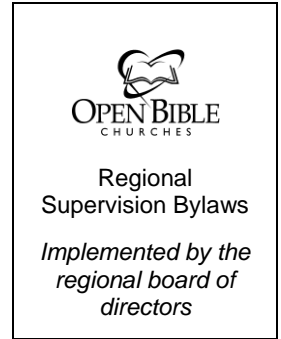


Name of Church
Address, City, State, Zip
Bylaws



ARTICLE 1. NAME, PURPOSE, AND MISSION

The name of this corporation is **(Name of church)**. The purpose of the **(Name of church)**, hereafter referred to as the church, is to glorify God and bring people to Jesus Christ using all methods and means to make and release disciples, plant churches, and send missionaries. The church's mission as a nonprofit, religious corporation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes, is to minister to spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs.

ARTICLE 2. OFFICE AND LOCATIONS

The principal office of the church is in **(City, State)**. The advisory council of the church may change the principal office from one location to another with approval from the regional board. Any such change shall be recorded in corporation minutes, but shall not be processed as an amendment to these bylaws. The advisory council may establish places to conduct meetings.

ARTICLE 3. AFFILIATION AND GOVERNANCE

Section 1. Affiliation

(Name of church) is a member church by affiliation with Open Bible Churches, an Iowa corporation, having agreed to abide by the provisions, procedures, and regulations in the Open Bible Manual. Our statement of faith shall be consistent with the Statement of Faith of Open Bible Churches. The church is an integral part of the **(Name of region)** region of Open Bible Churches, an **(Name of state)** corporation.

Section 2. Regional Supervision

(Name of church) is under regional supervision as prescribed in the Open Bible Manual. The purpose of regional supervision is to assist a church back to stability, remove the causes for supervision, and nurture health. It is restorative instead of punitive. The highest goal is for a church to bear fruit as it effectively functions under local leadership.

Section 3. Governance Documents, Records, and Reports

The church shall keep and maintain at least the following corporate documents:

- A. Articles of Incorporation and amendments;
- B. Statement of Faith and amendments;
- C. Bylaws of the church and amendments;
- D. Current partnership record, with contact information;
- E. Minutes of meetings of the advisory council;
- F. Financial reports and records; and
- G. Open Bible Manual.

Section 4. Availability of Records

All records shall be open at all times to the inspection of the senior pastor, church's advisory council, the regional board, national and regional representatives of Open Bible Churches, and to all other parties as required by state law.

Section 5. Reports

The senior pastor, officers, and members of the advisory council shall submit reports requested by the regional board or by authorized, national and regional representatives of Open Bible Churches, giving a full and accurate accounting of spiritual activities, attendance, property, and finances.

Section 6. Governance Conflicts and Omissions

When there is a conflict between bylaws of the church and the provisions, procedures, and regulations in the Open Bible Manual, or when the bylaws of the church are silent, the provisions, procedures, and regulations in the Open Bible Manual shall prevail. In the event of a conflict between any provisions in the Open Bible Manual or bylaws of the church between the laws or regulations of the state, county, or city, only the provision in conflict shall be of no effect.

Section 7. Personal Liability

The private property of directors, officers, partners, the region, members of the regional board of directors, and partners of this church shall be exempt from corporate debts and liabilities.

ARTICLE 4. PARTNERSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Definition

The church may develop a process for accepting members or partners while under regional supervision in consultation with the regional board. Members or partners will have privileges and responsibilities as granted by the regional board of directors.

Section 2. Discipline

- A. Purpose** – Discipline is a biblical exercise for which God holds the church responsible and accountable. Its design is to preserve Bible standards, protect integrity and anointing, and bring the offender to repentance, redemption, and restoration to God, self, family, and others. (2 Samuel 12:1-14; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:3-11; Galatians 6:1-5; James 5:19-20.) In the spirit of Galatians 6:1-2, the church is committed to the healing and restoration of the fallen.
- B. Process** – Partners or members, other than the senior pastor, found guilty of conduct contrary to Scripture, teaching contrary to the statement of faith, causing conflict among the members or partners, or failure to be in harmony or cooperation with the program of the church and the senior pastor and these bylaws shall be confronted first by the senior pastor and, if necessary, by the advisory council and regional board. The regional board may be asked to intervene by the senior pastor or advisory council with member or partner discipline. Members or partners who refuse to repent or receive corrective discipline in the spirit of restoration may be dismissed from membership or partnership by the regional board, upon recommendation of the senior pastor. Members or partners under discipline forfeit the right to resign from membership or partnership. Resignations from membership or partnership are possible only by members or partners not under discipline. Members or partners who are dismissed from membership or partnership shall be notified by mail by the secretary of the church.

