

# *Everlasting Life Christian Church By-Laws*

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"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I will give him will never thirst; but the water that I will give him will be in him a well of water springing up into Everlasting Life." - John 4:14

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## History

Everlasting Life Christian Church (ELCC) derives its name from John 4:14 and Romans 6:22. Both verses speak of an eternal life awaiting all those who walk in righteousness and live according to the Word of God until Jesus Christ returns.

*“But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.” – John 4:14*

*“But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.” – Romans 6:22*

Everlasting Life Christian Church began on September 21, 2009 as a small conference call Bible Study. It quickly grew from local participants to state-wide, and eventually country wide callers. A decision was made in January 2011 to move forward in ministry and begin official incorporation and non-profit filing status.

## *Who We Are*

ELCC is a multi-cultural church where all races and ethnicities are welcomed and loved. Our church is a Body of Spirit filled, baptized Believers whose focus is changing the hearts and minds of people through faith and works. We accomplish this through training, teaching, preaching and evangelism. Our desire is to see the lives of everyday people changed through the preached Word of God.

ELCC is the Church, the Bride of Christ.

ELCC is a teacher and servant equipping every man, woman and child with the tools necessary to live meaningful, purpose driven lives and to become godly leaders in their homes and communities.

ELCC is a non-denominational church who believes in preaching the Full Gospel (from Genesis to Revelations). We will not stop our endeavor and mandate to impact and impart into each and every life until Jesus Christ returns for His Bride (us, the Church).

## *Vision*

Our vision is to see lives in our communities changed. We accomplish this by being moral and godly examples to our communities. Through word, deed and life-style we become the light to those around us and a voice in the wilderness. We express this light through our love and outreach. We seek to serve our community by being a resourceful ministry and outreach to it. Our desire is that through our word, deed and life-style souls are saved. We want to see God glorified and his Son magnified through our lives and ministry.

Mind altering, heart penetrating change is a must and we will not stop the work of the Kingdom until Jesus Christ returns for His Church.

## *Mission*

Our mission is to train, teach, preach and do missionary work first in our community and then in the communities and places God sends us into (Mark 16:15-18). This requires ministry to the whole being (spiritual, mental and physical) through love and sacrifice. Through this endeavor we hope to better people's hearts and create healthy minds, or "take away the thirst." We also aspire to help every man, woman, and child realize their purpose, get in their place and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ before He returns.

# Everlasting Life Christian Church

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

This Organizational Chart is based on John 15:1-8,

<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. <sup>9</sup> Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."

In this organizational chart Jesus represents the Vine and every one who chooses to follow Him represent the branches. Each branch is directly connected to Jesus who is at the center of the chart. The chart is read from inside out.

Every role and position is centered around and connected to Jesus Christ the Head. This is important because each follower **MUST** have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Pastor is not Christ nor is he the mediator to Christ. The Pastor is the one chosen by God to care for and lead the flock to Christ based on a clear and concise vision. The Pastoral Vision requires that the pastor set the policies and procedures that empower the staff, ushers and volunteers to make necessary decisions that reflect the pastor's vision but do not burden him/her with certain day-to-day matters that distract from the bigger picture.

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man (woman) and desires for us all to know Him and love Him. The Pastor must sit on every ministry, board and committee at ELCC to ensure that all ministry auxiliaries and activities are in line with the vision of the Church and Pastor.

The chart contains seven Associate Ministers who are responsible for overseeing at least one church ministry. The number of Associate Ministers could change based on ministry needs and resources. Each Minister is accountable to the Pastor and Assistant Pastor.

The following list contains a general list of ministries at Everlasting Life Christian Church:

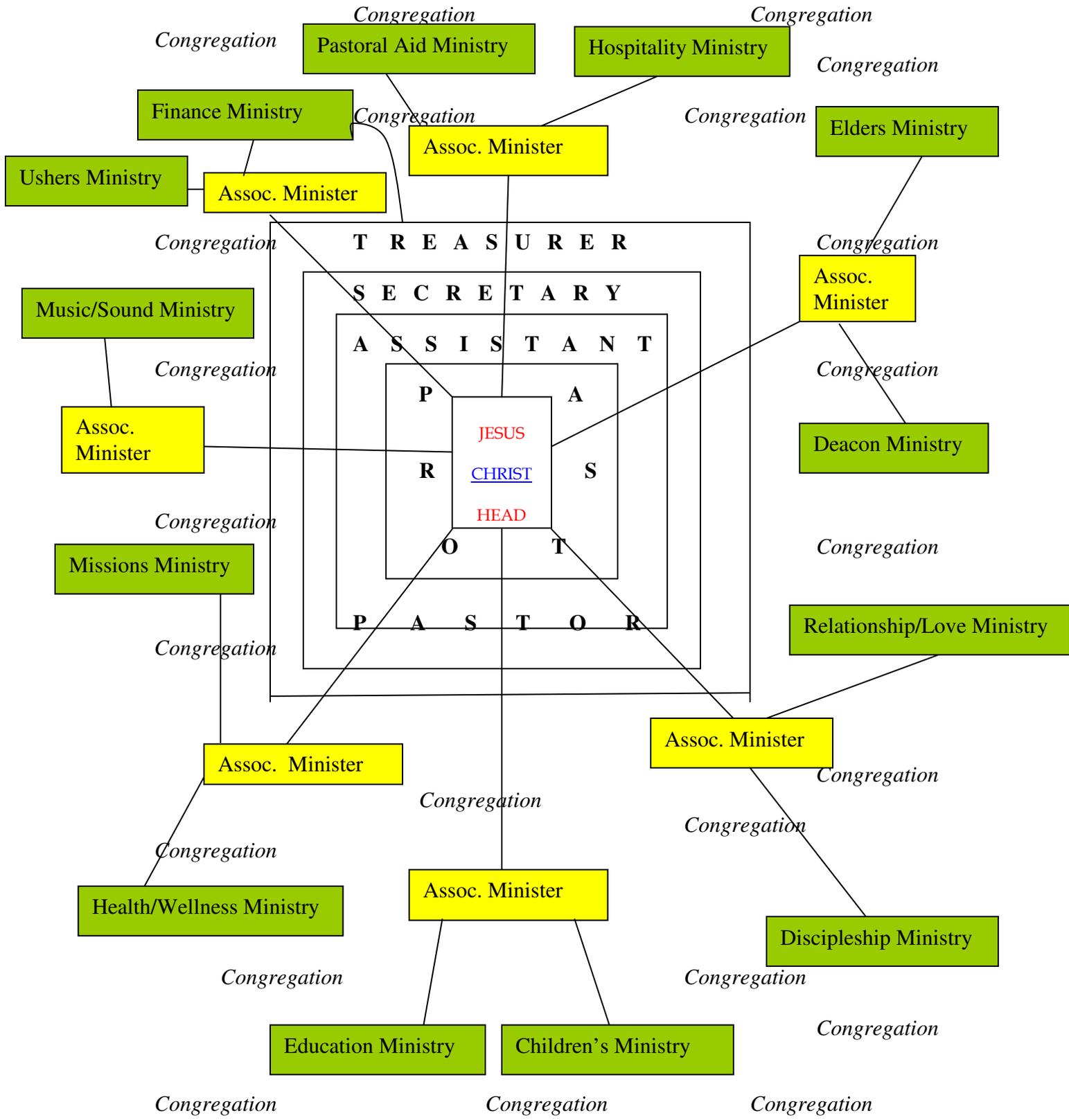
1. Hospitality Ministry
2. Elders Ministry
3. Deacon/Deaconess Ministry
4. Relationship Ministry
5. Discipleship Ministry
6. Youth/Children's Ministry
7. Education Ministry
8. Health/Wellness Ministry
9. Evangelism/Missions Ministry
10. Music/Sound Ministry
11. Ushers Ministry
12. Finance Ministry
13. Pastoral Care Ministry

The Finance Ministry is connected directly to the Treasurer as they will assist and hold accountable the Church's Treasurer. Both the Finance Ministry and Treasurer will oversee the affairs of each other. They both will ensure that all the church's financial goals and needs are met.

