

**EASTRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH
OF COVINGTON, INC.**

BYLAWS

As Adopted By Eastridge Community Church members on 12/14/2025.

PREAMBLE:

We, the people of Eastridge Community Church of Covington, Inc., trusting in the wisdom of Almighty God as He has revealed it in His Holy Bible, do hereby establish these bylaws for the governance of our congregation.

ARTICLE 1: NAME, LOCATION, PURPOSE AND MISSION

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be Eastridge Community Church of Covington, Inc. It will be referred to as "the Church" throughout this document.

Section 2. Location. The meeting place of the Church shall be in the vicinity of Covington, Georgia.

Section 3. Purpose. The purpose of the Church is established in scripture: "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ . . . and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Cor. 5:19-20).

Section 4. Mission. The mission of the Church is to lead people to a life-changing connection with Jesus Christ by making disciples and reaching the lost.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Admission. Any person meeting the six qualifications below shall be admitted as a member of the Church:

- (1) Public confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- (2) Baptism by immersion;
- (3) A stated desire to join the Church;
- (4) Agreement with the stated doctrines of the Church;
- (5) Agreement to submit to the authority of the Elders;
- (6) Agreement to actively participate in the life and mission of the Church.

Section 2. Categories.

Active Member. The Elders shall have authority to establish criteria for defining active and inactive members, and for establishing criteria for withholding certain membership privileges from inactive members.

Voting Member. Any active member who has reached the age of 18 years prior to the first day of the month of a congregational meeting, and who has been an active member for at least 90 days prior to the date of a congregational meeting, shall be eligible to vote during the meeting.

Section 3. Responsibilities. Members are responsible to place themselves under the authority of the Elders (Heb. 13:17).

Section 4. Termination.

The Elders shall have authority to terminate the membership of anyone meeting any of the following tests:

- (1) The member requests termination;
- (2) The member remains inactive for a period of not less than one year;
- (3) The member does not respond to discipline by the Church (Mt. 18:15-17, 1Cor. 5:1-5, 12-13). Such discipline shall be imposed in the following sequence to a member whose sinful conduct is disruptive to the unity and harmony of the Church:
 - Private reproof (Mt. 18:15)

- Reproof by two or three witnesses (Mt. 18:16)
- Reproof before the Church (Mt. 18:17a)
- Termination (Mt. 18:17b)

ARTICLE III: BOARD OF DIRECTORS and PASTORS/ELDERS

Section 1. Definitions. The Church recognizes 2 distinct groups, known as the 1) Elders and the 2) Board of Directors.

Pastors/Elders. The Pastors/Elders are the qualified men who function as the shepherds of the church body, as defined by Scripture, doing the daily and weekly work of the ministry for and with the congregation and its individuals and families. Eastridge Church recognizes that the office of the Pastor/Elder/Overseer in Scripture are one and the same, and not 3 distinct offices. Hereafter, this office will only be referred to as "Elder" in this document (cf. Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2), though they are more normally called "Pastors" in our congregation.

Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is a group of qualified individuals, charged, as representatives of the congregational body, to provide oversight, accountability, organizational expertise, fiduciary agency of the organization, practical ministry assistance, and personal care to the church's Pastors and, by extension, to the church body at large.

Section 2. Qualifications.

Elders. Eastridge Church adopts the prerequisites for its Elders as the qualifications of Elders, stated in scripture:

1 Tim. 3:2-7. "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of

money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. He must not be a recent convert . . . he must have a good reputation with outsiders . . ."

Titus 1:6-9. "An Elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and

disobedient. An overseer must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, and who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught."

Board of Directors. Eastridge Church adopts the prerequisites for the members of its Board of Directors members as the qualifications stated in Acts 6:3, for the servants of the early Church:

Acts 6:3: Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

Section 3. Duties.