ARTICLE 5. CORPORATE OFFICERS

The officers of the church corporation shall be a president, a secretary, a treasurer and, if so determined by the regional board, a vice president.

Section 1. Eligibility

An officer other than the president must be a member in good standing of the church and living a godly Christian life.

Section 2. Appointment and Term of Office

The regional executive director or an appointee of the regional executive director shall serve as president of the corporation while the church is under regional supervision. The regional board shall appoint, continue in office, or terminate the other officers of the corporation and determine terms of service.

Section 3. Vacancy or Incapacity

In the event of a vacancy or incapacity of an officer other than the president, upon recommendation of the senior pastor, the regional board shall appoint a successor and determine the term of service.

Section 4. Resignation

Except for the office of president, officers shall provide 30 days written, signed notice of resignation to the president.

Section 5. Accountability

The president shall be accountable to the regional board and the advisory council. Other officers shall be accountable to the regional board and the president for faithfulness and fulfillment of their duties.

Section 6. Duties

- A. President** – The president is the chief executive officer of the church corporation who implements the directives of the regional board. The president shall serve as member ex-officio of all church bodies and organizations of the church.
- B. Vice President** – The senior pastor of the church may be appointed by the regional board to serve as vice president of the church corporation while the church is under regional supervision.
- C. Secretary** – The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all advisory council meetings and may act as secretary of any other body or committee as desired by the senior pastor or regional board. The secretary shall provide for the safekeeping of all records and documents of the church, sign legal papers, and perform other duties as required by the senior pastor and regional board.
- D. Treasurer** – The treasurer shall supervise the receipt and deposit of all funds of the church in accordance with the finance provisions of these bylaws. The treasurer shall keep accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, maintain and distribute donor receipts according to IRS policy, submit monthly reports to the senior pastor, advisory council and regional board, and annual and other reports requested to the regional board. With the approval of the regional board, the treasurer shall establish an accountable plan of internal control. All records shall be open at all times to inspection by the senior pastor, members of the advisory council, national and regional representatives of Open Bible Churches, and to other parties as required by state law.

Section 7. Combined Offices

One person may hold two or more offices, except the office of the president.

Section 8. Discipline

The president shall be under the disciplinary authority of Open Bible Churches. Other officers shall be under the disciplinary authority of the regional board and the disciplinary procedures as prescribed in these bylaws.

ARTICLE 6. GOVERNING BOARD

Section 1. Definition

The regional board shall act as the governing board of the church and shall work in consultation with the senior pastor and may work in consultation with an advisory council in performing its responsibilities.

Section 2. Responsibilities of Governing Board

The governing board shall:

- A.** Serve as the board of directors of the corporation.
- B.** Manage the legal and primary financial affairs of the church.
- C.** Approve the annual budget, with salaries for all paid personnel.
- D.** Authorize the purchase of insurance for all properties owned by the church.
- E.** Conduct a review of the senior pastor as prescribed in these bylaws.
- F.** Approve all decisions regarding the sale, mortgage, lease, property use agreements, or purchase of real property.
- G.** Sign legal papers such as deeds, mortgages, leases, and property use agreements that have been approved in accordance with these bylaws.
- H.** Review all monthly financial reports.
- I.** Appoint all staff pastors and other personnel, both paid and unpaid, upon recommendation of the senior pastor and advisory council.
- J.** Appoint the senior pastor of the church.

Section 3. Pastoral Review

The regional board shall review the senior pastor at the end of the pastor's term of appointment. Members of the advisory council shall have opportunity to provide written, signed input during these reviews using tools provided by the regional executive director.

- A. Satisfactory** – Upon completion of a satisfactory review of the senior pastor, the regional board shall notify the pastor and the advisory council.

- B. Unsatisfactory** – Upon completion of an unsatisfactory review the senior pastor’s term of service shall cease. The senior pastor’s final day of service shall be 30 days after notice is given to the pastor, the advisory council, and the members or partners.

ARTICLE 7. ADVISORY COUNCIL

Day-to-day operations of the church corporation and any other responsibilities designated by the regional board may be carried out by an advisory council upon approval by the regional board.

Section 1. Definition

The advisory council is an advisory body to the senior pastor and regional board.

