

Constitutional Agreement and Bylaws for Assembly of God, Coweta, Oklahoma

PREAMBLE

Whereas, It is the express purpose of God, our Heavenly Father, to call out of the world a saved people who shall constitute the body or church of our Lord Jesus Christ, built and established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; and

Whereas, The members of the body, the church (ecclesia) of Jesus Christ, are enjoined to assemble themselves together for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God and the work of the ministry and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for in the New Testament, therefore be it

Resolved, That we recognize ourselves a body of Christian believers according to the Scriptural plan for the local church and under the law of the state of Oklahoma, that we may worship God as a united body, exercising all other rights and privileges granted to religious bodies.

Further be it Resolved, That we recognize ourselves to be in cooperative fellowship with the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and an active member of the Oklahoma District Council, with district headquarters at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

CONSTITUTION

Article 1. Name

This Church shall be known as Assembly of God with headquarters at Coweta, Oklahoma.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be:

1. To establish and maintain a place for worship.
2. To conduct under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures the work of evangelizing both the home and foreign field in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus, Matt. 28:19,20; and in harmony with the teaching and practice of His servants, the apostles. Acts 8:4,5,25,35:40; 13:14, 16:6, 10; Rom. 15; 18-21; 2 Cor. 10:16; Rom. 10:12-17.
3. To establish such departments as may be necessary for the propagation of the gospel and the support of missionary activity.
4. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, or otherwise possess, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

Article III. Tenets of Faith

Same as the Statement of Fundamental Truths published by the General Council of the Assemblies of God, available at <http://ag.org/top/Beliefs>

Article IV. Ordinances

1. The ordinance of Baptism by immersion should be observed as commanded in the Scriptures, by all who have fully repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:37, 38; Rom. 6:3-5.
2. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be regularly observed as enjoined upon the believer. Luke 22:19,20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
3. Infants and small children may be dedicated to the Lord in the assembly whenever requested. Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-16.
4. The sick should be prayed for, with the anointing with oil and laying on of hands, upon their request. Mark 16:18; James 5:14.

Article V. Membership

SECTION 1. LEGAL VOTERS

1. The legal voting membership of the church shall consist of all persons born of the Spirit, in good standing, who shall have met the membership requirements of the church and subscribe regularly to its financial support and whose names shall appear on the church roster.
2. Legal voters shall be at least 16 years of age.
3. By virtue of the office, the Senior pastor and spouse shall be included as voting members of the church in all matters, with the exception of a pastoral election.

SECTION 2. ASSOCIATE WORKERS

Persons serving in the church as associate pastor, music director, etc., shall be chosen by the pastor and the church board. Under no circumstances shall any one be chosen to fill such a position without the approval of the pastor. Any person working in any position in the church shall work under the supervision of the pastor.

Such individuals and their companions may be considered as voting members of the church upon the recommendation of the pastor and subject to the ratification of the church board. Under no circumstances should any credentialed minister participate in a pastoral election.

SECTION 3. COLLEGIATE MEMBERSHIP

Students attending a college or university may be granted a collegiate membership provided they meet the standard requirements for membership. They shall thus qualify for all the benefits of membership with the exception of the privilege to vote.

Article VI. Finance

The church shall be financed according to the Scriptural method by tithes and offerings of its members.

Article VII. Government

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of the church shall consist of the Pastor and Secretary.

2. OFFICIAL BOARD

The official board of the church shall consist of the pastor and the deacons. The pastor shall serve as chairman of the board.

3. DEACONS

The Board of Deacons shall consist of seven members.

Article VIII. Qualifications of Deacons

Deacons shall be persons, sound in faith and good report, who are baptized in the Holy Ghost and who shall qualify according to the scriptural standards in:

- a. Acts 6: 1-5, "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude..."
- b. I Timothy 3:8-13, "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

c. Local Church Leadership

- (1) Standard for offices of bishop or elder, and deacon. Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:12). However, we recommend that all other opportunities for Christian service for which these believers may be qualified be made available to them.
- (2) Prerogative of local assemblies. It is understood that General Council and District Council recommendations are not binding, but local assemblies shall maintain the prerogative of setting their own standards (in accord with provisions of Article XI of the General Council Constitution and Bylaws).

d. Spouses shall not serve together on the official church board.