Elders. The Church adopts as duties of the Elders those duties stated in scripture or implied by scriptural example: handle finances (Acts 11:30); resolve doctrinal issues (Acts 15:6-29); keep watch (Acts 20:28); be shepherds (Acts 20:28); be on guard (Acts 20:31); direct the affairs of the church (I Timothy 5:17); be entrusted with God's work (I Timothy 1:7); encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (I Timothy 1:9); pray over and anoint the sick (James 5:14); serve as overseers (I Peter 5:2); be examples for the flock (I Peter 5:3); and speak the word of God (Hebrews 13:7).

Board of Directors. The Church states as the duties of the Board of Directors the following:

- a) Holding the Elders accountable for the administration of their ordained duties, including the preaching and teaching of Biblical doctrine, leading of the Church staff, and general shepherding of the Church body.
- b) Overseeing and setting the salaries of all staff members
- c) Offering administrative expertise, wisdom, and practical service in the organizational aspects of the Church including but not limited to:
 - i. Finances
 - ii. Human Resources
 - iii. Employment of staff members
- d) Offering personal care, support, and prayer for the Pastors and staff, and making sure they are healthy spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically.

Section 4. Number, Selection, Appointment, Term of Office, and Removal.

Board of Directors.

Number. The minimum number of the Board of Directors shall be three, including the Senior Pastor, who serves as a Board member.

Nomination. Any voting member of Eastridge Church may nominate another member to serve on the Board of Directors.

Screening. The Elders and current Board members will screen all nominees to validate their qualifications and determine their availability for service. Nominees who pass the screening become candidates.

Announcement and Introduction. All candidates for the Board will be announced to and introduced to the congregation at each worship service during a two-week period.

Objections. Anyone having reason to doubt a candidate's qualifications must raise an objection to the Board privately within three weeks of the candidate's first announcement. The candidacy shall be held in abeyance until the objection is resolved by the Board. The resolution shall be by dismissal of the objection or by termination of the candidacy.

Appointment. Candidates other than incumbent Board members shall be automatically appointed as Board Members three weeks after their initial announcement, or one week after the dismissal of all objections against their candidacy whichever is later.

Reappointment. At-least sixty days prior to the expiration of the term of an incumbent Board Member, the congregation shall be advised by announcement at a regular Sunday service, or by mail, or by publication on church online media for two successive weeks that the incumbent member is a candidate for reappointment. Anyone having reason to doubt the incumbent member's qualifications to remain a Board Member must raise an objection to another Board Member privately within three weeks of the first announcement of the candidacy for reappointment. The candidacy shall be held in abeyance until the objection is resolved by the other Board members. The resolution shall be by dismissal of the objection or by termination of the candidacy for reappointment. The incumbent Board Member shall be automatically reappointed to a new term three weeks after the initial announcement of candidacy for reappointment, or one week after the dismissal of all objections against their candidacy for reappointment, whichever is later.

Term of Office. A Board Member shall be appointed to a three-year term. After a three-year term he is eligible for selection and reappointment to subsequent terms. The term of office shall be reckoned from the first day of the fiscal year, regardless of the actual date of appointment; all ending terms shall expire on the last day of the fiscal year, except that the term for an incumbent Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall expire at the close of the first meeting in the next fiscal year.

At the end of a Board Member's three-year term, and before reappointment, the Board Member will have the option to take a one-year sabbatical from the Board of Directors, at the end of which, he will be eligible for reappointment. Furthermore, any Board Member may request a sabbatical for himself at any time by submitting his request to the other Board members. His request will be reviewed, approved or denied, and given terms at the discretion of the rest of the Board members.

Removal. A Board Member who becomes disqualified while in office shall be removed from office if a majority of the other members calls for his removal.

Current Board Members. The individuals currently serving in the position of the Board of Directors shall retain that position. Notwithstanding the terms of these bylaws, the current term of Dalton Knox shall end as of the end of fiscal year 2025. The current term of Greg Herring shall end as of the end of fiscal year 2026. Each current Board Member shall be subject to reappointment in the manner provided in this section.

The Lead Pastor (Elder) shall be included as a functioning Board Member but shall not be subject to any term limits, nor shall any of the other pastors (Elders).

Elders.