Each Ministry will also be responsible for selecting a Secretary, and one person who will sit on the Ministry Team along with that Ministry's Associate Minister. Though, the Secretary position is not necessary in each ministry some one is required to type up the minutes for each meeting and present them to the Church's Secretary for filing and review.

**The Ministry Team shall be comprised of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Church Secretary, Treasurer, Associate Ministers, and one representative from each Ministry.**

See [ARTICLE III](#) of the By-Laws for more information on each ministry.



“But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.”  
 John 4:14

# Everlasting Life Christian Church

## Constitution and By-Laws

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#### PREAMBLE

As a Body of Believers under sole direction of Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God the Father, we establish and present the following as a public statement and visible expression of what we believe to be truth. We look to the Word of God and the Holy Ghost for direction, and voluntarily submit ourselves to the following prescribed Constitution and Bylaws.

#### ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

##### **SECTION 101 - Qualifications**

We acknowledge, according to the Scriptures, the requirement of an individual to be accepted into the Body of Christ includes the confession of the following:

Acts 2:38-39

“And Peter said to them, Repent and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God calls to *Himself*.”

Romans 10:8-13

“The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith which we proclaim. That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For

there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is *Lord of all and* rich to all who all upon Him; for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

The age of an applicant should be such that, they are fully capable of understanding and fulfilling Discipleship 101.

### **SECTION 102 - Admission Procedure**

An applicant for membership will be required to publicly profess, at a minimum, the life, death and resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and willing to attend and commit to Discipleship 101. This profession can be made to the Ministry Team, to an appointed representative of that Team, or to the Church Body at a conveniently appointed time. Upon the profession of faith and successful completion of Discipleship 101 the individual will be publicly welcomed into the fellowship at a regular service of the Church on the Lord's Day (Sunday morning worship service).

### **SECTION 103 - Responsibility of Membership**

Membership includes the responsibility for the various commitments of ARTICLE VI of the CONSTITUTION, and the Discipleship 101. In addition, each member is expected to tithe and participate in, and vote on, all business items brought before the membership.

### **SECTION 104 - Children of Members**

Children of adult members do not automatically become voting members of Everlasting Life Christian Church, nor do they automatically gain membership upon reaching a certain age of accountability. Our concern is that each young person and voting member has a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This relationship cannot be inherited by virtue of a parent's profession and commitment. Salvation is not inherited or passed on.

However, it is not our intention to exclude young men and women from the life and decisions of the church. Therefore, children may enter into Membership (including the privilege of voting) provided they meet the following three criteria:

- A. They are age 12 or older (unless signs of self-awareness and understanding of salvation are shown at an earlier age),
- B. They have met with the Pastor and or elders of the church to affirm their salvation, and
- C. They successfully complete the Discipleship 101 class

It is the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Associate Ministers, Deacons and Elders responsibility to periodically seek out young men or women and inquire about their desire (or lack of desire) to become a voting member.

### **SECTION 105 – A Voting Member**

What constitutes a voting member? A voting member is a member who is over the age of 12 and meets all the Qualifications and Responsibilities as outlined under sections 101 and 103 above. They must also be present at the meeting to vote.

## **SECTION 106- Termination of Membership in Everlasting Life Christian Church**

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

### A. By Death

### B. By Transfer

Any member in good standing who wishes to affiliate with another church will be granted a Letter of Recommendation upon request by the church with which they desire to associate. The Letter will be prepared and forwarded upon request by the Secretary or Elders to that church.

### C. By Request

Any member who requests termination of membership for whatever reason will be granted that request. If there are unresolved problems between the requesting member and the Church, efforts will be made by the Elders and Pastor to resolve any points at issue prior to granting of the request.

### D. By Disciplinary Action

Should any member of this Church be found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life, the Church reserves the right to administer Scriptural forms of church discipline, as outlined in I Corinthians 5, I Timothy 1:18-20, II Timothy 4:14-18. This form of membership termination is the most extreme and results after several attempts to remedy the situation. However, should faithful efforts by the Church render no promise of reform or manifest no spirit of repentance on the part of the member in question, membership may be terminated upon unanimous recommendation of the Pastor and Elders or 3/4 vote of the Members present at a meeting. A member removed from fellowship by disciplinary action may be reinstated only by means of the normal admission procedure. The Elders will maintain standard operating procedures that specify the process for exercising church discipline. This document will be available for review and use by any church member.

### E. By Inactivity

If a member has not participated in any of the church worship services for a period of six consecutive months, their membership may be terminated. Unless their inactivity is due to health or other reasons acceptable to the Pastor and Elders.

## ARTICLE II - OFFICERS

### **SECTION 201 - Elders**

#### A. Definition

An Elder is a holy ghost filled, tithe paying, seasoned man or woman of God who supports church leadership through service and prayer. An Elder will serve in this capacity for an indefinite period of time.

#### B. Selection and Removal

A new Elder may be appointed at anytime to either fill a vacancy or just to add an additional Elder to the ministry. Elders are appointed by the Pastor and ordained by the laying on of hands by Church Leaders and existing Elders. Elders may be removed from office only by the Pastor or upon their own requests. An Elder may also be suspended indefinitely by the Pastor.

#### C. Qualifications

Elders are heterosexual men or women of intellectual and spiritual maturity, with proven Christian character and sound judgment, exemplary in their conduct, effective leaders and teachers. No one condoning or living homosexual lifestyles will be placed in this role. Elders will be qualified in accordance with the guidelines of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and be willing, to be servants of the Church. Additionally, Elders will be Members of the Church and will have proven themselves before the Membership in lesser capacities of service. An Elder will be ordained by this Church with the laying on of hands by the Ministry Team (See SECTION 704).

An Elder does not have to be married, but marriage is highly recommended by the Ministry Team.

#### D. Responsibilities

An Elder will be responsible to:

1. Seek the Lord and find delight in Him:
  - a. Give adequate time to personal prayer and study in the Word.
  - b. Labor and strive after godliness (1 Timothy 4:6-10).
2. Be a pastor to one's own family first (1 Timothy 3:4, 5):
  - a. Spend time together in prayer, spiritual conversation, and the Word (Ephesians 5 and 6).

- b. Meet the needs of one's spouse in particular, deepening their intimacy and relationship together (Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3:7).
3. Be an example to the believers (1 Peter 5:1-3).
4. Pray for the whole church program and for individual members (Acts 6:4).
5. Be involved in the teaching of God's Word (Acts 6:4; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:9).
6. Meet with the other elders of the church at stated times for the purpose of prayer, discussion, examination of potential members, making decisions related to the life of the church, and other such duties as may be part of the responsibilities of the Elders as defined in SECTION 301.

## **SECTION 202 – Deacons/Deaconesses**

### A. Definition

A Deacon or Deaconess is a holy ghost filled, tithing, seasoned man or woman of God who supports church leadership through service and prayer, and is expected to carry out Church services, programs and other obligations.

### B. Selection and Removal

A new Deacon may be appointed at anytime to either fill a vacancy or just to add an additional Deacon to the ministry. Deacons are appointed by the Pastor. Deacons may be removed from office only by the Pastor or upon their own requests. A Deacon may also be suspended indefinitely by the Pastor. SECTION 301.B amplifies this provision. A Deacon will serve in this capacity for an indefinite period of time.

### C. Qualifications

Deacons are heterosexual, men or women of spiritual discernment and members of the Church, exemplary in their Christian character and conduct, and of good reputation in the community outside of the Church. No one condoning or living homosexual lifestyles will be placed in this role. Elders They will be willing to be servants of the Church in accordance with the meaning of the work as outlined in Acts 6:1-6 and will be qualified in accordance with the guidelines in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon will be ordained by this Church with the laying on of hands by the Pastor and Elders (See SECTION 704). They are not required to be married or to be a particular age.