Article IX. Meetings

SECTION 1. REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

The time and place of the regular church services shall be determined by majority vote of the membership.

SECTION 2. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- a. There shall be an annual business meeting of the church prior to January 15th each year.
- b. Meetings may be called:
 - (1) By the Pastor.
 - (2) By the secretary of the church upon the written order of a majority of the official board.
 - (3) By the petition of members of the church exercising the right of initiative.

SECTION 3. NOTICES

1. Notice on all regular or special business meetings of the church shall be published or announced at least one time in each of three different regular services prior to the date of the proposed meeting. Such notice shall be posted in writing where required by law.
2. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Church Board shall declare the church, once in session, to be in a continuous session of business until a pastor is elected.

Article X. Quorum

The membership of the church present at a business meeting which has been announced in accordance with Section 3, Article 9, shall constitute a quorum.

Article XI. Right of Initiative

Any member may exercise the right of initiative in the calling of a special business meeting of the church by presenting a request signed by at least one third of the membership of the church to the pastor or secretary of the church who shall proceed to issue a call for said meeting as prescribed in Art. 9, Sec.3 of the Constitution.

In the event that the pastor or secretary refuses to honor a legal petition for such a meeting an appeal may be made to the Sectional Presbyter for help in securing such a meeting. Any such petition must contain a clear statement of the purpose and agenda for the meeting.

Article XII. Amendments

Amendments to the constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the church present in any of its regular or special business meetings subject to the review of the District Board.

BYLAWS

Article I. Order

In order to facilitate the conduct of business in an orderly and satisfactory manner, business meetings shall be governed by the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as published in Roberts' Rules of Order.

Article II. Membership

SECTION I. THE STANDARD OF MEMBERSHIP

The standard of membership of this church shall be:

- a. Evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration (the new birth). John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; I Peter 1:18-25.
- b. Evidence of a consistent Christian life. Rom. 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13,14; Eph. 4:17-32; 5:1, 2, 15; I John 1:6,7.
- c. To fully subscribe to the tenets of faith as set forth in Article 3 of the Constitution.
- d. Willingness to contribute regularly to the support of the church according to his or her ability.

SECTION 2. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

- a. Persons desiring to become active members of the church shall make the fact known to the pastor, who shall examine the applicant according to the standard for membership. (See Art. 2, Sec. 1.)
- b. The pastor shall present the names of those who apply for membership with his recommendation to the official board who shall act upon said recommendation. All persons who shall have met the membership requirements and have passed on favorably shall be received into the church publicly at any of the regular church services and their names inscribed in the church roster. A minimum of 30 days shall expire following the public reception of a member until that individual is-eligible to vote in any business meeting and a minimum of six months before holding an elected office.
- c. In the event of the resignation of the pastor, the church roster shall be closed until a pastor is elected. Any exceptions must be approved by the District Executive Board.

SECTION 3. DISCIPLINE

- a. Any member of the church who shall willfully absent himself from the regular services for a period of three consecutive months or who shall be under charges shall be temporarily suspended from active voting membership pending investigation and final decision in his case. Inactivity in church membership shall be determined by the records of the church or by the District Executive Board and the official board of the church.
- b. Any member of the church who begins regular attendance at another church without transferring membership shall be placed on the inactive list of the former church.
- c. Unscriptural conduct or radical departure from the tenets of faith held by this church (See Art. 3 of the Constitution) shall be considered sufficient grounds upon which such person may be disqualified as a member. Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17,18; 1 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 1:8,9; Titus 3:1-15.
- d. Any individual or individuals who call a special meeting of the church board or the church without going through proper procedures set forth under CONSTITUTION, Article IX. Meetings, SECTION 2. BUSINESS MEETINGS, paragraph b, shall be subject to dismissal or suspension from active voting membership.
- e. When a church member is placed on inactive membership or dismissed from membership, they must be notified by letter giving the reason of such action.
- f. Reinstatement to active membership and voting privileges must be approved by the church board. Reinstatement shall be considered only after said inactive member has shown faithfulness in attendance and financial support. Such reinstatement must occur at least 30 days prior to any business meeting.