Section 2. Eligibility

Members of the advisory council shall be individuals whose character is consistent with the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9 and who demonstrate the gifting, ability, and maturity necessary to fulfill their duties. (1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Romans 12.) A qualified candidate shall be a member or partner in good standing of the church for not less than 24 months.

Section 3. Composition

The advisory council shall consist of not fewer than three individuals of legal age according state law, a majority of whom must be other than employees or staff and/or related to the senior pastor or other members of the advisory council by blood or marriage. The senior pastor shall be a member of the advisory council and serve as chair.

Section 4. Appointment

The members of the advisory council shall be nominated by the senior pastor and appointed by the regional board.

Section 5. Vacancy or Incapacity

In the event of a vacancy or incapacity of a member of the advisory council, upon the recommendation of the senior pastor, the regional board shall appoint a successor to fulfill the uncompleted term of service.

Section 6. Term of Appointment

The term of appointment shall be one to three years. Terms of office shall commence from the date of appointment by the regional board or as separately provided by the regional board. Members of the advisory council may be reappointed, but no member may be appointed to an indefinite or life term.

Section 7. Responsibilities

- A.** Provide a spiritual covering of prayer, guidance, counsel, encouragement, fellowship, comfort, and relational accountability to the senior pastor and members or partners.
- B.** Manage the daily care, maintenance, disbursements, and routine operational matters of properties owned by the church. Individual members of the advisory council shall not independently make decisions in the name of the church.
- C.** Assure accurate, monthly records of the financial receipts and expenditures of the church are maintained and reported to the regional board.
- D.** Provide counsel to the regional board in pastoral searches.
- E.** Handle all routine matters of the church.
- F.** Initially arbitrate conflicts within the church.
- G.** Communicate with the regional board on all substantive issues.
- H.** Approve the development and discontinuance of church ministries or departments and committees, which shall be accountable to and their responsibilities and authority defined by the senior pastor and advisory council.

Section 8. Accountability

The advisory council is accountable to the senior pastor and the regional board.

Section 9. Discipline

Members of the advisory council shall be subject to discipline as prescribed in these bylaws for members or partners.

Section 10. Dismissal

Members of the advisory council may be dismissed for the causes prescribed in these bylaws for members or partners and by adhering to the process prescribed in these bylaws for members or partners.

Section 11. Meetings and Quorum

Meetings of the advisory council shall be held at least quarterly at places and times determined by the senior pastor and approved by the regional board. Notice shall be provided at least seven days in advance by publication in the church bulletin, newsletter, letter, or electronically. A majority of the advisory council shall constitute a quorum.

Section 12. Minutes

Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the advisory council and distributed to each council member and to the regional executive director.

ARTICLE 8. SENIOR PASTOR

Section 1. Definition

The senior pastor is the shepherd of the flock. The senior pastor, under the guidance of God, in consultation with the advisory council of the church, and in partnership with Open Bible Churches will provide vision and practical direction to the church body.

Section 2. Eligibility

The senior pastor shall exemplify the characteristics of a godly, Christian life and possess the qualities of a spiritual leader as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-13. The senior pastor shall be a credentialed minister in good standing with Open Bible Churches.

Section 3. Pastoral-Selection Process

The pastoral-selection process shall be conducted as prescribed in the Open Bible Manual for churches under the governance of the regional supervision bylaw model. The process will be under the leadership of the regional executive director or representative. The regional executive director or representative will work in consultation with the advisory council to assist in a search for and selection of an eligible senior pastor.

Section 4. Pastoral Review

The regional board shall review the senior pastor at the end of the term of appointment for purposes of providing positive feedback, suggesting areas needing attention or correction, and determining continuation of appointment.

Section 5. Duties

The senior pastor shall:

- A.** Be the spiritual leader of the church. The senior pastor shall minister to the spiritual needs of and guard the congregation against dissension and be devoted to the mission of the church.
- B.** Call and lead meetings of the advisory council with approval of the regional board.
- C.** Consistently work to strengthen Christian life among the members or partners and in the community.
- D.** Have full responsibility for the supervision of all services and meetings of the church, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws or by the regional board of directors. Have general supervision over all ministries and auxiliary activities, and be an ex-officio member of all church bodies.
- E.** Be responsible, with the treasurer and advisory council of the church, for deposits and disbursements of all funds, records, and reporting of finances.
- F.** Recommend members of the advisory council as prescribed in these bylaws.
- G.** Recommend all pastoral and staff positions and personnel, both paid and unpaid, for approval by the advisory council and appointment by the regional board.
- H.** Be responsible, in consultation with the advisory council, for reviews and evaluations of staff pastors, members of the advisory council, administrative staff, and ministry leaders. All evaluations shall be sent to the regional board for review.
- I.** Provide at least 30 days written notice to the advisory council and regional executive director prior to resignation.