### D. Responsibilities

One of the major responsibilities of the Deacons is to maintain order and structure throughout the Church. A second major responsibility is to oversee the Treasurer. The Treasurer will be a Deacon or an Elder, since the administration of the Church's resources

was a task given to these persons in the early Christian Church. If a Deacon or an Elder cannot be found to serve as the Treasurer, then the Ministry Team may temporarily appoint another member of the church until a qualified person is found. The Deacons and Elders should seek to fill the position with a qualified person at the earliest possible moment.

Responsibilities of individual Deacons will be those of the Associate Minister and Ministry Team as defined in SECTION 302.

*Officers are generally unpaid positions and roles.*

### **ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT**

#### **SECTION 301 - Ministry Team**

##### A. Membership

The Ministry Team will be comprised of the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer, Associate Ministers, and one representative from each Ministry. No one condoning or living homosexual lifestyles will be eligible for this service.

Each Ministry will be responsible for selecting a Secretary, and one person who will sit on the Ministry Team along with that Ministry's Associate Minister. Though, the Secretary position is not necessary in each ministry some one is required to type up the minutes for each meeting and present them to the Church's Secretary for filing. No one condoning or living homosexual lifestyles will be placed in leadership position or eligible for service on any ministry boards.

##### B. Responsibilities

1. The Ministry Team is responsible for the vision, goals, and missions of the church. They are to meet together as determined by the Pastor. They must bring written reports of their ministry's progress.
2. Providing annual budgets as necessary.
3. Approving the budget as prepared by the Treasurer and Finance Ministry.
4. Approve expenditures by Officers, Committees, and ministry groups when such expenditures are within or without the budget categories previously approved by the Ministry Team, but temporarily exceed the limitations of the Church Budget (See SECTION 605.C).

##### C. Organization and Procedures

Procedures for the conduct of the Ministry Team's business will be as determined by that Team. The Chairman will be the Pastor unless otherwise designated by the Team.

##### D. Meetings

The Ministry Team will meet as and when necessary to conduct its business. Meetings will be called by the Pastor who will individually contact members of the Team and, when possible, announce such meetings on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. At times when the Pastor cannot contact each team member the Secretary will do so. A quorum for the transaction of business will be a 3/4 vote of the Ministry Team present at a business meeting.

## **SECTION 302 - Elders Ministry**

### **A. Membership**

The Elders Ministry will be comprised of those Elders appointed by the Pastor and confirmed by the Elders of the Church.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. Administer Scriptural forms of Church discipline to members as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, when a member is found to be flagrantly negligent in living the Christian life and in upholding the Covenant of Discipleship.
2. Suspend or remove church Officers per SECTION 201.A. If the vote is in favor of suspension or removal and the church Officer holds a staff position, the Ministry Team may also choose by majority vote to immediately dismiss that church Officer from their staff position.
3. Act on termination of membership as provided for in SECTION 105 of these By-laws.
4. Administration of the Church under God's authority and in particular is responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the Church and its members.
5. Define and interpret the overall objectives and aspirations of the Church which, if attained, will produce progress toward fulfilling the Scriptural purposes for its existence.
6. Become aware of the spiritual needs and concerns of those in the Congregation, and assist in the establishment of goals for the Church based on these concerns.
7. Obtain recommendations of those willing and qualified to serve as Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Secretary, Treasurer or other required administrative positions or Ministries.
8. Ensure all candidates for positions in number 4 above are fully qualified per the bylaws. Confirmed nominees are then presented to the Ministry Team and the Pastor for voting.
9. Appoint persons to and dismiss persons from paid or unpaid administrative positions. For paid positions, appointment should occur only after budget approval by the Ministry Team. Dismissal of persons from administrative positions requires a majority vote. However, hiring and dismissal of the Custodian will be per SECTION 302.G.
10. Become aware of the physical needs of those in the Church and the community at large, and develop and implement methods of meeting those needs.

11. Distribute money from the Benevolence Fund consistent with Biblical guidelines and procedures established by the Finance Ministry.
12. Assist the Pastor in ordinances and ceremonies as necessary.

Procedures for the conduct of Elder business will be as determined by that Board. The Chairman will be the Pastor unless otherwise designated by that Board.

### Meetings

The Elders will meet as and when necessary to conduct its business. Meetings will be called by the Chairman who will individually contact members of the Ministry and, when possible, announce such meetings on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. The Chairman's responsibilities are to oversee meetings and to act as Spokesman for the Elders Ministry as appropriate. A quorum for the transaction of business will be a 3/4 vote of the Elders present at a business meeting.

### E. Authority

On the basis of the Scriptures and ARTICLE IV of the CONSTITUTION, the administration of authority in the Church is given by the Holy Spirit to the Elders who are to administer God's authority and be responsible for His will being put into practice. The Board of Elders, therefore, will have the authority to interpret this Constitution and Bylaws and implement actions consistent with it.

They will also oversee and ensure the Pastor is fulfilling his duties and responsibilities according to ARTICLE IV SECTION 401 of the CONSTITUTION. If they find that the Pastor is not fulfilling his duties and responsibilities they may address it with him and work with him to ensure progress is made. If after several attempts progress is not made they may recommend he sit down or resign. If the Pastor sits down the Assistant Pastor takes over his responsibilities. This responsibility may also be filled by a qualified Associate Minister. However, if the Pastor resigns the Assistant Pastor or Associate Minister may permanently fill his position.

The Elders Ministry will be accountable to the Associate Pastor and to the Pastor.

## **SECTION 303 – Deacons/Deaconesses**

### A. Membership

The Board of Deacons will be comprised of all those Deacons appointed by the Pastor (See SECTION 202).

### B. Responsibilities

Deacons do not exercise Biblical authority over the congregation. The Deacons will assist the Elders. It is not uncommon for a Deacon to be an Elder too. Specifically, the Deacons will:

1. Be an example to the Congregation in the areas of faith, prayer, spiritual growth in the home, and boldness in proclaiming the Gospel.
2. Visit the sick, the elderly, the prisoners, and others in the Church requiring contact with the Church.
3. Become aware of the physical needs of those in the Church and the community at large, and develop and implement methods of meeting those needs.
4. Distribute money from the Benevolence Fund consistent with Biblical guidelines and procedures established by the Finance Ministry.
5. Assist the Elder and Pastor in ordinances and ceremonies as necessary.
6. Oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer.
7. Keep accurate written minutes of all meetings.

#### C. Organization and Procedures

Procedures for the conduct of Deacon Business will be as determined by that Ministry. A Chairman will be selected by the Deacons Ministry. The Chairman's responsibilities are to oversee meetings and to act as Spokesman for the Deacons Ministry as appropriate. The Deacons Ministry will be accountable to the Associate Pastor and to the Pastor. If it is impossible for any reason to secure Deacons, the responsibilities of their office will fall upon the Elders.

#### D. Meetings

The Board of Deacons will meet when necessary to conduct its business. Meetings will be called by the Chairman who will individually contact members of the Board and when possible, announce such meetings on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. A quorum for the transaction of business will be a 3/4 vote of the Elders present at a business meeting.

The following ministries are for those members who acknowledge their gift(s) and would like to operate in it. Their participation in any of the ministries does not have to be voted on. The only requirements are that they be a member of the Church according to the guidelines outlined in ARTICLE I. Each Ministry is accountable to a respective Associate Minister.

### **SECTION 304 – Hospitality Ministry**

The Hospitality Ministry is based on Romans 12 and Hebrews 13:2. This ministry will be devoted to caring for Visitors, visiting Pastors and their churches. In addition they will foster fellowship and unity amongst ELCC members through periodic fellowships where food is served. The Hospitality Ministry may solicit food donations and assistance

from the congregation for such fellowships. These fellowships must be announced to the congregation at least two weeks in advance of the gathering.

