

# **2025 NLCC By-Law Revision Proposal**

Handout for Congregational Meeting Jan. 12, 2025

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## Why Are We Changing the By-Laws?

- I. Changing the by-laws allows us to structure church governance to reflect even more of what we see in the New Testament model for the Local Congregation.

An Elder-led congregation reflects the New Testament model of church governance as seen in passages like Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Elders are spiritually mature leaders appointed to shepherd, teach, and oversee the church. This structure emphasizes shared leadership, accountability, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ensuring decisions align with Scripture. The plural leadership of elders fosters wisdom and balance, guarding against authoritarianism while promoting unity and care for the flock.

- II. The proposed by-laws elevate Ministry Teams and their work.

A ministry team model empowers individuals to use their spiritual gifts, aligning roles with callings and passions. This fosters collaboration and a hands-on approach to fulfilling the church's mission. Ministry teams encourage ownership and active participation, reducing bureaucracy and increasing ministry effectiveness. This model reflects the biblical principle of the body of Christ (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:4-27), where each member contributes uniquely, creating a vibrant, mission-focused community that better serves God's purposes.

- III. This allows the governance of the congregation to focus more on ministry.

Continuing from the above answer, it shifts the emphasis from governance and business operations to effectively serving the congregation and community. Therefore, it also simplifies the governance structure, allowing for faster response to ministry opportunities and challenges.

- IV. As you will see on the following page, we have been taking steps to implement this model for twenty years.

The current Guidelines allow for alterations and modifications every year that end in 0 and 5. Since we are entering 2025, now is a good time to update our guidelines to by-laws that reflect the style of ministry we have been implementing for the last couple of decades.

- V. Scalability

Prepares the church for growth by creating flexible structures that can expand as the congregation and ministry needs increase.

# What process did you follow to write these by-laws?

## Process before 2024

1. **2010** - The Guidelines were revised in and a few ideas were added to start the process of transitioning to a Ministry Team model. Elders continued discussing further modifications to the guidelines to better reflect the church of the New Testament.
2. **2015** - Staff began researching and assembling various models from churches we have relationships with.
3. **2020** - The building project and COVID halted any by-law revisions.