Section 6. Financial Support

- A. **Compensation and Benefits** – The senior pastor shall be compensated for services by a compensation and benefits package. The advisory council shall review the senior pastor's compensation and benefits package at least annually. The advisory council shall submit the compensation and benefits package to the regional board for final approval.
- B. **Housing Allowance** – The senior pastor may annually submit a signed request to the regional board for a portion of his compensation to be classified and recorded in minutes as housing allowance and excluded from federal taxes as provided by the IRS. Housing allowance requests shall always be submitted and approved in advance of implementation.
- C. **Event and Ministry Function Expenses** – The advisory council shall give consideration to the payment of expenses incurred by the senior pastor's attendance at regional and national Open Bible Churches' events and other church or ministry functions. The advisory council shall pay, reimburse, or provide an offering to help defray such expenses, according to the ability of the church.
- D. **Accountable Reimbursement Plan** – The advisory council, with approval by the regional board, shall establish an accountable reimbursement plan for the payment of approved, ministry expenses for pastors and staff personnel upon the presentation of receipts.
- E. **Severance Package** – The advisory council shall, with the aid of the regional board, develop a reasonable severance package and appropriate farewell considerations for the departing senior pastor who has honored Open Bible's ministerial covenant of ethics for departing pastors.

Section 7. Interim Pastor

In a case of emergency or when a church is without a pastor, the regional board shall have the power to appoint an interim pastor. The appointment shall not exceed two years. An individual who is interested in becoming pastor of the church shall not be eligible to serve as an interim pastor unless otherwise determined by the regional board.

Section 8. Charges and Violations

- A. **Charges** – A member or partner making a charge against the senior pastor must present it in writing to the regional executive director signed by corroborating witnesses.
- B. **Authority** – Charges will be investigated by the regional board to determine if a charge involves a violation of the Open Bible Manual.
 - 1. A charge against the senior pastor, or any staff pastor or any member or partner who is a credentialed, Open Bible minister, entailing violations of the Open Bible Manual requires the regional executive director assume authority over the pastor, staff pastor, member, or partner under provisions of the Open Bible Manual.
 - 2. A charge against the senior pastor, any staff pastor, member, or partner who is a credentialed Open Bible minister not entailing violations of the Open Bible Manual may be overseen by the advisory council at the request of and with the assistance of the regional board, if requested.

ARTICLE 9. STAFF PASTORS AND MINISTRY LEADERS

Section 1. Staff Pastors

- A. **Eligibility** – They shall exemplify the characteristics of godly, Christian lives and possess the qualities of spiritual leaders as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Individuals appointed to full-time ministry roles shall be credentialed ministers in good standing with Open Bible Churches.
- B. **Appointment & Review** – Staff pastors shall be approved by the advisory council upon recommendation by the senior pastor and appointed by the regional board. They shall serve congruent with the senior pastor's tenure and should anticipate resigning upon the senior pastor's departure. The senior pastor and advisory council shall review staff pastors every two years. Copies of all reviews shall be sent to the regional board.
- C. **Duties** – Staff pastors will function in a manner consistent with their job descriptions as determined by the senior pastor and advisory council and approved by the regional board.

Section 2. Ministry Leaders

Ministry leaders shall be appointed by the senior pastor with approval by the advisory council and shall be responsible to the pastor.

ARTICLE 10. FINANCE

All funds given to or received by the church for operation, development, and maintenance shall be deposited in banks or other federally insured institutions under the supervision of the treasurer and as approved by the regional board. The church may accept gifts of real and/or personal property at the discretion of the regional board.

Section 1. General Fund

All undesignated contributions shall be part of the general fund.

Section 2. Donor-Designated/Restricted Funds

All donor-designated contributions shall be held as restricted funds and expended only according to the designation of the donor.

Section 3. Other Offerings and Fund Raising

Ministries of the church may receive offerings and raise funds as authorized by the advisory council. Monies shall not be solicited or collected from members or partners by members or partners for any cause without the consent of the pastor and regional board.