They will also oversee the usage of the church and its resources.

### **SECTION 305 – Relationship Ministry**

The Relationship Ministry will focus on assisting the Body of Christ in developing, nurturing, and growing life relationships. Such relationships include family, spousal, friends, mentor/mentee, employer/employee, and most of all God and man. There are several ways this can be accomplished: conferences, workshops, seminars, and fellowships.

### **SECTION 306 – Discipleship Ministry**

The Discipleship Ministry is based on Matthew 13:52 and Luke 14. This ministry is responsible for teaching new members and converts the Christian Lifestyle and walk of Christ. This is accomplished through an in-depth study of the Gospels in a course specifically designed and catered for this purpose - Discipleship 101. In this course each participant will receive a Bible and a Discipleship 101 Guide. The Discipleship Ministry is responsible for maintaining and updating the Discipleship 101 Guide and course. This ministry is very important because they help the Body understand the reason and purpose for following Jesus Christ.

### **SECTION 307 – Youth/Children’s Ministry**

The Children’s Ministry is responsible for the physical care and spiritual growth of all children under the age of 3. Children are permitted to sit in the sanctuary with their parents. For a matter of fact parents are encouraged to bring their children to the sanctuary for regular worship services. However, ELCC realizes the challenges and difficulties some parents face in trying to care for small children while at the same time trying to worship and focus on God during regular worship service. The Children’s Ministry only offers parents an option of freeing them up long enough to totally focus and worship God.

### **SECTION 308 – Health and Wellness Ministry**

The Health and Wellness Ministry is based on III John 1:2, I Corinthians 9 and II Timothy 2. This ministry is responsible for both the physical and spiritual growth of the Body of Christ. They are to assist the Body in developing good and healthy physical and spiritual habits so both the individual and the Body of Christ may prosper. This may be done through workshops and seminars, Bible workouts, joining other church leagues, and health coaches. ELCC believes the natural body is just as important as the spiritual body (however, by no means more important).

### **SECTION 309 – Missions Ministry (also known as Outreach and Evangelism)**

The Missions Ministry is responsible for equipping and teaching the Body how to take the Gospel to the streets and surrounding communities. They may do State wide, Nation wide, and Worldwide missions, but their primary focus should be bringing salvation to each of our local communities.

### **SECTION 310 – Music and Sound Ministry**

The Minstrels and Sound Technicians are responsible for leading the congregation into praise and worship. A Minstrel is not just a musician, but it is someone that ministers to the spirit of the people. A Minstrel is a person that has a relationship with God and because of their relationship with God they are able to, usually with the assistance of vocalist, set the atmosphere in a service. The Minstrels must have a sensitive spirit and be in tuned with every shift in the supernatural. It is also key that the Minstrels understand the power that is in music by attending both yearly Praise and Worship workshops. Minstrels consist of pianists, drummers, bongo players, guitarists, and other instrument players. Compensation will be worked out on an individual basis.

The Sound Technicians are responsible for the proper working and maintenance of the sound system and equipment. They are also responsible for recording sermons and services. The Minstrels and Sound Technicians must be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, or at least seeking the Holy Ghost. They must be qualified to take the Lord's Supper (Communion). They must be a tithe payer, and attend church and rehearsals on a regular basis.

### **SECTION 311 – Ushers Ministry**

The Ushers Ministry is based on I Chronicles 9:21 and II Samuel 18:26. They are responsible for guarding the entrances to the church and assisting in the direction, safety, security and order of the service, congregation and facility.

An usher's responsibilities during a worship service can be useful in legally protecting him/her should an occasion arise in which they need to deal with a disruptive person.

### **SECTION 312 – Finance Ministry**

The Finance Ministry along with the Treasurer is responsible for the financial growth of the church and the congregation. They must assist in training and teaching financial principles according to Scripture.

### **SECTION 313 – Pastoral Care Ministry**

The Pastoral Care Ministry is responsible for the wellbeing of the Pastor and their family. The ministry may accomplish this through annual services, soliciting member contributions and pledges.

### **SECTION 314 – Education Ministry**

The Education Ministry is responsible for the Biblical growth and teaching of the entire Church. This is done through formal and informal curricula and programs.

### **SECTION 305 - Associate Ministers**

Associate Ministers will maintain and oversee the strategies, development, and progress of the various committees, ministry groups and individuals using available resources to meet the goals of the Church, including all programs, ministries, meetings, and other efforts of the Church. Individual members may be assigned as liaisons to various ministries for temporal periods of time.

They will report directly to the Pastor and Assistant Pastor.

## **ARTICLE IV - STAFF**

### **SECTION 401 - PASTOR**

#### **A. Selection**

Should the need ever arise the Elders of the church will have authority to organize and conduct the search for a Pastor. The role of Pastor is open to both men and women. Preference should be given to the current Assistant Pastor and Associate Ministers first before going outside for any Pastoral candidates.

#### **a. Responsibilities**

In general, it will be the responsibility of the Pastor Search Committee to review and select candidates to be presented before the Church. This will involve:

- (1) The establishment of criteria to be considered in making initial contacts with prospective candidates.
- (2) The making of inquiries as to the availability of prospective candidates.
- (3) The review of information as to the prospective candidate's educational training, experience in Christian service, personal and spiritual reputation, doctrinal views, and conditions under which they would consider a call from the Church.
- (4) The scheduling of candidates for exposure to the Church including speaking at services.
- (5) The consideration of candidates for formal presentation to the Church for the purpose of voting on calling the candidate.

When possible or desirable the Pastor Search Committee is encouraged to select a candidate who has received some sign or signs of approval from another evangelical

church body or organization (such as examination, ordination or letters of recommendation). The Pastor Search Committee is encouraged to seek the aid of the Associate Pastors and elders at Everlasting Life Christian Church in examining educational and spiritual matters of a pastoral candidate.

c. Authority

The Pastor Search Committee will have the authority to expend funds in the pursuit of their responsibilities consistent with the Church budget.

2. Calling of Candidates

After a candidate has spoken at services of the Church and met with the Pastor Search Committee, the Committee will meet to consider whether or not to formally present the candidate to the Church for the purpose of a Membership vote. The unanimous vote of the Pastor Search Committee is required for formal presentation to the Church whereupon a vote will be taken by the Members at a Business Meeting. A Pastor may be called by 3/4 of the Members present (See SECTION 501.C.3).

B. Term of Service

A Pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. The Pastor's tenure of service will terminate by his resignation or death or by 3/4 vote of the Members present at a Business Meeting. In the event of the Pastor's resignation, he may give up to thirty days notice; in the event that the Church votes to terminate the Pastor's services, he will receive thirty days notice or thirty days salary in lieu of such notice.

C. Conditions of Employment

The salary of the Pastor and other compensation such as Social Security, insurance, housing allowance, and pension will be specified in writing and determined by the Pastoral Care Ministry. Likewise, such items as authorized vacation, attendance at meetings and conferences, moving expenses, and other agreed upon conditions will be addressed in the compensation package. The compensation package will be in the form of a legal agreement. Changes in the initial conditions of employment are to be enacted by the Pastoral Care Ministry and overseen by the Elders.

D. Qualifications

The qualifications for Pastor will be the Biblical standards for the office of Elder (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In addition, the Pastor will be ordained by the Elders through the laying on of hands and will hold membership in this Church during their term of service. Additional qualifications will be as determined by the Pastor Search Committee. No formal training is necessary, but such training is highly recommended.

E. Responsibilities

The Pastor has both the collective responsibilities as a member of the Elders Ministry (see SECTION 301) and the individual responsibilities of an Elder (see SECTION 201). Additionally, the Pastor will:

1. Minister to the Congregation through the regular preaching and teaching from the Holy Scriptures. Also known as the Bible.
2. Coordinate the day-to-day operations of the Church and be available for the purpose of counseling.
3. Visit in the homes of those in the Congregation.
4. Oversee the Church's observance of its ordinances and ceremonies.
5. Supervise and evaluate paid staff functions. Part of this function will be to determine vacations, sick days, and other work-related leave.
6. Be a member of and participate on every Ministry and Committee.
7. Responsible for overseeing the growth, development, and maturity of all Assistant Pastors and Associate Pastors.