Article III. Finance

SECTION 1.

All money received from offerings and all other sources shall be deposited in a bank designated by the official board. The procedures for deposits and responsibility for making deposits shall be determined by the official board.

SECTION 2.

The disbursement of all funds shall be under the supervision of the official board. The official board shall hire or appoint such staff as is necessary to properly care for the finances of the church.

SECTION 3.

- a. The pastor shall be given regular and adequate financial support, the amount and manner of which shall be determined by agreement between the pastor and the official board .
- b. The church shall reimburse expenses for the pastor's attendance to the District and General Council functions.

SECTION 4.

- a. The church accepts their responsibility to provide a retirement income for the minister and his family by contributing to the pastor's MBA account in an amount determined by agreement between the pastor and the official board.

Article IV. Property Rights

SECTION 1.

All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the church corporate name.

SECTION 2.

- a. No real estate of the Assembly shall be purchased, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise alienated without the same shall have been authorized by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a regular or special business meeting. Announcements of the pending meeting shall be made public at least three times before the business meeting. If required by law, a written notice of the meeting shall be sent to each voting member. Also, a copy of the pending transaction shall be mailed to the District Superintendent. Any property transaction otherwise effected shall be declared illegal.
- b. In cases where the local Assembly desires to withdraw from the fellowship of the Assemblies of God, the church shall notify the District Office thirty days prior to such meeting and shall arrange for representatives of the District to be present at the meeting. They shall participate, and in the absence of a pastor or where necessary, they shall be in charge of the meeting. Any meeting conducted without representatives of the District Council being present, shall be considered null and void.

SECTION 3.

The Pastor and the Secretary of the church shall certify in such conveyance, lease, or mortgage, that the same has been duly authorized by the vote of the church. Such certificate shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

SECTION 4.

- a. In the event this local church should be dissolved and cease to function as an Assembly of God church under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. and the General Council of the Assemblies of God then the tangible property belonging to said church, real or personal and all the interest of said church, real or equitable, in any and all property shall be and thereupon become the property of the Oklahoma District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., and all property held by any person or persons of entity as trustee for said local church shall at such time as said church so cease to function as an Assembly of God church as aforesaid be and become the property of the Oklahoma District Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., and the District Council may thereupon cause any such trust to be executed.
- b. The title of the said District Council in and to the properties acquired by it by the provisions of the above paragraph shall be that the fee simple absolute burdened, however, with such liens as may be law have attached to said property prior to the acquisition thereof as aforesaid by the said

District Council.

Article V. Government and Official Functions

SECTION 1. PASTOR

- a. The pastor shall be elected to office by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the church present at any regular or special business meeting or a majority to retain a pastor at any regular or special business meeting.
- b. Absentee ballots are not acceptable during the candidate process (initial selection) of a pastor. Absentee ballots may be acceptable during a vote to retain a pastor provided that absentees have given proof to the presiding officer that unavoidable circumstances have prevented them from being present at such meeting. Such ballots must be signed by the absentee voter and presented in a sealed envelope.
- c. The pastor is designated in the Scriptures as the head of the church under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the early church, provision was made for bishops (overseers: Acts 20:28; I Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5-9). The terms "Bishop," "Elder," and "Pastor," refer interchangeably to the same office, the various terms describing the status and the function of the pastor. The deacons were their helpers (Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 3:8-13). The word for deacons literally means "servants." We are admonished in Hebrews 13:7, 17, to obey those who have the rule over the church. If the early church pastors could be compared to the pastors of our modern day churches it is only reasonable to believe that the duties of deacons or trustees or any other church officer should not be one of superiority or rivalry to the pastor.
- d. REMUNERATION. This very vital and important in the relationship between pastor and church officials. In considering the pastor's compensation (I Timothy 5:17, 18), the following items should be considered carefully:
 - (1) Salary.
 - (2) Parsonage or housing allowance.
 - (3) Utilities.
 - (4) Allowance for expense of operating his car.
 - (5) Moving expenses.
 - (6) Travel and expense to national, district, and sectional meetings.
 - (7) Retirement benefits such as Ministers' Benefit Association and Social Security.
 - (8) Consideration should also be given to enrolling the pastor in some insurance program providing adequate compensation for illness or physical disability.
 - (9) Consideration should be given to providing life insurance for the pastor and ministerial staff members in the maximum non-taxable benefit amount as prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service, and that the church be named as a co-beneficiary for amounts in excess of the non-taxable benefit amount.
 - (10) There should be an annual review made of the pastor's compensation, taking into consideration the following items:
 - (a) Prosperity of the church.
 - (b) Needs of the pastor.
 - (c) The length and value of his service and increase of living costs.
 - (d) If a comparison is made of the pastor's salary with those in the congregation, it should be compared to the higher salaries and not the least, since the demands made of him are above and beyond that of the average wage earner.
 - (e) The pastor shall be chairman of the official board and preside over all business meetings of the church.
 - (f) The pastor shall be the general supervisor of all activities of the church and shall be an ex officio member of all boards and committees and under no circumstances should anyone be invited to speak to any department of the church without pastoral approval.
 - (g) All General Council appointed home missionaries or workers working the church shall work in cooperation with and under the supervision of the pastor.
 - (h) Finally, the pastor shall perform all those duties which properly belong to the Scriptural ideal for a pastor.