Section 4. Handling of Offerings and Receipts

- A. Offerings shall be counted by at least two, authorized individuals, not related by blood or marriage, before the funds are removed from the church facility. An offering-receipts report shall be signed by those counting the offering and submitted to the treasurer.
- B. Written receipts shall be issued to donors for tithes, offerings, and other monetary contributions. IRS rules must be followed for acknowledgment of all cash and non-cash gifts.
- C. Funds shall be deposited within 24 hours of receipt or as soon as possible thereafter.

Section 5. Disbursements

Disbursement of funds at a level authorized by the regional board shall be under the supervision of the senior pastor and advisory council. All other disbursements must have written, regional board approval. Unless approved by the regional board, checks shall require two, approved signatures from persons who are not related by marriage or birth. Signatories shall include the senior pastor, treasurer, and other officers or members of the advisory council. Checks shall not be pre-signed nor affixed with a stamped signature.

Section 6. Investments

The church shall not invest its funds in speculative investments or in a business in which a pastor, member of the advisory council or regional boards, officer, or employee has a personal interest. The church may raise revenues through fund-raising activities and contributions consistent with the nonprofit laws of the state and Internal Revenue Code as it applies to 501(c)(3) corporations.

Section 7. Contracts

The regional board may, by a majority vote and as documented in official minutes, authorize officers to enter into contracts or execute and deliver instruments in the name of and on behalf of the church. Such authority may be general or restricted to specific instances.

Section 8. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE 11. PROPERTY

All property, real or chattel, shall be received, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the name of the church corporation. Property owned by the church shall not be sold, leased, mortgaged, or the title otherwise encumbered except by action of the regional board.

ARTICLE 12. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Scripture instructs Christians to handle disputes among members or partners of the church within the church, not in civil courts. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8.) If a member or partner feels there is an offense or misunderstanding with another member or partner, the senior pastor, member of the governing board, member of the advisory council, staff pastor, or ministry leader, he or she shall go to the other individual promptly in love in order to resolve the difference.

- A. **Unresolved** – If the offense cannot be resolved on an individual basis, the two parties shall meet together with an appropriate church leader to resolve the dispute.

- B. Church Mediation** – In the event two or more members or partners of the church cannot resolve or agree about a dispute between them with the assistance of a church leader, they shall submit the dispute for mediation or judgment within the church, through the pastor or advisory council. They shall refrain from suing one another, the church, or the region in a court of law.
- C. Open Bible Mediation** – In the event of a dispute between a member or partner and the pastor or advisory council, the pastor or advisory council shall request the regional board to provide a mediator to resolve the dispute.
- D. Abiding by Mediation** – Members or partners shall agree to abide by the outcome of mediation. Failure to do so may be grounds for discipline.

ARTICLE 13. CESSATION

Section 1. Dissolution

Should the church become extinct or dissolved, all assets remaining after discharging the obligations and responsibilities of the corporation shall be turned over to (Name) Region of Open Bible Churches. In the event the (Name) Region is nonexistent, the assets shall be turned over to Open Bible Churches, an Iowa corporation, or in the event it is nonexistent, to a religious, educational, or charitable organization or organizations whose objectives are in harmony with those of Open Bible Churches. Such recipient organization or organizations must also be exempt from federal income taxation under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In no event may any of the assets of the church, upon dissolution thereof, be paid to or inure to the benefit of any individual partner, member of the advisory council, regional board, officer of the corporation, or any other private individual.

Section 2. Withdrawal

Withdrawal from affiliation with Open Bible Churches during the term of regional supervision is under the authority of the regional board.

ARTICLE 14. APPEALS

Appeals must be presented in writing and signed, to be considered at the next meeting of the body to which the appeal is presented. Appeals of decisions by the senior pastor and advisory council shall be submitted to the senior pastor and advisory council. Appeals to Open Bible Churches shall be submitted in the following order: church advisory council, regional board of directors, and national board of directors.

ARTICLE 15. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall be the parliamentary authority on all points not conflicting with the articles of incorporation or these bylaws.

ARTICLE 16. RELEASE FROM REGIONAL SUPERVISION

Upon determination by the regional board the church has fulfilled the criteria for release from regional supervision, the regional executive director shall consult with and provide counsel to the pastor and advisory council concerning their preferred church-bylaw model. When church bylaws have been approved by the secretary of the Association, signed by the pastor and members of the advisory council, and filed at the national office, the church shall be released from regional supervision and function under its approved bylaws and the provisions, procedures, and regulations of the Open Bible Manual.

Effective date of implementation

Regional Executive Director