#### F. Outside Ministries

Involvement by the Pastor in ministries, work, or other endeavors outside of the Church and its Ministries will be limited and reasonable. Such limits and reasonableness is determined by the Pastor.

#### G. Authority and Limitations

The authority of the Pastor to expend funds is limited to their participation as a member of the Elders Ministry and the authority and limitations prescribed to the Board in SECTION 301. The Pastor will have the authority to interpret the Scriptures to the Congregation consistent with the Doctrinal Statement of the Church.

### **SECTION 402 – Assistant Pastor**

The Assistant Pastor will assist the Pastor in accomplishing the work of the Church and the ministry. His or her salary and condition of compensation will be determined by the Pastoral Care Ministry. Many of their responsibilities are similar to those found for the Pastor under SECTION 401.A.(a).

### **SECTION 403 – Treasurer**

#### A. Election and Removal

The Treasurer will be confirmed by the Pastor, and elected by 3/4 vote of the Deacons Ministry present at a Business Meeting of the Church. The Treasurer may be removed from office upon his (her) own request, by a 3/4 vote of the Elders at a Business Meeting, or by the Pastor.

#### B. Qualifications

Preferably, the Treasurer will be a member of the Church and an individual of sufficient numerical and accounting skill so as to carry out the responsibilities of the position. However, the Treasurer may be someone who is not a member of the church. In this case, the selected person must be confirmed by the Pastor, and elected by 3/4 vote of the Deacons Ministry. Whenever possible, the Treasurer should also hold the Biblical office of Deacon, since the accounting and administration of the Church's funds was a task given to Deacons from the early Christian Church.

### C. Responsibilities

The Treasurer will be responsible for:

1. The holding in trust of all monies belonging to the Church in the appropriate checking, savings, or other type account.
2. The care for, maintenance, and oversee of all Church property
3. The maintenance of appropriate records of all expenditures of the Church.
4. The Business Meeting preparation of the Year End Financial Statement and its presentation to the Membership and Ministry Team and presentation of financial reports at each congregational budget Business Meeting.
5. Cash disbursements:
  - a. The payment from the receipts on hand of all authorized salaries and fixed expenses, and other amounts within the designated Budget of the Church.
  - b. The payment of amounts in excess of the Church Budget when authorized by the Ministry Team (See SECTION 605.C).

The Treasurer will also serve as a member of the Deacons and/or Elders Ministry. The Treasurer may be removed by a majority vote of the Pastor and Deacons Ministry. Persons from the Finance Ministry may serve as helpers (called Treasurer Advisors) by appointment of the Treasurers Chairman.

All or any of the above responsibilities may be delegated to a paid bookkeeper, an Accountant, or an Accounting firm. The funding and choice must be approved prior to any hiring action by a majority vote of the Ministry Team present at a Business Meeting. It will then be the responsibility of the Treasurer to work with and supervise the actions of the person or group.

### D. Accountability

The Treasurer will, in general, be accountable to the Finance Ministry and specifically to the Deacon Ministry.

## **SECTION 404 – Secretary**

### A. Election and Removal

The Secretary will be selected by the Pastor. The Secretary may be removed from office upon his (her) own request, or by the request of the Pastor.

### B. Qualifications

The Secretary will be a member of the Church and an individual of sufficient language, grammar, and written skills.

### C. Responsibilities

1. Keep accurate written or typed minutes of all meetings.
2. Support the clerical needs of the Pastors.

## **SECTION 405 - Custodian**

- A. Will be hired by the Deacons Ministry and with the input (for spiritual concerns only) of the Elders Ministry, provided funding (budget) has been approved.
- B. Can be removed by resignation, death, majority agreement by the Deacons Ministry present at a Board Meeting, or by the Pastor.
- C. Supervision of the custodian will be the responsibility of the Deacons Ministry and Pastor. Day to day scheduling and prioritization will be done by the Pastor.

Responsibilities of the Custodian include the external and internal upkeep of the Church building (including parking lot and lawn).

## **SECTION 406 - Other Paid Staff Positions**

- A. Will be hired by the Pastor after unanimous approval by the Elders, provided funding (budget) has been approved.
- B. Can be removed by resignation, death, unanimous agreement by the Elders (except when the person being considered for removal is an Elder), or by 3/4 vote of the Deacons Ministry present at a Business Meeting (see SECTION 501.C).
- C. Will be supervised by the Pastor.

## **SECTION 407 – Whistle Blowers Clause**

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act provides new protections for whistle blowers and criminal penalties for actions taken in retaliation against whistle blowers. The Act protects whistle blowers who report suspected illegal activities in the organization. It is illegal for a corporate entity—for-profit and nonprofit alike—to punish the whistle blower in any manner.

The Church will work to avoid suspected illegal activities by providing training and procedures to all staff. We will avoid and eliminate careless and irresponsible accounting practices.

Our Church will investigate any suspected fraud or misconduct claims sent to our church's e-mail address or left on our office voice-mail. The steps taken during the investigation and the end result will be documented and kept on file indefinitely. Names of whistle blowers and information collected during the investigation will be kept confidential. All staff is required to fully participate in any investigations. We encourage staff and members to report any inappropriateness within the church to church Elders and the Treasurer. No punishment—including firing, demotion, suspension, harassment, failure to consider the employee for promotion, or any other kind of discrimination—is allowed. Even if the claims are unfounded, the nonprofit may not reprimand the employee. The law does not force the employee to demonstrate misconduct; a reasonable belief or suspicion that a fraud exists is enough to create a protected status for the employee.

In Summary,

- The Church will deal with complaints and act accordingly.
- We will do all we can to prevent retaliation on the whistle blower.
- We will take all complaints seriously, investigate the situation, and fix any problems or justify why corrections are not necessary.

## **ARTICLE V - MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 501 - Regular Meetings**

#### A. Sunday Services

The Church will meet regularly each Sunday for worship of the One True and Living God, for edification and discipleship through the Word of God, for fellowship among those in the Body of Christ that they may minister to spiritual needs, and as a witness to the community. The conduct of these meetings will be the responsibility of the Pastor, with specific responsibilities delegated to the Elders Ministry, Deacons Ministry, and other individuals and committees as necessary.

#### B. Cell Groups

These are groups that take many forms and meet throughout the week, either in homes, jobs or church buildings in addition to our Sunday Church gatherings to promote the spread, teachings and preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

##### 1. Structure of Cell Groups

All those in the Congregation are encouraged to participate in a Cell Group. The number of Cell Groups, their structure and leadership will be determined by the Pastor and Elders.

##### 2. Purpose of Cell Groups

The Cell Group structure is an attempt to follow the pattern of house churches or house fellowships which existed in the early Christian Church and to put into practice certain principles found in the New Testament that provide opportunities for:

- a. Knowing God and seeing His work in each of us in a more personal and meaningful way.
- b. Studying the word of God for the purpose of practically relating it to daily living (Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16).
- c. Interacting with one another by sharing, confession, and speaking the truth in love with one another (James 5:16; Ephesians 4:15, 25).
- d. Bearing one another's burdens through prayer, comfort, encouragement, and the sharing of material goods (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 3:13; Acts 4:32).
- e. Equipping each other for ministry and encouraging the discovery and use of spiritual gifts in ministry (Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).
- f. Witnessing to those outside the Church (Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:21).

In addition to the above general purposes, Cell Groups may choose to become individually involved in special areas such as Scripture memorization, specific community outreach endeavors, worship, etc. Different Cell Groups may focus on different aspects of Christian living dependent upon the needs and interests of the Group.