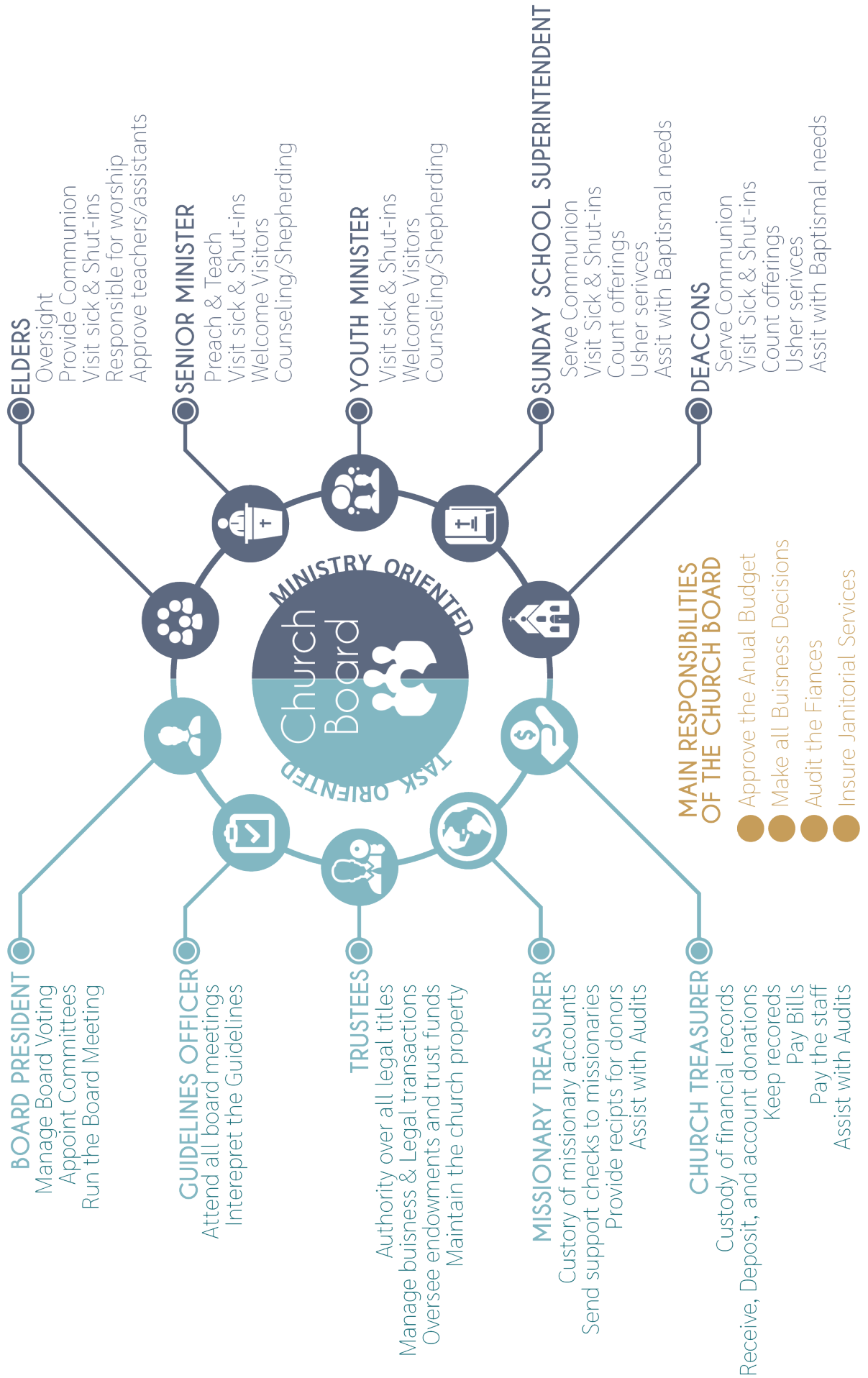
## Process in 2024

4. **(April)** - Mark provided Jonathan with past research and tasked him with creating a rough draft from which the Elders could work.
5. **(May)** - Jonathan finished the rough draft using several sources and submitted this draft to Clay Miller for legal advice. **This draft was Version One.**
6. **(June)** - Jonathan and Clay reviewed the proposal from a legal perspective. The results of these edits made **Version two** of the by-laws.
7. **(June)** Jonathan gave the proposed by-laws to Mark so that he could read them and provide input.
8. **(July)** The current NLCC Guidelines were given to the Elders to read.
9. **(August)** Version two of the Proposed By-laws were given to Elders to read.
10. **(October)** Elders conducted two workshops (10/1, 10/22) where they read line by line and discussed issues related to the governance in the proposed document. The adjustments made formed **Version Three** of the by-laws.
11. **(November)** Jonathan and Todd conducted a focus group to review the by-laws. Four couples were given version three of the proposed by-laws to read, compare, and contrast to the current guidelines. A week later, they met to discuss their findings. Edits were made according to their suggestions, thus forming **Version Four** of the by-laws. The group included Mike & Kathy Miller, Richard & Joyce Chew, Allen and Julie Mills, Roy and Amy Claar, Jonathan Willmore, & Todd Myers
12. **(December)** After making additional edits, Elders approved the **By-laws Final Draft (Version Five)** for the Church Board to vote on and approve, which they did at the December Board Meeting.