Number. The minimum number of Elders shall be 1, in that there shall always be at least a qualified Elder in the role of Lead Pastor.

Nomination. The current Elders and Board of Directors, may nominate a candidate for ordination into Eldership and pastoral ministry.

Screening. The Elders and current Board members will screen all nominees to validate their qualifications and determine their availability for service. Nominees who pass the screening will become candidates.

Announcement and Introduction. All candidates for Eldership announced to and introduced to the congregation at each worship service during a two-week period.

Objections. Anyone having reason to doubt a candidate's qualifications must raise an objection to any Elder or Board Member privately within three weeks of the candidate's first announcement. The candidacy shall be held in abeyance until the objection is resolved by the Board. The resolution shall be by dismissal of the objection or by termination of the candidacy.

Appointment. A candidate shall be automatically appointed and ordained as an Elder three weeks after the initial announcement of his candidacy, or one week after the dismissal of all objections against their candidacy, whichever is later.

Term of Office. There is no specific term-length designated for Elders.

Removal. An Elder who becomes disqualified while in office shall be removed from office if a majority of the other Elders AND a majority of the Board Members call for his removal.

Current Elders. All Pastors on staff at Eastridge Church and ordained for pastoral ministry shall be recognized as Elders, in accordance with the Scriptures. This may include, but is not limited the Lead Pastors, Associate Pastor, Celebrate Recovery Pastor, Worship Pastor, and Youth Pastor.

Section 4. Meetings, Officers, and Decision-Making.

Meetings.

The Board of Directors shall meet as a group monthly, or more frequently, as they deem necessary to properly address the affairs of the Church.

The Elders shall meet together as frequently as they deem necessary to properly shepherd the Church.

Officers. The Board of Directors shall elect from among themselves a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman during the first meeting of each fiscal year, and at the first meeting after the resignation of either incumbent. These officers will serve a tenure of one year, with all terms ending at the first meeting of each fiscal year. They shall serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board during Board meetings, and as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Church during congregational meetings. The Lead Pastor shall not be eligible to serve as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Decision-making. Decision-making within the Board of Directors will be accomplished by voting, with a simple majority being necessary to decide a motion. For non-unanimous votes, if the Chairman sides with the majority, he shall have authority to delay implementation of a motion for a reasonable period if he feels the issue warrants greater accord.

Section 5. Jurisdiction.

Elders. The Elders are appointed to be shepherds and overseers. As such, any committee, ministry team, Bible study group, small group, or other such organization which exists as a subset of the Church, or which uses publications of the Church to announce its activities, or which uses the meetings of the Church as a time for recruitment for its church-related activities, regardless of where the organization meets, must place itself under the authority of the Elders. The Elders retain the authority to require standards of conduct for any organization which meets on the property of the Church, regardless of the purpose or function of the organization.

Board of Directors. The Board of Directors delegates all duties, responsibilities, and authority of day-to-day ministry and Church governance to the Elders employed by the Church as Pastors. Therefore, the Elders are free to make authoritative decisions for Church without the necessary stated approval of the Board of Directors, with the following exceptions:

- a) Hiring of any Pastor or other staff member
- b) Firing of any Pastor or other staff member
- c) Purchases or projects exceeding a value of \$5,000
- d) Purchase or sale of land
- e) Editing any part of the Church's stated doctrine
- f) Renaming the Church organization
- g) Approving the overall yearly budget of the Church
- h) Editing of the Bylaws of the Church

ARTICLE IV: MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

Section 1. The mission of the Church shall be carried out through member-led committees called ministries. The Elders shall establish any and all policies regarding the leadership, function, and interaction of the ministries.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF

All church officers and staff must be members of the church in good standing.

Section 1. Lead Pastor. The qualifications for Lead Pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His responsibilities include preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, supervision of the pastoral staff, planning and guiding the Church to grow and fulfill its purposes; however, the Lead Pastor shall not be authorized to hire or terminate a church employee, officer, Pastor or other staff member without the prior approval by a majority vote of the Elders. However, the Elders shall be authorized to establish policies and procedures regarding the hiring or termination of church employees, officers, Pastors or other staff members. There shall be a written employment contract between the Lead Pastor and the Church acting through the Elders.