### 3. Meetings of Cell Groups

Cell Groups will normally meet once a week at a time and place determined by the individual Cell Group. When possible, the times and places of Cell Group meetings will be made known to the Congregation on the prior Sunday.

The Missions Ministry will be responsible for the Cell Groups.

### C. Business Meetings

#### 1. Notification of Meetings

All Business meetings of the Church will require that notice be given in written form sent to each member at least one week prior to the meeting, in the Church Bulletin two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting, or by announcement on at least two previous Sunday mornings. Such announcement will state the time, the place of the meeting, and the nature of the proposed business. The requirement for a two-week notice may be waived by the Pastor or Elders in cases of emergency.

#### 2. Moderator

The Chairman of the Elders Ministry will either act as Moderator or appoint an Elder to act as Moderator at all Business Meetings of the Church. In his absence, another Elder will function in that capacity.

### 3. Quorum

Those Members who attend a Business Meeting will constitute a quorum for that meeting with the exception of business addressing the following items: changes in the status of the organization, its Constitution, or its By-laws; the buying, selling, mortgaging, leasing or long-term rental of Church real property; and the call, selection, or termination of the Pastor; and the termination of church staff. In the case of the exceptions noted above, a quorum will consist of 40% of the Church Membership.

### 4. Transaction of Business

The transaction of business at any Business Meeting of the Church will require a majority vote of Members present, except as otherwise provided in these By-laws. Votes may be cast only by Members who are present at a Business Meeting since congregational discussion and/or amendments made to a motion may change a vote cast in absentia. The Elders Ministry will always have the authority to request the reconsideration of any vote.

### 5. Minutes

Official minutes of all Business Meetings will be recorded by the Secretary or someone designated by the Elders or Pastor. Minutes from the previous Business Meeting will be read and approved at each meeting.

### 6. Procedures

*Robert's Rules of Order* is to serve as guidance relative to parliamentary rules of procedure for all Business Meetings of the Church.

## **ARTICLE VI - FINANCES**

### **SECTION 601 - Financial Policies and Goals**

We believe that the way a Church handles itself in the financial area is a reflection of its integrity in every area. Luke 16:11 teaches that the person who is untrustworthy in handling money cannot be trusted to handle spiritual riches either. Likewise, if we are trustworthy in the use of monetary riches, then God will be able to entrust spiritual riches and blessings to us as a church (Luke 16:10). Therefore, we have established the following financial policies and goals to guide us in proper **stewardship** of God's monetary and non-monetary riches and assets:

- A. This church and ministry belongs to God. It is neither a monument to anyone's ego nor a legacy to anyone's memory. The ministry does not bear anyone's name. The buildings are not dedicated to anyone, but Jesus Christ. The Pastor, Elders and other members are merely stewards and fellow-servants in the work of the Kingdom.

- B. The Lord has chosen to place His mantle of approval on this ministry called Everlasting Life Christian Church. Nevertheless, He gives and sometimes takes away. The "church" of Jesus Christ is the people of God. God's people will never cease to exist. But this particular ministry may. If He ever closes the doors to this work, we will accept His leading and yield the outcome to Him. Until then, we will devote every ounce of energy to the task at hand.
- C. One of the ways we can discern the Lord's will regarding the continuation of our work is through the financial support He sends (or doesn't send) from His people. Therefore, during lean times we will make our obligations known--but we will not squirm, scratch or claw for contributions. We will never resort to what we consider to be disrespectful and dishonorable methods of raising funds, even when the need is serious. Nor will we attempt to motivate giving from a false sense of guilt or compulsion, since this robs God's people of the opportunity to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- D. We will view each contribution as a sacrificial gift from Christian people who love God -like the widow's last cent (Luke 21:1-4). Our obligation, therefore, is to spend that money conservatively and wisely. Every penny will be stretched as far as possible to serve the needs of the ministry and the extension of Christ's kingdom.
- E. We believe God wishes to use ELCC as a financial channel to help needy individuals and to support other evangelical ministries. Therefore, we will not spend money upon nonessential church personnel, programs or facilities. Instead we will strive to give as much as possible of income received to ministries and individuals outside of the regular church body (i.e. Sunday school program, pastor's salary, building projects, utilities, etc.).
- F. When we make a purchase, we will pay the invoice within 30 days if possible. Overdue bills are a sorry testimony to the world.
- G. We will not spend more money than we receive. Careful budgeting and monitoring of our resources will permit us to reduce our expenses for programs and services before disbursements exceed income. Deficit spending is not God's will for this church.
- H. The Scriptures teach that "the borrower is a slave to the lender" (Proverbs 23:7). In order that we might be free to act, minister and to give as we are led by the Lord, it is our goal to remain financially free from debt, as much as possible. If debt is incurred we will work to repay the obligation as soon as possible.
- I. The Pastor will not be the primary Fundraiser.
- J. We do not intend to rely solely on the tithe of the people for funding. Offerings, non-monetary contributions, and people's time and talents will also be acceptable means of fundraising. As long as what you give and do is acceptable to God, who are we to judge?
- K. We will seek to elect and confirm leadership that is free from the love of money (1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:3), and we will conform to acceptable accounting procedures as established by the United States Government to ensure ethical monetary practices.
- L. To summarize, we will try to remember always that Jesus Christ is our possessor and our dispossessor. He ordained and blessed the establishment of ELCC. It

belongs entirely to Him. Therefore, we will cradle it lovingly in our hands, attempting not to crush it through self-centeredness, ignorance, greed, selfishness or church politics.

## **SECTION 602 - Accounts**

The Financial Accounts will be established through the Budget annually, maintained by the Treasurer, and approved by the Finance Ministry. Accounts may also be established for non-budgeted funds collected for church approved activities or events.

## **SECTION 603 - Offerings**

### A. Regular Offerings

Regular offerings will be taken at Sunday services and other special meetings as determined by the Elders and Deacons. Undesignated offerings will be applied to the Annual Budget.

### B. Special Offerings

Special offerings will be specifically identified as to their purpose and will either be taken separate from regular offerings or provision made for the separating of special offerings from regular offerings by means of an identification procedure.

### C. Designated Offerings

At the discretion of the individual, offerings or portions thereof may be designated, but only to specific budget categories in the church budget or Christian causes approved by the Finance Ministry. If monthly collections toward the Church Budget are not sufficient to meet all Budget Commitments, then the Treasurer can apply designated funds towards the Church's Budget commitment with approval by the Finance Ministry. This procedure does not apply to funds designated to non-budgeted accounts as specified in SECTION 602.

### D. Accounting of Offerings

The amount of funds received in regular offerings will be recorded in periodic financial reports and statements. These documents will be made available upon request from any member or donor of the ministry. Funds received in special offerings will be communicated to the Congregation on the Sunday morning following the offering. When possible offerings will be counted in the presence of two or more people appointed by the Treasurer or Pastor.

## **SECTION 604 - Financial Statements**

Financial statements will be prepared by the Treasurer or outside accounting provider. Financial statements will conform to business standards and be comprehensive in nature including the identification of receipts and disbursements by account for the period covered and comparisons made to the budget figure for those same accounts and period. Financial statements will be made available to the Membership upon request.

## **SECTION 605 - Church Budget**

### A. Preparation

The Church budget will be prepared by the Ministry Team (SECTION 301.B) or a committee appointed by the Deacons Ministry. The Ministry Team or the committee will be assisted by the Treasurer. The Church Budget will be based on God-given challenges, the previous receipt and disbursement records, growth experienced during the previous year/period and anticipated in the coming year/period, and other factors which affect the expenditures of the Church. Input should be obtained from the various Ministries, Committees, and Officers, Pastors or individuals relative to their particular areas of ministry.

### B. Submittal and Approval

A copy of the prepared preliminary budget will be made available to the Membership at least one week prior to the Budget approval meeting. At this time membership has the opportunity to recommend any changes to it prior to final approval. Upon final approval of the Budget at the Business Meeting, copies will be made available to Membership.