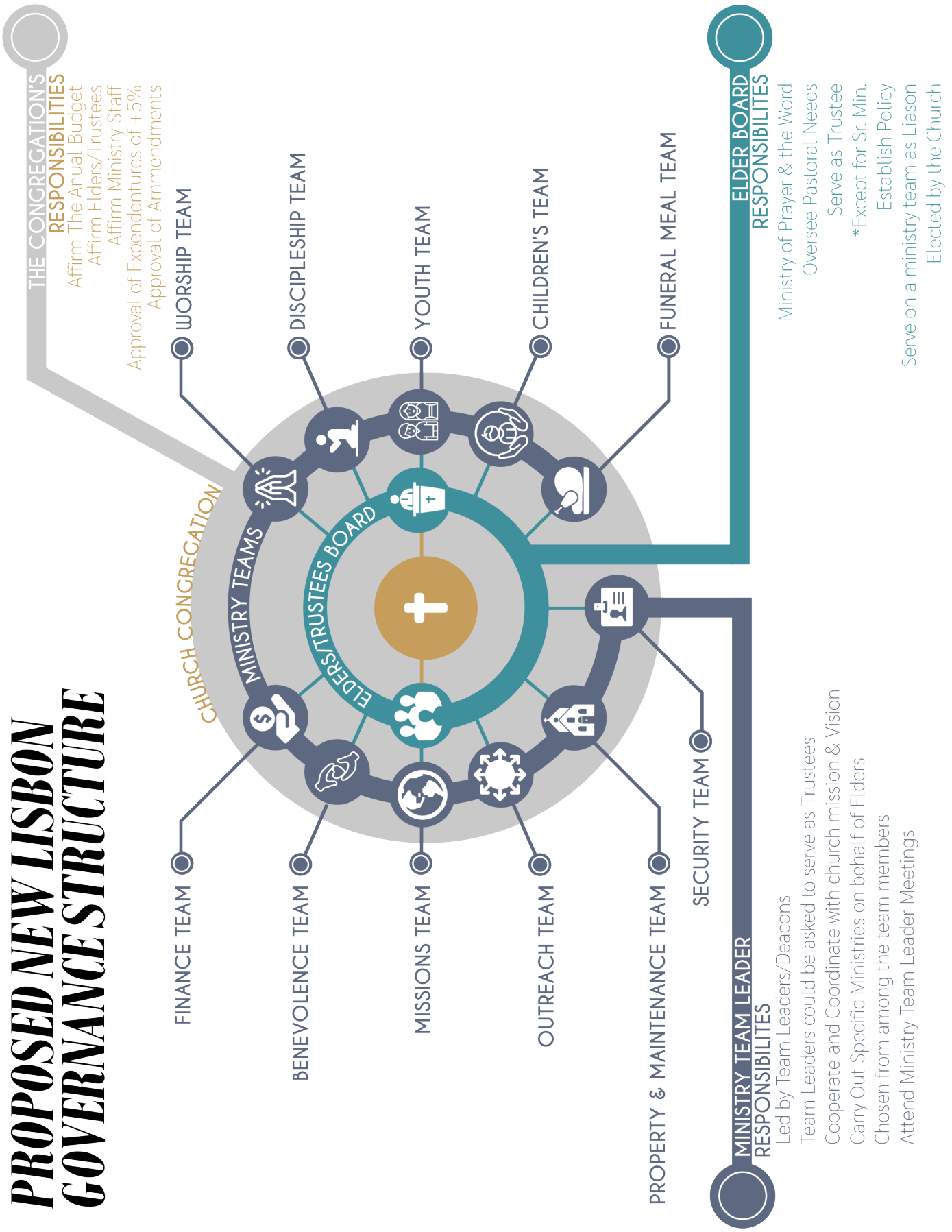
# What are some of the significant differences between the existing Guidelines and the proposed By-Laws?

Existing Guidelines	Governance:	Proposed By-Laws
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Church Board is the main governing body of the New Lisbon Christian Church.</li> <li>The board members who make the church's business decisions are the Elders, Senior Minister, Deacons, Trustees, Finance Officer, Guidelines Officer, Sunday School Superintendent, Missions team leader, Youth Minister, and benevolence officer.</li> <li>The Church Board makes all budgetary and financial decisions.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Proposed by-laws shift to an Elder Board and elevate Ministry Teams.</li> <li>The Elders authorize budgets and collaboration to empower Ministry Teams to conduct their ministry in alignment with the church's vision and mission. Ministry Teams can be added as necessary, allowing the church to respond more quickly to the kingdom's needs.</li> <li>The Congregation now has the responsibility of approving the budget.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different needs have different thresholds, ranging from 50% to 67%, depending on the issue or person being voted on.</li> <li>The Board votes on issues and needs of the church.</li> </ul>	Voting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All voting must reach 80% for the issue/person to be approved.</li> <li>Elders must have a consensus on all decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deacons are elected and have a place on the Church Board. They are tasked with being ushers, serving communion, ensuring proper janitorial services are met, visiting the sick and shut-ins, counting the offerings, assisting with baptismal services, prepare the communion emblems.</li> </ul>	Role of Deacons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The term Deacon derives from the Greek word, <i>diakonos</i> meaning servant. Deacons are meant to be servants who perform specific ministry on behalf of the Eldership. Therefore, the proposed by-laws sees Deacons and Deaconesses* the same as Ministry Team Leaders. They are chosen from among the ministry team they serve on and not voted on by the church. (*See Rom 16:1 where the feminine version of the Greek word <i>diakonon</i> is used to describe Phoebe).</li> </ul>

# CURRENT NEW LISBON GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



# PROPOSED NEW LISBON GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## **Preamble:**

We, the members of New Lisbon, Henry County, Christian Church Corporation, having met in a duly called session on \_\_\_\_\_ in Henry County, Indiana, in order to promote the work of Christ in the spirit of Christ, do hereby adopt the following By-Laws.

New Lisbon Christian Church endeavors to be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ as described, established, and mandated by the New Testament. These by-laws help us accomplish the task of this church in a biblical and orderly manner by effectively and efficiently using the body's time, gifts, and other resources. Our ultimate desire is to bring glory to God through the church.

These by-laws are to provide general guidance on organization, governance, and operation based upon biblical principles and practices. However, the Bible is the ultimate authority for the church's organization, governance, and operation. When a conflict or ambiguity exists concerning these by-laws, deference is to be given to the biblical reference to resolve the conflict or ambiguity.

