

Venango Woods Church

Constitution Bylaws of Venango Woods Church

Amended on April 25, 2010

Constitution Bylaws Of Venango Woods Church (A Pennsylvania Non-Profit Religious Corporation)

Article I Name and Principal Office

The Name of this Corporation is Venango Woods Church. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Bylaws as the "Church". The Church office is presently located at 3973 State Route 257, Seneca, PA 16346. The Church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

Article II Purpose Statement/ Core Values

"Our Purpose is to Love the Lord, Love One Another, and Make Disciples for Jesus Christ."

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." -- *Matthew 22:36-40*.

"Then Jesus came to them and said. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age." -- *Matthew 28:18-20*.

Section 1: Purpose Statement

Our Church Purpose is to make more and better Christ followers/disciples through an active participation in four key environments. We pursue our purpose by balancing out the following environments, each of which corresponds to an element of the Great Commission or Great Commandment.

Our Worship Center is the place where we meet and greet for fellowship and welcome new people. It is our Sunday morning worship environment. "Love God with all..."

We are:

- Contemporary- with a full band, PowerPoint, and Video.

- Casual- Come as you are- we accept people as they are whether it is Blue Jeans or a Suit.
- Relevant- we deal with real life issues- how to handle stress, improve our relationships, find success and significance in our lives.
- Real- All of us are on a journey- we have good days and bad days- we struggle with life's challenges and yet we serve a God who makes a real difference in our lives.

Our Class Rooms are where we sit down and have more in depth conversations. It is our seminar, teaching and age related ministry environment. "Teaching them..."

- Bible Study
- Ministries for various life stages
- Specialty groups

Our Small Groups are where most people connect and where we share much of our life together. It is our ministry environment. "Baptizing them (incorporating and welcoming people into the family of faith) and "make disciples" (those who would follow Jesus).

- We believe that life change happens best in a small group.
- Small Groups focus on the application of Scripture to Life, prayer and the sharing of life together.

Our Community is the place where we work side by side with our neighbors on various projects. It is our service environment. "Love your neighbor..."

- We not only want to invite people to join our congregation and connect to our services and groups but we also want to go out and actively serve our community. Actively showing and sharing Christ's love.

Section 2: Core Values

- We Value People- God Loves all People
- We Value Practical Application of the Bible- Teaching is for Transformation, not Information
- We Value Growth- Believers Desire to be like Christ
- We Value Small Groups- Because People Grow in Small Groups
- We Value Service- When we serve others, we show love to God
- We Value Creativity and Innovation- Changing Methods... Unchanging Message
- We Value Unity and Uniqueness- Focusing on the Things that Unite Us, Not the things that Divide Us

Article III Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the only basis for our beliefs. Although it is not binding, this Church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message", a 2000 affirmation of basic Christian belief, as a general statement of our faith.

Article IV

Church Covenant

We affirm the unity described in Ephesians 4 as paramount to the church's health and growth. Therefore, we agree to be unified under the church covenant guidelines outlined at the end of this document.

Article V

Affiliation

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denomination control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world mission, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

Article VI

Membership

Section I: General

Membership in this Church shall consist of all persons who have met the requirements for membership, been approved by the congregation, and are listed on the membership roll.

Section II: Qualifications for Membership

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation.
3. Completion of the Church's membership class and its requirements.
4. Basic agreement with the Church's statement of faith and covenant.

Section III: Designation of Membership

In an effort to properly reflect the membership of the Church, the following membership roll will be maintained.

Active/Resident Members: All members who reside within the Church's ministry area and are currently active in the Church.

Inactive Members: All members who are inactive for a period of three months will be moved to an inactive membership roll and be terminated from the roll if inactivity persists for one year.

Section IV: Rights of Membership

Every active/ resident member shall have the right to participate in the following matters:

1. The annual budget of the Church
2. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church
3. The merger or dissolution of the Church
4. Acquisition or sale of property
5. To affirm the nomination of a senior pastor by the Church Elders
6. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Church.

Section V: Termination of Membership

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. Inactivity of one year
5. Dismissal by the Elders according to the following conditions:
 - A. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Statement of Faith and covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community.
 - B. Procedures for dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18: 15-17 or Titus 3:10-11.