The Lead Pastor shall also act as a functioning Board Member but shall not be subject to any term limits.

- (a) **Selection of Lead Pastor.** A Lead Pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs. A Lead Pastor's selection committee shall be appointed by the Board to seek out a suitable Pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination. The Pastor's selection committee will recommend to the Board only one (1) candidate at a time. Upon approval of the candidacy by a majority vote of the Board, the Pastor's election shall take place at a meeting of the church members called for that purpose, of which at least one (1) week's notice shall be given to the members. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present is necessary for a choice;
- (b) **Dismissal of Lead Pastor.** The chosen Pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the Board. In either case, at least sixty (60) days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed.

Section 2. Other Staff Members. The Church shall employ Pastors and staff members as deemed necessary by the Board, and the Lead Pastor to assist the Church in fulfilling its purpose. The Board and the Lead Pastor shall also establish any and all policies regarding the Pastors and staff members of the Church.

ARTICLE VI: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meetings. The Church shall conduct a business meeting each year during the last quarter of the year as announced by the Board no less than 27 days prior to the meeting date. The meeting shall include a report of the financial status of the Church and the annual budget shall be presented to the congregation for approval.

Except as stated otherwise above, the voting members present shall constitute a quorum for all votes, and a simple majority shall suffice to pass a measure.

Section 2. Called Meetings. Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Chairman or the Vice-chairman of the Board. The date, place, time, and purpose of the meeting shall be established by the Board and be announced to the Church at a regular Sunday service, or by mail, or by publication in the Sunday worship bulletin no less than one week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Special Meeting for Dismissal of the Lead Pastor. The Board must call a special meeting of the Church prior to releasing the Lead Pastor from employment. The purpose of the meeting will be to announce the intention of the Board and to hear the concerns of the members, not to obtain congregational approval.

Section 4. Special Meeting for the Sale of Real Estate. The Board must call a special meeting of the Church prior to directing the sale, purchase or any other form of transfer of the real estate holdings of the Church. The purpose of the meeting will be to announce the intention of the Elders and Board of Directors, to hear the concerns of the Church, and to obtain congregational approval.

ARTICLE VII: MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1. The Bible. The Church does not endorse a particular translation or paraphrase of the Bible. Resolution of apparent conflicts of meaning among the versions shall be decided by referring to those versions generally regarded as most closely translating the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

Section 2. Advocacy of Candidates for Public Office. The Church shall not be involved in any activity which could be construed as an advocacy of a candidate for public office. Members retain their full rights as citizens to become involved in the democratic process at whatever level they desire.

Section 3. Policy Letters. The Board of Directors shall issue policy letters from time to time as they determine necessary.

Section 4. Leadership Succession: Shortage/Lack of Board Members.

Shortage of Board Members. If the number of Board of Directors drops below the minimum requirements (3), the Chairman will announce to the congregation the opening of the selection process for the appointment of new Board Members. The Church will neither hire any staff member nor approve an increase in the annual budget until the minimum number of Board Members is in service.

Lack of Board Members. If there is no incumbent Board Member, the senior staff member will act as Interim Chairman for the purpose of beginning the selection process for the appointment of new Board Members. The Interim Chairman will form a screening committee from among the available staff members. If the Interim Chairman is to be a Board Member nominee he must first resign his position as Interim Chairman, appointing the staff member of next longest tenure in his place. The Interim Chairman shall not undertake any business of the Church other than the appointment of Board Members and business necessary for the day-to-day operations of the Church. The position of Interim Chairman will terminate upon appointment of a new Board Member.

Section 5. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These bylaws may be amended at any annual or special meeting of the Church by a two—thirds vote of the members present and voting, provided a notice of the proposed amendment is available to all members or published in the Sunday Worship bulletin or via church online media no less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

This document rescinds any previous editions of the Bylaws of Eastridge Community Church of Covington, Inc.