- (i) There shall be one Sunday each year set aside as Pastor's Annual Appreciation Day. All departments of the church should cooperate in the implementation of this program.

SECTION 2. DEACONS

a. *Duties of the Deacons*

- The deacons shall act in a consultative capacity with the pastor, conferring and conversing in matters pertaining to the church in its spiritual life and in the ministry of its ordinances. They shall assist in the examination of applications for membership and also in the administration of the discipline of the church.
- b. The official board shall meet monthly to transact any business in the conduct of their church duties.
 - c. A special meeting of the board may be called only by the pastor. Should a condition arise that a majority of the board desire a meeting and the pastor refuse to call such meeting, only then should the majority membership of the Official Board call on the District Presbyter and ask his help in securing a meeting
 - d. The deacons shall perform all duties prescribed by law for a board of trustees or board of directors.
 - e. The board of deacons shall be custodians of the church property and shall be responsible for the care of the same.
 - f. The deacons shall hire or appoint staff to keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements of all moneys committed to the church in a proper and business like manner. Said staff shall make report at the monthly meeting of the official board and all business meetings of the church.
 - g. Monies and records committed to the trust of the board of the church shall be kept in a church office or safe deposit box and not in the treasurer's home.

SECTION 3. QUORUM (*Board and Committees*)

A majority of the membership of any board or committee present at any time of their regular or special business meetings shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 4. SECRETARY

- a. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all business meetings of the church and the official board.
- b. He shall be the custodian of all legal documents and be in possession of the corporate seal.
- c. All legal documents and other papers pertaining to the church shall be kept in the church office and/or in a safe deposit box and be available to the pastor and/or church board.

SECTION 5. TERM OF OFFICE

- a. The term of pastors' office shall be for a period of one or more years as may be decided upon by the church at the time of election. (See Art. 5, Sec. I-Pastor.) Be it further resolved, that whenever the church votes to retain a pastor this term of office shall be for a period of not less than three years.
- b. The term of office of the secretary shall be for a period of one year
- c. Deacons shall be elected to a term of four years. When a vacancy occurs on the board, the pastor shall appoint, with approval of a majority of the board, a deacon to serve until the next annual business meeting. At that time, a deacon will be elected to serve the balance of the unexpired term of the vacated position.

Article VI. Nominations and Elections

- a. All nominations shall be by secret ballot. If a candidate receives a two-thirds majority of nominating ballots cast, he shall be declared elected.
- b. All Church Officials shall be elected by a two-thirds majority of votes cast and shall be members of the local Assembly.
- c. If there shall be no election on the first two ballots cast, the two receiving the highest number of votes shall be further balloted upon until an election is declared. If after the fourth ballot, there still is not an election, the one on the fifth ballot receiving a simple majority vote shall be elected.
- d. Election of deacons shall take place at the annual business meeting of the church.
- e. Election of Secretary shall be at the first meeting of the official board after the election of deacons. The Secretary shall be elected by the board from among the currently serving deacons.
- e. Absentee ballots may be accepted in any election in the church which has been legally announced, other than the initial selection of a pastor. Proof shall be presented to the presiding officer that

- unavoidable circumstances have prevented the voter from being present at such meeting. Such ballots must be signed by the absentee voter and presented in a sealed envelope.
- f. The Deacon Board shall be designated as Tellers in all business meetings and pastoral elections.
 - g. In the event the church is under District supervision with no church board, and members are allowed to vote on their pastor, the Sectional Presbyter shall hold such a pastoral election and assist in counting the ballots.