## **Article I – An Established Church and a Not-for-Profit Organization**

### **Section 1: Establishment and Name of the Church:**

- i.** The church that gathers at New Lisbon shall be a Christian Church following the church established on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and governed by the New Testament scriptures.
- ii.** The organization's name shall be the New Lisbon Christian Church (New Lisbon, Henry County, Christian Church Corporation), duly organized and existing pursuant to the laws of the State of Indiana as a Not-for-Profit Corporation.
- iii.** As of August 7, 2015, New Lisbon, Henry County, Christian Church Corporation will conduct business as New Lisbon Christian Church. A certificate of Assumed Business Name is kept on record with the church treasurer.



**Section 2: Governing Structure and Agreement:**

- i. The Church seeks to be a New Testament Church committed to the teachings of the Bible. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church. The pastoral and administrative structure for a New Testament Church is to utilize a plurality structure of leaders, consisting of, but not limited to, elders, professional staff, lay leaders, etc. The elders are accountable before God for the ultimate oversight of the Church.
- ii. Every officer of New Lisbon Christian Church will be in agreement with the purpose of the organization and any laws the State may require to maintain the status of a non-profit organization so long as such laws do not conflict with Scripture.
- iii. All Elders affirmed by the congregation with at least 80% vote also serve as Trustees for legal representation.
- iv. No earthly agent or agency outside the New Lisbon Christian Church may represent or speak for the church without the written approval of the Elders. No member, officer, or Elder may represent or speak for the entire membership without the approval of the Elders.

**Section 3: Purpose:**

- i. The purpose of the church shall be to carry out the mission of the Kingdom of God as expressed in the New Testament, mainly to love God, love others, and make disciples who make disciples. This mission will be pursued by the leadership of the Board of Elders, who also serve as Trustees.

## Article II – Membership

### Section 1: A Member:

- i. A member of the New Lisbon Christian Church shall be a person who has made a public confession before Christ and His believers of his or her faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and who has been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as revealed by the Scriptures set forth in the New Testament (Acts 2:38) and have properly presented themselves to the local congregation for membership, and been so enrolled.
- ii. Any person who has complied with the requirement of Article 2, Section 1, Paragraph i. may transfer their membership to the New Lisbon Christian Church.
- iii. Voting privileges shall be accorded to all members, 18 years of age and older, who have continued an active membership by a recent continuity of attendance, giving, or service. Any disputed cases may be decided on the basis of these things by unanimous decision of the elders.

### Section 2: Congregational Meetings:

- i. New Lisbon Christian Church must conduct at least one congregational meeting each year. At that meeting, the congregation will be presented with a budget for affirmation. A vote of affirmation will consist of 80%. This meeting will also include the election of Elders or any other officers necessary for the ministry of the church. The meeting may occur on a date at the discretion of the Elders.
- ii. New Lisbon Christian Church must conduct at least one congregational meeting each year to share the state of the church with the congregation. The meeting may occur on a date at the discretion of the Elders.
- iii. The Elders may call additional congregational meetings at their discretion.
- iv. All congregational meetings must be announced during a church service at least 14 days in advance of the desired meeting date.

## Article III – Church Administration

### Section 1: Congregational Authority:

- i. The governance of the New Lisbon Christian Church derives from the membership of the congregation and no other association of churches, councils, agencies, societies, authorities, and organizations.
- ii. The Following are subject to affirmation or ratification by the congregation with a vote of no less than 80% of the members present:
  - a. Election of Elders.
  - b. Expenditures over 5% of the approved budget for that given year.
  - c. Amendments to By-Laws.
  - d. Hiring all Ministerial Staff (those who administer ministry).
  - e. Annual Budget.
  - f. Any other needs deemed necessary by the Board of Elders.

### Section 2: Elder Leadership is:

- i. For five primary functions:
  - a. Ministry of prayer
  - b. Ministry of the word
  - c. Oversight of pastoral matters
  - d. Serve as a Trustee for the church.
  - e. Establish Policy
- ii. *Accountable to God for the care of the local congregation:* The elders shall oversee, lead, shepherd, and care for the spiritual condition of the Church as set forth in the Bible. The elders are accountable before God for the ultimate oversight of the Church. According to scriptural example, the elders' responsibilities include and accountable for, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Exercise personal holiness
  - b. Shepherd the flock
  - c. Lead through example
  - d. Teach and exhort
  - e. Refute those who contradict truth