Section VI: Restoration of Members

Members dismissed by the Church shall be restored by the unanimous agreement of the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8

Section VII: Voting Limitations

In any Church business meeting:

1. Only active members will have the privilege to speak;
2. Each active member must be at least 18 years of age in order to vote;
3. Voting by proxy is prohibited, except as provided in Article VIII, Section XII

Article VII Meetings of Members

Meetings of the members shall be held in the times , in the manner and purposes set forth below:

1. The Church membership shall meet at least quarterly and one of those meetings, called the annual meeting, shall be held prior to January 31st for each fiscal year to receive and adopt the annual report and Church budget.
2. The Church shall set the dates of the annual or other scheduled meetings by notifying the members at least 7 days in advance.
3. A special business meeting of the church may be called at any time by:
 - A. The Senior Pastor
 - B. In absence of the pastor by any other officer of the church
 - C. By a majority agreement of the Church Elders.
4. A meeting may be called to affirm the nomination of a Senior Pastor by the Church Elders.
5. Notification of members for business meetings may be given by any one of the following methods:
 - A. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a Sunday service.
 - B. Announcement of the meeting in the Church newsletter.
 - C. Oral announcement to the congregation at a Sunday service.
 - D. By a first-class letter to members.
6. A quorum shall consist of those members present and voting but no vote shall be accepted if there is less than 50% of active members in attendance.
7. Members shall be notified no less than 7 days prior to a meeting to consider any matters set forth in Article VI section IV of the Bylaws.

Article VIII

Church Leadership

(Directors of the Corporation)

Section I. Purpose of Officers

In the New Testament church, certain individuals were set apart to official responsibilities within the church. These individuals were servants of the church, following the pattern of Christ who came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:26-28). The officers of this Church are those indicated in the New Testament, specifically those of Elder and Deacon (Ministry Leader).

Section II. Responsibilities of Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is the main teaching Elder and shall be responsible for the majority of all teaching and preaching during the regular weekly worship celebrations. He shall serve as the main administrator, overseeing the daily operations of the church. The Senior Pastor shall be a part of the Elders and as such shall be required to meet all responsibilities and qualifications for the Elders. The Senior Pastor shall review the performance of all church staff, discuss, pray and plan for the future planning and teaching of the church, and act as chairman of church meetings. He will also meet jointly with the Elders and Deacons (Ministry leaders) no less than once every other month to discuss, pray and offer guidance dealing with current ministries.

Section III. Responsibilities of Elders

The Elders shall act as the Church Leadership which shall be comprised of all Pastors and duly elected Elders, but at no time shall the number of Elders be less than three. The church leadership shall have general oversight of the church as overseers and pastors (Acts 20:16-32; Titus 1, I Timothy 3, Hebrews 13:17). All Elders shall have equal voice. They are responsible to lead and feed the flock, protect from doctrinal error, exhort and refute those who contradict doctrine, be a godly example, and disciple others (1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Matthew 28:18-20). The Elders shall meet together regularly but not less than once every other month. They shall also be responsible to meet regularly with the Church Deacons (Ministry Leaders). The Church Elders shall be specifically responsible for recommending appointment of Elders, Deacons (Ministry Leaders), Church Clerk, and Treasurer for Congregational approval and it shall be responsible for the hiring and dismissal of church staff.

Section IV. Qualifications for Elders

The office of Elder is open to any male member of Venango Woods Church who is recognized by the body for their spiritual maturity, ability to teach Scripture and live by the same, and gifts and skills needed for the general oversight of the flock. All Elders shall meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Section V. Responsibilities of Deacons (Ministry Leaders)

The New Testament identifies both men and women who were set apart for specific works of mercy and service, primarily to assist the Elders in such works of caring that might otherwise distract from the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:1-6, Phil 1:1, Rom 16:1). Their responsibilities shall be designated by the Church Leadership and they shall serve as needed. The Church Deacons (Ministry Leaders) shall meet together regularly but not less than once every other month.

