or may not be involved with the second confrontation.

3. If the person refuses to repent after the first and second confrontations as described above, the matter shall be brought to the Elder Council who will investigate the matter. If the Elder Council concludes that the unrepentant person is, in fact, living in unrepentant sin and is in violation of the Word of God, the Elder Council shall:
 - a) Attempt to contact the person living in unrepentant sin to let them know that they and their sin will be brought before the congregation so that the entire church can pray for and encourage them to repent. The specific sin and its biblical violation will again be stated. If the person repents, the matter will be dropped.
 - b) If the unrepentant person refuses to repent, the Elder Council will inform the congregation of the person living in unrepentant sin, state their sin, and its biblical violation. The entire congregation shall be instructed to pray for and contact the person by whatever means and lovingly encourage the sinner member to repent. If they repent, the congregation will be notified and the matter will be dropped.
 - c) If the unrepentant person still refuses to repent, after at least four weeks, the congregation will be notified by the Elder Council that the unrepentant person will be excommunicated from Anchor Bible Church and asked not to attend any more. Their membership shall be revoked. The congregation shall be instructed not to fellowship with or even eat with the unrepentant person as the Scriptures instruct. Their only contact with the excommunicated person should be for the purposes of encouraging the unrepentant person to repent. The unrepentant person shall be treated as an unbeliever who has despised the gospel.
 - d) If at a later date the unrepentant person desires to repent and be restored to fellowship, they shall contact the elders, who will investigate the legitimacy of their repentance. If it is determined by the Elder Council that they have indeed repented, the congregation will be notified and the repentant person will be allowed to worship and fellowship with the church. If they desire to become a member again, they shall go through the normal process for becoming a member.
4. Though the process above is how church discipline is normally practiced, there are instances where rebellious men, false teachers, and unbelievers pose an immediate threat to the safety, unity, and health of the congregation. On these special occasions, the Elder Council, by unanimous decision, may expedite the process of excommunication in order to protect the flock from harm.

PARTIES RESPONSIBLE TO PERFORM CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Every believer is required to practice church discipline if they encounter a fellow believer living in any unrepentant sin. The Elder Council may be involved in the second step of church discipline and

shall oversee any disciplinary process that requires any public action or is necessary for the immediate protection of the flock.

ARTICLE VIII – BIBLICAL COUNSELING

All Christians struggle with sin. Whenever a Christian finds themselves failing to overcome sinful thoughts or actions, they are encouraged to seek biblical counsel from a mature believer, a ministry leader, or elder at Anchor Bible Church. Biblical counseling is intensive discipleship in the Word of God that is directed at a specific spiritual problem or need in a person's life. Every believer at Anchor Bible Church is to participate in giving biblical counsel to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. However, there will be those who have more training, life experience, and knowledge of the Scriptures who may make counseling their intentional area of ministry.

The biblical counselors of Anchor Bible Church are not trained or licensed psychotherapists, mental health professionals, or medical doctors. We believe those with physiological problems should see a medical doctor and those with spiritual problems can be helped by any believer armed with a Bible, a knowledge of what the Bible says, and how to apply the Scriptures to life.

CONFIDENTIALITY IN COUNSELING

We believe in practicing confidentiality and respecting people's right to privacy as much as possible. However, there are times when it is necessary for someone giving biblical counsel to share confidential information with others. Examples are as follows:

1. A person in the congregation who is giving biblical counsel to someone may seek out a more mature, experienced, or trained believer to get advice on how to deal with a particular spiritual issue, while not mentioning the counselee's name.
2. For very difficult cases, the one giving counsel may seek out the advice of an elder or the Elder Council to better help someone with their spiritual problems.
3. If it is perceived that a person's life is in imminent danger or posing an imminent danger to others, it is required by law to break confidence and notify the proper authorities.
4. In the cases of child abuse or ongoing illegal activity, it is required by law for the counselor to break confidence and notify the proper authorities.
5. If it is discovered in the course of giving biblical counsel that someone is living in unrepentant sin and has no desire to turn from their sin, it may be necessary to break confidence and deal with the unrepentant believer according to the normal process of church discipline as described above.

ARTICLE IX – HIRING ADDITIONAL PASTORAL STAFF OR EMPLOYEES

Any non-contract, part-time, or full-time support staff employee of Anchor Bible Church:

1. Must agree not to participate in or represent any idea or activity that is contrary to the elders' understanding of Anchor Bible Church's Statement of Faith, doctrinal beliefs, or Constitution and By-laws, both while actively representing Anchor Bible Church in their employment duties and in their personal life.
2. Shall be a member in good standing, as determined by the Elder Council. If the employee is not in good standing, they may be terminated from employment regardless of job competency.

ARTICLE X – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

ANNUAL AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

An annual meeting to approve the budget for Anchor Bible Church will be held every year in January, either in person or digitally via email to confirm the budget. The congregation will be notified at least two weeks in advance. The elders may call for other congregational meetings as they deem necessary.

CONGREGATIONAL VOTING

Anchor Bible Church is an elder led church. However, the elders believe it is important to receive feedback from the members of Anchor Bible Church, especially when making critical decisions. The elders have chosen to seek affirmation for critical decisions by means of a congregational vote from Anchor Bible Church's membership, either in person or digitally via email. When a vote of affirmation is required, either by the Constitution and By-laws or at the elders' request, there must be 75% congregational affirmation of a quorum (50% +1 of the total church membership).

The elders shall seek affirmation from the congregation in the form of a vote for the following instances:

1. Affirmation of the annual budget or significant changes in the budget exceeding 10% of the annual budget.
2. Affirmation of elder candidates to be appointed to the office of elder.

3. Hiring a new pastor or additional full-time staff members.
4. Purchases of land and real estate.
5. Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws.
6. If a congregational vote of the membership fails to give affirmation, the elders are to communicate the results of the vote to the membership. The elders may choose to cease pursuing what they decided or within 45 days have a second vote on the same proposal or alternative proposal.
7. All members 18 years old or older shall have the right to vote.

ARTICLE XI – BUDGET

A yearly budget will be proposed by the elders to the congregation. An approved budget may be amended over the course of the year as the elders deem fit, as long as those amendments do not exceed 10% of the approved yearly budget. Changes greater than 10% must be affirmed by congregational vote.

ARTICLE XII – ADDITIONAL POLICIES

The elders of Anchor Bible Church reserve the right to adopt additional policies and to make all other decisions not requiring a vote of affirmation.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS

Anchor Bible Church may amend, revise, add to, repeal or rescind these By-Laws and/or adopt new By-Laws at any time by a unanimous decision of the elders and a congregational vote of affirmation. The congregation will be given notice at least three Sundays preceding the vote.