- f. Direct the church
  - g. Pray for the sick
  - h. Serve as Trustee
  - i. Manage leadership discipline
  - j. Hire Support Staff.
  - k. Meet together on a regular basis, as determined by the eldership, to discuss spiritual and business matters of the church.
  - l. An elder shall not participate in any matters concerning the staffing of an immediate family member.
- iii. *By Consensus:* The Elders speak and act with one voice. Any decision for the direction, vision, future, financial, or otherwise must be by consensus (unanimous).
- iv. *Qualified by criteria found in Scripture:* Any man, who is an active member of the Church, has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period of time, and meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17) is eligible to serve as an elder.
- v. *Selected by the Board of Elders:* While there is no established biblical mandate for a minimum number of elders, those elders currently serving will determine the appropriate number of elders to serve at the Church based upon the number of spiritually qualified individuals. Each year, the church shall have a period of time determined by the Board of Elders to receive nominations from the congregation. After prayerfully considering the nominations, the Board of Elders, by unanimous decision, shall call for a congregational meeting to call for a vote of affirmation following the procedure outlined in Article II Section 2 of the By-Laws. For example, the Eldership may raise up new Elders when it is necessary to fill a vacated position or to add additional Elders.
- vi. *Affirmed by the Congregation:* Elections shall be by written ballot. Each candidate must receive at least 80% of votes cast to become an Elder.
- vii. *A term of no more than three years:*
- a. The term of an Elder is three years unless otherwise specified by the Board of Elders on the ballot indicating fewer years. Elders may serve consecutive terms. Elders may be affirmed to terms of less than three

years, but the length of those terms must be designated on the ballot. The congregation must reaffirm elders if they desire to serve another term.

- b. At the beginning of an Elder's seventh year (and every seventh year after) shall discuss that elder's spiritual and other health. The Elder may serve a year-long break from Eldership duties and will resume his duties as an elder after the conclusion of the sabbatical year. The Sabbatical year is for the spiritual or other health of the elder or the congregation; the sabbatical year may be any other year. The elder retains the title and position of Elder and Trustee. However, He takes a yearlong break from meetings and is not counted toward the consensus of any vote the year of that sabbatical. Should the Board of Elders require the return of the Elder, they may invite him back.
- c. At the start of the first Board of Elders meeting for the year, the Elders must select from among them a Chairman as representative of the group to the congregation and lead the Board of Elder meetings.
- d. At the start of the first Board of Elders meeting for the year, the Elders must select a Secretary from among them to make notes about matters discussed during the meeting. Those notes are to be kept on file (digital or paper) with a Church Administrator. To adhere to privacy laws, private shepherding matters may be listed simply as "Discussed Shepherding needs of the church."

**Section 3: The Senior Minister is:**

- i. Accountable to God for the care of the local Congregation: The Senior Minister IS an Elder on the Board of Elders and is a voting member toward consensus, but he is NOT a trustee. Therefore. . .
  - a. As "the first among equals," he participates in vision planning, mission, and pastoral care for the congregation.
  - b. He Does NOT participate in the legal representation of the church. Nor does he participate in discussions of his employment, compensation, raise, or review. He is not part of the consensus vote on the Board of Elders on the topics of his compensation or employment.

- c. The Senior Minister reports to the rest of the Elders regarding the administration of ministry and staff of the church and is present at all Board of Elders meetings except during his annual review when they discuss his compensation or his performance. If the Board of Elders determines that a new minister is required, they shall follow Article 5, Section 4, Paragraph ii of these bylaws.
  
- ii. *Qualified by criteria found in Scripture:* Any man who meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17) is eligible to serve as a Senior Minister.
  
- iii. *Affirmed by the Congregation:* After an adequate search is conducted following the guidelines of Article IV Section 3, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation for a vote of affirmation. He must receive a vote of no less than 80% to become Senior Minister. See Article IV Section 1 for voting procedures.
  
- iv. *Reviewed by the Board of Elders/Trustees:* The Elders are to have an annual review of the Senior Minister's performance, which is judged upon the criteria of the job description/contract negotiated and agreed upon in the hiring process with the Senior Minister. The review should include the following:
  - a. His effectiveness in communicating the word of God through dynamic preaching and teaching.
  - b. Building healthy relationships and maintaining harmony within the church.
  - c. His character and ability to live above reproach.
  - d. His ability to manage the staff effectively ensures a healthy work environment for all staff and volunteers.
  - e. If the Senior Minister has a poor review, the Elders shall provide coaching terms to improve and a reasonable amount of time for the Senior Minister to demonstrate his improvement.
  
- v. *The representative and liaison between the Board of Elders and the paid staff:* He serves as manager of the ministerial staff and the direct

supervisor over all hired persons by the church. He communicates and executes the will of the Board of Elders through his leadership and administration of the paid staff. A Senior Minister shall not participate in any matters concerning staffing of an immediate family member.

