

Simplified Church Structure By-laws Template

A. CHURCH COUNCIL

1. The members of our Church Council are nominated (per *Book of Discipline*) by the Nominations & Leadership Development committee which is chaired by the church's pastor. The slate of nominees is presented and elected at the church's annual Charge Conference. Other nominations can be made from the floor at that time.
2. The Church Council will consist of ____ [9-13] members, plus the senior pastor.
3. No two members may be of the same immediate family, nor may they be staff members (other than the lead pastor). All must be church members and at least one-third must be made up of females and males.
4. The members of the Church Council will also serve as members of _____ [indicate which of the following administrative committees apply: Board of Trustees, Pastor-Parish Relations, Finance.]
5. When Church Council members meet, they can conduct business germane to any of the above committees. The agenda is set ahead of time by the Council chair and pastor, in consultation with the members.
6. The chair of the Council will also chair agenda of the other administrative committees listed in #3 above. [Or, each administrative committee may have a separate chair that handles the business related to that particular area.]
7. The Council secretary will indicate in the meeting minutes when the group is moving from one committee's agenda to another committee's agenda. [Clear distinctions are required by State of Indiana law.]
8. The meetings and minutes are open to the public, with the exception of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, which are kept confidential.

B. NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9. The Nomination & Leadership Development Committee members are nominated and elected using the same process as the Church Council. They must be members of the church and only one person from a household may serve. One should be a young adult. The lead pastor serves as chair.

C. MEMBERSHIP TERMS & QUORUM

10. Members of all the administrative committees, including Nominations & Leadership Development, are elected for three-year terms and are placed in three different classes so that only a third are leaving the committee in any given year.

11. The Church Council will meet _____. [It must meet at least four times a year.]

12. A quorum for the unified Council is members present and voting, except for Trustees matters, which require a majority of members to be present.

D. INDIVIDUAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

13. [If not part of the unified Council,] The Board of Trustees will meet _____. [It must meet at least annually.] Its members may serve for a three-year term. [They may serve more than three years if the church permits.] Two-thirds must be church members and at least one-third must be female and male.

14. [If not part of the unified Council,] The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee will meet _____. [It must meet every three months.] Its members may serve a three-year term. They may serve one additional three-year term. Members must be church members. No staff (other than the lead pastor) or immediate family members of staff may serve, nor may more than one person from a family residing in the same household.

15. [If not part of the unified Council,] The Finance Committee will meet _____. [There's no required number of times it must meet, but bi-monthly is recommended as a minimum.] Members include the chairperson, pastor/s, lay leader, lay member of Annual Conference, financial secretary, treasurer, business administrator, and administrative chairperson/s (e.g. Church Council, Trustees, Pastor-Parish Relations). There is no term limit. If the above positions are filled with staff members, they have voice but no vote. The financial secretary and treasurer may not be the same person nor may they be of the same immediate family.

E. FISCAL YEAR

16. The church's fiscal year is the calendar year [or some other month-to-month period].

F. MINISTRY COMMITTEES

17. The pastor and/or Church Council may establish ministry committees, work areas, teams, or task forces to help accomplish the church's mission as deemed necessary. [Or, a church can designate specific committees that will be part of its organizational structure.]

18. The leader of these ministry groups, in consultation with the pastor, will be responsible for determining their groups' members and their tenures. [It could be short-term or

with no term limit.]. [Or, a church may have these ministry groups' members nominated and voted on using the same process as the Church Council, and the members may be put in three-year classes.]

19. The lead pastor is responsible for managing the church's ministries, making sure that their efforts are aligned with the church's mission and vision. Therefore, they are responsible for supervising all ministry group chairs as well as paid and unpaid staff. The Church Council is responsible for holding the lead pastor accountable to this task.

G. CHARGE CONFERENCE

20. A Charge Conference is convened by the Conference Superintendent annually where the church's officers are elected and the pastor's salary is approved. It also is where candidates for ministry are recommended. It approves the removal of people from the membership rolls after they have been listed two consecutive years. Membership consists of Church Council members and active and retired clergy. A quorum is those members present and voting.

H. CHURCH CONFERENCE

21. A Church Conference is convened by the Conference Superintendent for very specialized church issues that they deem, in consultation with the lead pastor, important enough to have all church members eligible to vote. These could include voting on closing the church, changing the church's structure, electing church Trustees, taking out a significant loan for building purposes, etc.

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

22. A pastor is responsible for determining when a person is ready for church membership. A member can be removed for chargeable offenses as listed in *The Book of Discipline*, following the process it provides.

Administrative Committee Responsibilities

A. Church Council

1. Makes sure all ministries, staff, building utilization, budget, and calendar are aligned with the mission, vision, and values
2. Sets needed policies & procedures
3. Reviews and adopts the annual budget and provides financial oversight
4. Sets strategic goals
5. Plans & implements a program of nurture, outreach, and witness
6. Holds the pastor accountable to the management of the above
7. Fills vacancies on committees between Charge Conferences

8. [Carries out the responsibilities of the other administrative committees in the simplified structure]
- B. Nominations & Lay Leadership Committee
1. Creates, for the Charge Conference, a slate of nominees for church offices
 2. Recruits, develops, nurtures, trains church leaders throughout the year
 3. Provides the Church Council with guidance on matters related to non-paid leaders
- C. Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
1. Encourages, strengthens, nurtures, supports and respects the pastor/s and staff and their families
 2. Promotes unity in the church
 3. Confers and counsels the pastor/s and staff on matters pertaining to effectiveness of ministry, relationships with the congregation, health...
 4. Develops and approves written job descriptions and titles
 5. Provides at least annually evaluation for use by the pastor & staff
 6. Recommends to the Church Council staff policies and needed staff positions
 7. Recommends to the Charge Conference ministry candidates and lay preachers, and provides a list of students preparing for ordained ministry
 8. Makes sure Safe Sanctuary policies are clearly shared with staff
 9. Does an annual review of a church-owned parsonage
- D. Board of Trustees
1. The Board of Trustees is the legal representative of the church
 2. Provides supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the church and any ministry, Sunday school class, UMW, etc., within the church
 3. Cannot interfere with the pastor using the property for religious services or proper meetings; or permit use for such services without the pastor's consent
 4. Annually reviews the adequacy of the property, liability insurance, and makes recommendations to the Charge Conference
 5. Chair and pastor do an annual review of the parsonage
 6. Handles bequests and administers trusts, unless the Charge Conference creates an endowment committee
 7. Completes an annual accessibility audit Charge Conference report