### C. Use and Implementation

The Annual Church Budget will serve as a guide for the expenditure funds in all areas of the Church's ministry. Expenditures in excess of the budget by Committees, Officers, ministry groups or individuals require the prior approval of the Ministry Team or the Deacons Ministry. The expenditure of funds for budgeted items which exceed the Budget amount may be approved by the Ministry Teams as long as these expenditures are consistent with the needs of the Church, the recent financial position of the Church, and the extent of funds on hand. Items not addressed or identified in the Budget require the approval of the Ministry Team, regardless of amount.

### D. Budget Oversight Committee

The Church finances will be reviewed at least semi-annually by a committee of at least three people, one of whom will be a member who is not affiliated with the Treasurer, Finance Ministry or Deacons Ministry. This committee will be selected by the Ministry Team on an annual basis. This committee will review all financial records and ensure that the books are balanced, and prepare a report with recommendations and findings. This report will be made available to the Ministry Team and membership upon request. The

Treasurer will provide all pertinent documents required by the committee, with assistance from the Finance Ministry if necessary.

## **ARTICLE VII - ORDINANCES AND CEREMONIES**

### **SECTION 701 - Baptism**

Water baptism is the symbol of Holy Spirit baptism, but differences in interpretation as to how it is to be practiced are acknowledged. These differences exist in practice because of man's limited knowledge and understanding of God. Consequently, each individual is encouraged to be convinced in his own mind as to which interpretation to accept as his own and act accordingly by faith. We are to be willing to receive another believer and act according to his wishes in the matter of baptism even though his position may be difficult for us to understand.

On the basis of the above principles baptism will be practiced as indicated below.

#### A. Baptism of Believers

A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ and who earnestly desires to lead an obedient life and who has never been baptized will be encouraged to be baptized. Such a person should present himself before the Elders and/or the Congregation to profess his faith and to request baptism. The mode and reason for baptism can be discussed one-on-one with the Pastor. If a person becomes a Christian who has previously been baptized, a second baptism is not required. If, however, he earnestly desires a rebaptism, he may present himself before the Elders and/or the Congregation to profess his faith and to request baptism.

#### B. Baptism of Infant Children of Believers

Parents who wish to baptize their children will vow to:

1. Express their faith that although their children are born sinful and rebellious toward God, He has promised to save them through faith in Jesus Christ even as He has saved us, and acknowledge that God's means of saving their children is primarily through the Christian home; and
2. Believing these promises, promise to lead a Godly life before their children and encourage them to follow their example, pray with and for their children that God would save them, train them in the nurture and discipline of the Lord and His Word, and impress on their children the need they have of a Savior and the promises of God in Christ Jesus.

In the baptism service the Pastor or Elder will ask the following questions to the parents:

1. Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?

2. Do you claim God's covenant promises in his (her) behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for his (her) salvation, as you do for your own?
3. Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon God's grace, that you will endeavor to set before him (her) a godly example, that you will pray with and for him (her), that you will instruct him (her) in the teachings of the Christian faith, and that you will strive, by all means of God's appointment, to bring him (her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Then he will ask the Congregation:

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting these parents in the Christian nurture of their child?

After which, calling the child by name, the Pastor or Elder will baptize the child with water and say:

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Jesus name). (Matthew 28:19)

This does not automatically save the child, but serves as a symbol of the commitment from the parents and congregation that they will raise the child in a Christian home and by the Word of God. The child must individually make a decision to accept Jesus Christ into their heart once they come to the age of accountability. At which time a second baptism is warranted.

#### C. Mode of Baptism

The Bible permits latitude with respect to the mode of baptism and can support all three modes (sprinkling, pouring, and immersion). Therefore, we claim that same freedom. The only requirement is that water be used.

#### D. Administration of Baptism

Baptism services will occur as and when scheduled by the Pastor and Elders. Any Pastor (Associate), Elder may baptize and will be assisted by Deacons or others as required.

### **SECTION 702 - Child Dedication Ceremony**

#### A. Parent's and Congregation's Commitment

Those parents who believe only in the baptism of believers but wish to make a commitment to raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord may make a public statement of this fact by vowing to:

1. Express their faith that although their children are born sinful and rebellious toward God, He has promised to save them through faith in Jesus Christ even as He has saved us, and acknowledge that God's means of saving their children is primarily through the Christian home; and
2. Believing these promises, promise to lead a Godly life before their children and encourage them to follow their example, pray with and for their children that God will save them, train them in the nurture and discipline of the Lord and His Word, and impress on their children the need they have of a Savior and the promises of God in Christ Jesus.

In the dedication service the Pastor or Elder will ask the following questions to the parents:

1. Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you claim God's covenant promises in his (her) behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for his (her) salvation, as you do for your own?
3. Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon God's grace, that you will endeavor to set before him (her) a godly example, that you will pray with and for him (her), that you will instruct him (her) in the teachings of the Christian faith, and that you will strive, by all means of God's appointment, to bring him (her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Then he will ask the Congregation:

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting these parents in the Christian nurture of their child?

#### **B. Administration of the Dedication Ceremony**

Dedication Ceremonies will occur as and when scheduled by the Pastor or Elders. The Pastor is responsible for the Dedication Service.

#### **SECTION 703 - The Lord's Supper (also known as Communion)**

The Lord's Supper is symbolic of the sacrifice of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and the resulting fellowship of believers (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Participation in the Lord's Supper will be open to all Christians who genuinely confess their sinful state and indicate their repentant spirit and dependence upon Christ as Savior and Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). The Lord's Supper will be administered as and when determined by the Pastor and Elders, but not less frequent than annually. Any Elder may administer the Lord's Supper and will be assisted by Deacons or others as required.

#### **SECTION 704 - The Ordination Ceremony**

Upon confirmation by the Elders and approval by the Members, the Candidate will be ordained to Christian ministry at a public service of the Church containing exhortation from the Word of God, questions posed to the Candidate, the laying on of hands, and prayer (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22). The Church encourages any person considering ordination to get formal training and education prior to the actual ceremony. This training or education may result in a certificate and/or degree. Whomever the Church ordains we will also license. This ordination and license applies to both new and transferring ministers. The Church will take the responsibility for encouraging and assisting those whom it has ordained (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17).

The following questions will be asked of the Candidate by a Pastor or Elder:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God without error in the original writings, the only rule of our faith and practice?
2. Do you acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer and Head of His Church and are you willing to submit to His Lordship?
3. Have you been motivated as far as you know your own heart to seek the office of Elder from love of God, obedience to God's call and to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ?
4. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?
5. Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in your personal and family life, as well as in the public duties of your office, endeavoring to walk as an example before the people of God?
6. Are you ready now to take the responsibilities of Elder (Deacon)?

For Elders and Pastors the following question will be asked of the Membership, which should signify an affirmative answer by holding up their right hands:

Are you ready to submit to the spiritual leadership of this man?

Following affirmative answers to these questions the Elders, or in the case of a Deacon Candidate the Elders and Deacons, will lay their hands upon the Candidate and prayer will be offered. An Elder will then say:

I now pronounce and declare that \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly confirmed, approved, and ordained to the office of Elder (Deacon), agreeable to the Word of God, and according to this Church's Constitution and By-laws, and that as such he (she) is entitled to all encouragement and honor in the Lord. In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **SECTION 705 – Wedding**

Weddings are worship services holy and sacred in the sight of God. Matthew 5:27-28; 31-32 clearly identifies marriage as a lifelong commitment of one man and one woman to

each other. This view does not condone easy divorce, extramarital affairs, or couples living together without marriage. Marriage is very sacred in the eyes of God. Marriage is both a civil and a religious institution, and we of the Christian ministry represent both the state and Almighty God when we conduct a wedding. This rare combination of church-state relationship is justified by the fact that the state does not require that a member of the clergy perform the marriage but does permit such a person to do so.