Article VII. Vacancies

SECTION 1. PASTORATE

- a. When a vacancy occurs resulting from the death or permanent disability of a duly elected pastor or ministerial staff member in a local assembly, it is recommended that the church maintain identical salary, parsonage or housing allowance, and benefits for his/her surviving spouse and family for a period of no less than 60 days following the occurrence.
- b. When a vacancy in the pastorate shall occur a preacher for each regularly scheduled service shall be arranged for by the board of deacons, until a pastor shall be chosen as arranged for in Art. 5, Sec. 1 of the Bylaws.
- d. As soon as a pastoral change becomes evident, the out-going minister and the local church board shall immediately work out a satisfactory arrangement regarding the financial remuneration for the pastor based on service rendered until his tenure is fully expired. If an agreement cannot be reached they shall consult a district official to arbitrate.
- e. When a pastor's service to a church is terminated by the church or he is not re-elected, or resigns, the church shall pay his salary for at least a period of thirty days. The only exception will be where serious charges are proven against a pastor to the extent that his credentials are revoked.
- f. When a church board calls a minister for an interview or engaged his services, his expenses shall be paid by the church.
- g. The pastor's resignation shall be considered official upon his written presentation to the church board. Subsequently, if he changes his mind and wants to reapply for the pastorate, he must be re-elected by a two-thirds majority of the membership present at any regular or special business meeting of the church.

SECTION 2. CHURCH OFFICERS

- a. Any office may be declared vacant by an act of a majority membership at any regular or special business meeting.
- b. Ground for such action shall be:
 - (1) Unscriptural conduct.
 - (2) Radical departure from the tenets of faith.
 - (3) Incompetency in office.
 - (4) For any other good and sufficient cause.
- c. A complaint may be lodged against an incumbent in office and brought before the church for action by any member exercising the right of initiative as described in Art. 11 of the Constitution, or upon the recommendation of the official board.
- d. Any incumbent under charges shall have opportunity for a fair and impartial hearing of his case before the church if he so desires.
- e. In the case of a pastor's removal from office, a report of such action shall be made to the District Officiary who shall immediately confer with the church officials relative to securing a pastor for the church. In no case shall a church call a pastor from another District until the church board has consulted the District Superintendent or Section Presbyter of their Section and secured a favorable recommendation from them.
- f. In the event of a vacancy in any elected position of the church, other than the pastor, the pastor shall make a recommendation to the Official Board of the church who shall ratify an individual to fill the position until the next annual business meeting of the church.

Article VIII. Departments

SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION

Various departments (e.g. Youth, Children, Missions, Christian Education, or others) may be established upon recommendation by the pastor and approval of the Board. The ministry of all such departments shall be under the supervision of the Pastor through such staff members or laypersons as

the Pastor assigns.

Section 2: Sunday School Officers

The following officers for Sunday School shall be elected at the annual business meeting: Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Article IX..Civil Government

- a. Whereas, the Scriptures declare that government is of God, the powers that be are ordained of God as ministers of good to the governed. Whosoever therefore resists the power resists the ordinances of God. Wherefore we are subject not only for wrath but also for conscience sake; rendering to all their due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor (Rom. 13:7).
- b. Therefore be it resolved, that this church hereby declares its loyalty to our government and to its Chief Executive, and that we do hereby state our fixed purpose to assist in every way morally possible, consistent with our faith.

Article XIII. Amendments

Amendment to the Bylaws may be made by a majority vote of the membership of the church present in any of its regular or special meetings, subject to the review of the District Executive Board.

This constitution approved by the membership at annual business meeting 1/9/2008.