**Section 4: The Ministry Team Leaders are:**

- i. *Leaders of ministry teams:* Teams are established by the Elders at their discretion, which may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Property and Maintenance Team
  - b. Finance Ministry Team
  - c. Outreach Ministry Team
  - d. Discipleship Ministry Team
  - e. Worship Ministry Team
  - f. Youth Ministry Team
  - g. Children's Ministry Team
  - h. Missions Ministry Team
  - i. Benevolence Ministry Team
  - j. Security Ministry Team
  
- ii. *Servants who serve the needs of the church within a specific ministry under the authority of the Eldership. The biblical term [for servant] is Deacon/Deaconess (Romans 16:1). The Ministry team Leaders fulfill this role:* Ministry Team Leaders are those who serve special ministry needs at the request of the Elders as outlined in Acts 6:3, Romans 16:1, and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
  
- iii. *To organize and work within the parameters set by Elders as related to the Church Programing:* All the work must be done in cooperation and submission to the administrative authority of the Eldership and for the forwarding of the mission of New Lisbon Christian Church.
  
- iv. *Participants in the Ministry Team Leader Meeting:* The Elders shall call for Ministry Team Meetings where Ministry leaders share what their ministry has accomplished, plans to accomplish, and coordinate with other ministry leaders.
  
- v. *Members of the church and regularly participate in the life of the congregation:* All Ministry team leaders must already be members of the

congregation. In the event that the church hires a paid staff member for a specific ministry, like a youth minister, they shall also be the Ministry Team Leader for that ministry.

- vi. Able to serve as Trustees:* If the Church requires that a ministry team leader, such as the Building and Grounds Ministry Team leader, also serve as a Trustee, then they will be asked by the Elders to do so. Ministry Team Leaders who also serve as Trustees will not be part of the Board of Elders; however should be consulted in matters of legal representation. No hired staff member may serve as a Trustee.
- vii. Chosen by Elders or from among the Ministry Team:* If there is a new ministry team being created then the elders will appoint a leader to lead the ministry team. Otherwise, the team chooses from among its members who will be the leader.

**Section 5: The Church Treasurer:**

- a. Should be filled as a paid staff position:* Hiring will be performed by the Elders.
- b. Has custody of all church fund records and keep an accurate accounting of these funds:* Procedures enumerated here are designed to provide an accurate and confidential accounting of all donated funds and for the protection of the Church Treasurer.
- c. Receives all church offerings, and any other donations made to New Lisbon Christian Church:* Upon receiving these funds, see that they are promptly placed in a bank or other secure institution as is agreeable with the Elders.
- d. Maintains legible records of a type designated by the Elders and the laws of the State of Indiana.* These records show all funds received and disbursed. The Treasurer shall prepare a memo presenting a monthly accounting for at least one Board of Elders monthly meeting.
- e. Maintains a separate entry account for each person or family who makes offerings by envelope or through an online platform:* Upon request by these persons, furnish a copy of such offerings by the end of the month of February each year, showing the total offerings for the previous calendar year.



- f. Issues receipts, as requested, for donations or gifts to the church in the form of cash unless that cash is given in the general offering Sunday morning.*
- g. Ensure the paid staff is compensated in a timely manner.*
- h. It is authorized by the Board of Elders to make regular monthly payments on accounts requiring them without presentation for approval: These payments should be made on or before their due dates. A record of all purchases and payments of bills and debts shall be kept on file in an orderly manner. No payment should be made in cash.*
- i. Keeps any knowledge of the accounts of the members of the church private: The Treasurer shall not, under any circumstances, be discussed with anyone except the person involved, or at such times as directed by the Elders, pursuant to a legal inquiry by an authorized entity.*
- j. Willingly present and participate in regular audits: For the financial security of the church and to protect the donations given the finance team shall submit to an audit at the discretion of the Elders or an outside authorized legal entity.*

## **Article IV – Church Elections and Minister Searches**

### **Section 1: Votes of Affirmation:**

- i. Only members of New Lisbon Christian Church may vote. Voting can only occur at congregational meetings that have met the criteria of Article II Section 2 of these By-Laws.
- ii. Any member in good standing who has reached their eighteenth birthday is eligible to vote in the election.
- iii. All voting will be conducted on paper ballots.
- iv. As a courtesy, absentee ballots will be prepared by the Election Committee and made available to those members who know they will be unable to attend. The Election Committee is to protect the absentee ballots from being tampered with until they are included with the ballots cast the day of the election.
- v. All votes must reach a threshold of 80% of the votes cast to be approved.
- vi. Any person voted into the office of Elder will begin their term at the discretion of the Elders but not later than January 1 of the next year. If an elder is voted into office and asked to serve immediately, that calendar year counts toward their three-year term.