Section VI. Qualifications of Deacons (Ministry Leaders)

The office of Deacon (Ministry Leader) shall be open to any member of Venango Woods church who is recognized by the body for their spiritual maturity and particular gifting in ministries of mercy, service, helps, and administration. They shall work with and under the direction of the Elders and meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section VII. Selection and Tenure of Elders and Deacons (Ministry Leaders)

The selection of the Elders and Deacons (Ministry Leaders) for the Church shall be considered a responsibility for the Church Elders. A Candidate for Elder or Deacon (Ministry Leader) shall be a member in good standing of Venango Woods Church for the minimum of one year. The candidate is then affirmed by the voting members to serve a one year term and shall assume office if they receive at least 80% of the total votes cast.

Section VIII. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Church Leadership for a one year term and be affirmed by 80% approval of the congregation. The clerk shall be a member in good standing of Venango Woods Church for a minimum of one year. The clerk shall maintain minutes from the Church business meetings.

Section IX. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Church Leadership for a one year term and be affirmed by 80% approval of the congregation. The Treasurer is a legal representative of Venango Woods Church. The Treasurer shall assist with and oversee the preparation, approval, and implementation of the annual budget.

Section X. Trustees

For legal purposes of the Corporation the legal representatives of the Church will be the Trustees. The Trustees shall be appointed by the Church Leadership for a one year term and be affirmed by 80% approval of the congregation.

Section XI. Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees serve as legal representatives in all transactions related to the church. They hold legal title as related to the purchase, sale, mortgaging, or rental of church property after approval by the congregation during a regular business meeting. They have the authority to sign all legal documents involving church property.

The Trustees duties include:

1. Maintain an up-to-date inventory of all church property, mortgage loans, and insurance on church property.
2. Relate to appropriate civil officials in all legal matters involving the church.
3. Keep abreast of latest insurance and legal changes (innovations, programs, etc...) report such changes to the appropriate church leaders, and advise the church staff concerning legal matters.
4. Counsel with appropriate church officers in matters related to church properties.
5. Maintain all church legal documents in conjunction with the Church Clerk or Church Secretary.
6. Report on all legal issues related to the church as necessary and/or requested.
7. Keep accurate, organized and updated records.
8. Assist the Treasurer with the preparation, approval, and implementation of the annual Church budget.
9. Establish the value of salaries and compensation for church staff.

Section XII. Death, Dismissal, Resignation of Pastor

In the event the position of Senior Pastor becomes vacant, the Church Elders will, within 90 days, recommend a Pastoral search team to the congregation for approval. The Pastoral search team will then nominate one candidate at a time to the Church Elders and the Church Membership for approval. The calling of a Senior Pastor requires 80% approval of voting active members either present at the meeting or voting by absentee ballot.

Article IX

Records and Reports

The Church will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records).
2. Minutes of the proceedings of its members and Church leadership.
3. A record of its members, giving their names and addresses.
4. Contribution statements for contributors.
5. Reports of annual review of all church financial books, records, and proceedings.

Article X

Corporate Responsibility

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of a Director, officer or member of the corporation, or to the benefit of any private individual.

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall become the Trust of the Northwestern (Southern) Baptist Association and/or the (Southern) Baptist Convention of the Pennsylvania/ South Jersey.

Article XI

Amendments to the Bylaws

New Bylaws may be adopted or these Bylaws may be amended or repealed by the affirmative vote of two thirds majority of the votes represented at a duly held meeting of the members.

Article XII

Church Ordinances

Section I, Baptism

Those who have professed by faith in Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior will be eligible to be baptized by immersion. No other method of baptism shall be observed other than immersion. Baptism by immersion shall be a prerequisite for membership.

Section II, The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be served by any able body affirmed by the Elders to the assembled church on the even months of the year (or at the discretion of the Senior Pastor). Since it is the Lord's supper, no person shall be barred from participating; however, at each observance, it will be explained the order and meaning of the Lord's supper as found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30

Certificate of Secretary

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the acting secretary of Venango Woods Church, a non-profit Religious Corporation and the above Bylaws, consisting of five (5) pages, are the bylaws of this Corporation as adopted April 21, 2002.

Executed at Seneca, Pennsylvania this 21st day of April 2002.

Secretary

As amended, consisting of seven pages, on January 9, 2005. Executed at Seneca, Pennsylvania this 9th day of January 2005.

Secretary

As amended, consisting of nine pages, on April 25, 2010. Executed at Seneca, Pennsylvania this 25th day of April 2010.

Secretary