ELCC is here to assist any person wanting to use our church facility or Pastor for their wedding. No facility fee will be assessed to ELCC members. However, a nominal fee will be assessed to non-members to cover facility expenses. This fee may increase or decrease at anytime. Scheduled weddings of members and church events come before non-member weddings, unless approved by the Hospitality Ministry. A wedding form must be filled out by any couple interested in using ELCC's facilities for their wedding. It must be presented to the church Secretary who will review it to see if the date conflicts with any of the church's events. No alcohol is allowed in or on the church's grounds. Secular songs are NOT to be played in the church or on the church's property. All wedding songs must be approved prior to the wedding. No dancing will be allowed outside of the Bride and Groom and their parents.

Our purpose as the Church is to provide Biblical guidance to any couple seeking such a blessed union. We will work closely with the couple to ensure their desires and needs are met without compromising the sanctity of marriage. We understand all wedding ceremonies and programs are different therefore we reserve the right to deny our participation in or services for such ceremonies.

Wedding ceremonies may be held inside the sanctuary or outside.

### **SECTION 706 - Funerals**

The dead and death is talked about in many places in the Bible: John 5:24; 8:51, Romans 5, Romans 6, Romans 8, I Corinthians 15:54-56, II Timothy 4:1. As Believers in a returning Savior we believe that Christians do not die but we sleep. We will remain sleeping until Jesus Christ returns for His church (saints). Ministry to those who have been separated by death from their loved ones is another important pastoral responsibility. It begins at or before the moment when the death occurs and continues for several weeks or even longer. It is a rich opportunity for serving families, both before and after the funeral as well as in the service itself.

Death comes to all eventually, sometimes suddenly with little or no warning, other times at the end of a long and serious illness. It has been said, in fact, that death is a normal part of life. As pastor, it is an opportunity and privilege to prepare friends and families for this great transition by including in preached sermons the promise of Christ that his people shall inherit eternal life. Equally appropriate are informal discussions about the nature of the funeral or memorial service, considering together with the individual's family what is appropriate to include and why.

ELCC is here to assist any person wanting to use our church facility or Pastor for their funeral. No facility fee will be assessed to ELCC members. However, a nominal fee will be assessed to non-members to cover facility expenses. This fee may increase or decrease at anytime.

Spiritual counseling also offers opportunities to talk about death, especially with older persons, those who are chronically or terminally ill, or their families and close friends.

All funerals should be handled with the utmost care and consideration for the family and friends of the loved one.

### **SECTION 707 – Politics**

Everlasting Life Christian Church will not openly or privately endorse any political candidates, however, individual members and the Pastor are free to do so. This is their right.

### **SECTION 708 – General Facility Usage**

All requests for usage of the facility must go through the Secretary. A form must be completed and turned in to them prior to usage. Final word will be communicated to the requester in a timely manner. No drinks or food of any kind will be allowed in the sanctuary, besides pulpit attendees. All food and non-alcoholic drinks are to be consumed in the reception hall. Fees for non-member activities will be discussed, assessed and if necessary voted on by the Hospitality Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS**

### **SECTION 801 - Procedures**

These By-laws may be amended at any Business Meeting of the Church provided:

1. That such amendments are proposed by either committees, officers, ministry groups, or members of Everlasting Life Christian Church;
2. That such proposed amendments have been made available to the Ministry Team in writing two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting in which action on the amendments is to be taken or have been provided by mail 10 days prior to that Meeting;
3. That notice of the time and place of the Meeting has been indicated in the above written notification, has been announced, or has been acknowledged in the Church Bulletin on at least two Sundays preceding the Meetings;
4. That the affirmative vote for amendment will not be less than 3/4 of the votes cast by the Ministry Team present (See SECTION 501.C.3).

Voting will be by secret ballot if so requested by any member.

## **SECTION 802 - Exclusion**

No amendment to these By-laws will be permitted which infringes upon the Constitution of the Church.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**APPROVE** - A distinction is made in these By-laws between approving and electing Officers. Those Officers that are approved by the Members are Elders (including Pastors) and Deacons. The Officer elected by the Members is the Treasurer. The procedure of approval and election are the same (3/4 vote of the Members present at a Business Meeting), but there is a conceptual distinction, which seems to be important to preserve.

The offices of Elder and Deacon are made a part of the Church by the Scripture (I Timothy 3:1-13). On the other hand, the office of Treasurer is a man-made position set up by the Church in order that things might be done decently and in order. Secondly, according to the Scriptures, a person who undertakes the office of Elder or Deacon is first called or elected by God to that office (Acts 20:28). In this sense then, the Church Membership does not make the person an Elder or Deacon by election, but rather approves or agrees with God that the person is indeed called to an office which God Himself has already given to that individual.

**ASSISTANT PASTOR** – Assistant Pastor and Associate Pastor are used interchangeably throughout this document but mean the same thing.

**BENEVOLENCE FUND** - A specific fund established by the Church budget and administered by the Elders for the purpose of sharing our monetary resources with those in financial or material need.

**BODY OF CHRIST** - The visible Church of Jesus Christ; all Christians still living, no matter what local church or denomination they may be a part of.

**CHURCH** - In almost every case in these By-laws, Church refers to this particular local church called Everlasting Life Christian Church or Everlasting Life Christian Church. Where Church is used to refer to the Christian Church, the entire Body of Christ, this is made clear either by the context or use of the term "Christian Church".

**CONFIRMED BY THE ELDERS MINISTRY** - The Elders have the responsibility to verify the qualifications of Church Officer nominations per SECTION 301.B. Once verified, the elders will approve the nomination by a vote of at least 3/4 of the Elders Ministry. If this is done, the nominee is "confirmed" and will be presented to the membership for voting into office.

**CONGREGATION** - All those who fellowship with Everlasting Life Christian Church on a regular basis including both members and non-members.

**MEMBERS** - A member of Everlasting Life Christian Church as per ARTICLE I of these By-laws.

**PASTOR** - All references to "Pastor" in this document refers to the Senior Pastor of Everlasting Life Christian Church unless otherwise specified.

**REMOVAL** - Removal from office is the permanent expulsion of an officer from his church position. In order for the person to return to office, they would need to go through the same procedure as someone who had never held that office.

**SUSPENSION** - The temporary removal of a church officer to include all responsibilities and privileges, until such time as they are permanently removed or reinstated. The suspension may be definite (a set period of time) or indefinite (waiting for the unrepentant offender to exhibit signs of repentance).

### **EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS**

The following documents may have been mentioned in these By-Laws but are separate from them. Other documents will be added as needed.

**DISCIPLESHIP 101** – This is a guide and course for those new to Christ and salvation. It is maintained and updated by the Discipleship Ministry.

**GUIDELINES TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION** – This guide outlines the disciplinary action taken when Leadership, members and others break by-laws and other Christian values and morals. In summary, all church disputes and matters will be handled and resolved within the church. Mediators maybe used at the Church’s discretion.

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION** – This letter is used to transfer membership from one church to another. It is maintained and updated by the church Secretary.

**ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER** – This book contains the rules and order for church business meetings. We will use a hybrid form of these rules and other parliamentary procedures.

### **PROGRAM, CONFERENCES, AND MEETINGS**

Following is a general list of annual programs, conferences and meetings observed by Everlasting Life Christian Church. Additional programs, conferences and meetings may be scheduled, called or added as necessary.

*Annual Business Meeting, Youth Sunday, Men’s Day, Women’s Day, Church Anniversary, Friends and Family Day, Membership Appreciation Day, Leadership Appreciation Day, Resurrection Sunday, Communion, and Christ’s Birthday*

More details on the ministry of Everlasting Life Christian Church can be found at our website: [www.everlastinglifechristianchurch.webs.com](http://www.everlastinglifechristianchurch.webs.com)

### **501(c)3 STATUS**

The church is not a 501(c)3 but certain functions of it may become 501(c)3 in the future.