### **Section 2: Election Committees:**

- i. Are those appointed to the position by the Board of Elders to serve the best interests of the congregation with all diligence. Their appointment to the committee ends when the election is over.
- ii. They are responsible for securing a slate of candidates for all offices for the designated election. They will conduct the election and tabulate ballots in accordance with the by-laws.
- iii. At the required budgetary approval congregational meeting, the election committee will include the budget with any slate of officers up for election and tabulate the results for all matters on the ballot and share the results

with the Chairman of the Elders who then shares the results with the congregation.

**Section 3: Senior Minister Searches:**

- i. In the event that a new Senior Minister is needed and there is a Minister already on staff who meets the criteria of a Senior Minister and has already preached before the congregation, the elders may, at their discretion, present him as a candidate for a vote of affirmation without going through an additional search process.
- ii. In the event that a new Senior Minister is needed but there is not a Minister on staff the Elders wish to promote to Senior Minister, the Board of Elders will (1) choose a search committee to evaluate potential candidates, (2) inform the congregation who is part of the committee, and (3) ensure adequate and proper publication of the vacancy.
  - a. The Committee will select one to three candidates to submit to the Elders for interview.
  - b. The Elders approve one candidate for trial sermon and vote for church affirmation.
  - c. The Candidate will perform a trial sermon.
  - c. Prior to the Congregational vote, exact terms of the work agreement between the candidate and the Elders will be drawn up in writing.
  - d. The church will vote at a congregational meeting. The elders shall designate the Date and time following the procedure in Article II Section 2 of the By-laws.
  - e. Additional interviews and search inquiries may be added at the Elders' discretion.
  - f. The beginning of employment for a senior minister is determined by the agreed-upon date between the Elders and the Candidate.

**Section 4: Other Ministerial Staff:**

- i.** Should it become necessary for the congregation to call a new full-time or part-time minister other than the senior minister, the Board of Elders will (1) choose a search committee to evaluate potential candidates, (2) inform the congregation who is part of the committee, and (3) ensure adequate and proper publication of the vacancy.
- ii.** The search committee appointed by the Board of Elders shall consist of church members who volunteer in the ministry area(s) from which that new minister will have oversight. For example, if a new youth minister is being hired, then volunteers from the youth ministry should participate in the search. Additional church members may be asked to participate on the search committee at the discretion of the Elders.
- iii.** The Committee will select one to three candidates to submit to the Elders for interview.
- iv.** The Elders will approve the final candidate for church affirmation. Exact terms of the work agreement between the candidate and the Elders will be drawn up in writing.
- v.** After a search has been conducted, the church will vote at a congregational meeting. The elders shall designate the Date and time following the procedure in Article II Section 2 of the By-laws.

## **Article V – Investigations/Resignations/Removals/Church Discipline**

### **Section 1: Suspected Misconduct:**

- i. An incident of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be immediately reported as required by law.
- ii. Other suspected misconduct may be reported. However, such misconduct shall be reported if required by law.

### **Section 2: Character Investigations:**

- i. Any leader who, by their conduct or actions, gives cause concerning their qualifications to hold office pursuant to the requirements set forth in these by-laws shall be informed of the specific charges against them and be requested to appear before the Elders for a hearing on the charges. (If the leader in question is an Elder, they may not participate in the process and will be relieved of all responsibilities until the matter is resolved.) At the conclusion of the interview, the Elders will determine by consensus whether the individual should be temporarily relieved of their duties pending further investigation. If the Elders at the meeting vote to relieve the person of their duties, then the person will be so informed, in writing, and will be relieved of their duties effectively that date. In the event that the Elders vote to relieve the person of their duties, the Elders will then:
  - a. Complete their investigation and determine an appropriate remedy (by consensus) and present their findings and remedy, in writing, to the Individual. If the remedy includes the permanent removal of the individual from their position, then such removal will be effective immediately. The congregation will be informed of the individual's removal in a timely fashion.
  - b. After the Elders present their finding and remedy to the individual, the Elders will then prepare a written report documenting their investigation. This report will be maintained in confidence by the Elders.

- c. If the individual tenders such a resignation, then the proceedings under this section will cease unless criminal activity still needs to be reported and investigated.
- d. If the Elders do not vote to relieve the individual of their duties at the conclusion of the interview, the matter will be handled in accordance with Article V, Section 5.

**Section 3: Resignations:**

- i. If any leader of the church wishes to resign from such office, they may tender their resignation in writing to the chairman of the Elders, who shall notify the Elders of such resignation at the next Elder's meeting. The Elders will promptly notify the congregation of such resignation.
- ii. All Full-Time staff members must submit notification of resignation 30 days prior to the end of their employment.
- iii. All Part-Time staff members must submit notification of resignation 14 days prior to the end of their employment.
- iv. Shorter arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Elders.

**Section 4: Removal of Elders and Trustees:**

- i. The Elders should handle this situation following New Testament scriptures such as Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and 1 Timothy 5:19.
- ii. Meetings of the entire group of Elders should have already been taking place where the matter has been thoroughly discussed. Chairman of the Elders should make every effort to ensure all Elders are present for the discussion. If the action is directed toward the Elder Chairman, another Elder must assume this position as is agreeable with the entire group. All diligence should be made to determine facts in the case and not merely opinion or conjecture.
- iii. In the event a complaint against an officer is made by a member of the congregation, the individual must meet personally with the Eldership to voice the complaint in person and answer any questions they may have

concerning the situation and then follow the procedure of **Article V Section 1.**

- iv. If the Elder and/or Trustee is required to resign and is not present at the Elders' meeting, at least two Elders will personally contact him to request the resignation. A written resignation should be secured as soon as possible, and all written and oral information should be treated with utmost confidence. Should the request for resignation be refused, the Chairman of the Elders, with another Elder as a witness, must declare the office vacant and the term expired.

**Section 5: Removal of Paid-Staff Members:**

- i. All staff called are eligible to serve for an indefinite period. Only a consensus vote of the Elders can remove a Paid-Staff member from their position.
- ii. When the Board of Elders determines that a change of staff can serve the best interest of the congregation, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with the involved staff, at which time the matter shall be considered. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Board of Elders may request their resignation in writing.
- iii. In the event the staff member does not respond to the request for resignation within one week, the matter shall be resolved by the immediate termination of the paid staff member without the need to pay severance benefits.
- iv. The Elders have the discretion to pay severance benefits as led.

**Section 6: Church Discipline:**

- i. Discipline within New Lisbon Christian church is to be conducted in accordance with Scripture following the criteria and procedure of Matthew 18:5-7, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and 1 Timothy 5:19. Church discipline is for the purpose of encouraging members to grow in Christ and become strong, effective Christians in their daily lives. Discipline will be carried out in two ways:

- a. Edification – The edification program of the church, through teaching the Scriptures, intimate fellowship with other believers, and the use of God-given gifts for the upbuilding of others. (The objective is to help dedicated Christians grow.)
  - b. Purification – Because the Scripture calls for the church to practice moral purity before the community, the procedure outlined below is to be applied in dealing with members whose behavior brings embarrassment or disgrace to the church and/or themselves. (The objective is to restore the erring person).
- ii. If an accusation against the church member is brought to the attention of the Eldership which involves behavior that reflects willful disregard of Biblical teachings, the following procedure will be carried out:
- a. (Step 1) Leaders will direct the church member who is aware of the problem to confront the person privately. If confession and repentance do not occur, then move to Step Two.
  - b. (Step 2) The leaders will direct two or three church members (one of whom is to be an elder) to talk to the person privately. If confession and repentance do not occur, Step Three is to be followed.
  - c. (Step 3) The problem will be made known to the Elders, who will determine if the individual needs to be further encouraged to repent by following the procedure in Step Two again. If there is no repentance, or if the Elders determine not to return to step two, then Step Four is to be followed.
  - d. (Step 4) The individual will be notified that an announcement to the congregation is pending, which will state that he or she is being removed from church membership.
  - e. Throughout the process, the identities of minors and victims will remain confidential. If there is an incident involving legal involvement, the proper authorities will be contacted.



## **Article VI – Additions or Changes to Church By-laws**

### **Section 1: Eldership Discretion:**

- i. The Eldership shall have the authority to change or modify these By-laws at any time within the scope of the New Testament scriptures.
- ii. Any action taken by the Eldership as a group will have the effect of changing said By-laws until the congregation approves the changes following the procedure of Article VI Section Two.
- iii. Any action taken by the Elders must coincide with the laws of the State of Indiana and the United States unless the laws are not in accordance with Scripture.

### **Section 2: Amendments to the Church By-laws:**

- i. By-laws can be altered or amended when necessary by the Elders preparing an amendment and bringing it before the congregation following the procedure in Article VI, Section 2, paragraph ii.
- ii. No amendment to the church By-laws can be presented to the congregation for a vote unless the entire eldership recommends the amendment. The eldership must prepare and distribute an announcement of the proposed amendment(s) to the congregation at least fourteen days prior to a vote. Voting on the amendment(s) may occur during the Sunday morning worship service with members of the Eldership being in charge of distributing, collecting, and tabulating ballots. To attest to the accuracy of the tabulations, the counting of the ballots will occur in the worship center with the church present.
- iii. Eighty percent of the ballots cast “in favor” are required for an amendment to pass. Each amendment shall be considered and voted upon separately, and results should be entered into the minutes of the next regular Elders meeting.