

## By-laws

### Constitution and By-laws Fincastle Church, Lafollette, TN

#### Mission

**Our Mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly. Love God, Love others and serve.**

In our worship, we desire to surrender to and be fully devoted to one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are passionate about what is important to God.

Jesus calls those who follow Him to love God wholeheartedly and love their neighbors as themselves. Our desire is to demonstrate to the world the extravagant love of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

We have been entrusted with a lifesaving and transforming message that we must share with others. Our witness is bold, compelling and fearless. Our mission advances when individuals become disciples for Jesus Christ and join God's mission to make more disciples.

#### Vision

**Our Vision is to join God in a journey of bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people, and to encourage each person to reflect the character of Christ.**

Through our ministries, we desire to share the whole counsel of God with all peoples and to advance the presence and fulfillment of the Kingdom of God in every part of the world and at all levels of societies and cultures. The Church is committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, and the work of the Holy Spirit in conveying God's truth and grace to all people.

We are a church that recognizes and deploys the gifts and contributions of each part of the church, working as partners in the gospel with equal voice and leadership. Our witness to the world is marked by mutual love, concern, sharing, and a focus on those who are most vulnerable. We watch over one another in love and bear witness to the transforming power of the Good News as we humbly, but boldly, strive to serve others as ambassadors of Christ!

## **Article 1 – Name**

This body shall be known as “Fincastle Church” of Lafollette, TN.

## **Article II – Principal Address**

The principal office will be 629 Old Middlesboro Highway, Lafollette TN 37766

## **By-Laws:**

### **Article I – Government**

Section 1 – The government of this church is vested in the body of believers.

- During the period of transition between disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church and the effective date of affiliating with another Church, the Transitional Leadership Council shall serve as the primary leadership body of the church. As the most representative body, it is charged with making all necessary decisions related to the Church. Its decisions are subject to approval, modification, or revocation by the church membership. It shall be in effect only until the effective date of permanent policies and procedures.
- The Transitional leadership Council will be made up of current officers of Administrative Council, Chairs of committees and selected members.

The Council shall provide planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life, and shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the ministry and mission of the church.

- Committees:
  - Administrative Council
  - Pastor Parish Relations-Personnel
  - Children’s & Youth Ministry
  - Trustees
  - Finance
  - Lay-Leadership-Nominating Committee
  - Outreach & witness nurture team
  - Technology Team
  - Safety Team
  - Next Step Team
  - Ad Hoc Committees as needed

All such Committees and Council shall be answerable to the church.

## **Article II –Members**

### **Our Belief's**

1. We believe that all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. We denounce as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person (Genesis 1-2, Deuteronomy 16:19-20, Luke 11:42, 19:9, Colossians 3:11).
2. We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities or serious illness, and the aged (Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44).
3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Exodus 22:23-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27).
4. We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God's creative power (Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18).
5. We believe that God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God's people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed (Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5).
6. We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all (Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 26:34-35, Psalm 24:1).
7. We believe that human sexuality created by God, is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 19:3-9, Ephesians 5:22-33). All marriage ceremonies will be approved by the Pastor and the Transitional Leadership Committee. Church property will not be used for marriage ceremonies other than between one man and one woman.

8. We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20). Effective June 1, 2023 individuals working with children are required to obtain a background check at their expense. Background checks are required every 5 years to continue working in with children.

9. We believe that children, whether through birth or adoption, are a sacred gift to us from God, and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture the youngest among us, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world (Deuteronomy 4:9-10, Psalm 127:3-5, 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16).

10. We believe that followers of God have been called to exercise self-control and holiness in their personal lives, generosity and kindness in their relations with others, and grace in all matters of life (Romans 12:9-21, Galatians 5:22-23).

11. We believe in the rule of justice and law in society, in the right of individuals to follow God's call and to lawfully immigrate to new places, and in the pursuit of peace both between nations and individuals. We offer ourselves to work in order to reduce the bitterness that has overflowed in God's world (Genesis 12:1, Isaiah 11:1-9, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:19-10).

12. We believe the practice of the Golden Rule, treating others as we would wish to be treated, can effectively guide our social and business relationships. We seek to cultivate the mind of Christ and a heart for others (Matthew 7:12, Romans 12:1-2).

13. We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution and those governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the greater society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, or political views (Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:35).

14. We believe in the final triumph of righteousness when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work towards that end as Christ's light and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16, Revelation 11:15-17, Revelation 21-22). Person(s) professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repenting of their sins and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church may be received into its fellowship. They must verbally agree to keep our church declaration of faith.

When persons unite as professing members with a local church, they profess their faith in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, died, and was buried; on the third day He rose and sits at the right hand of the Father,

from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Thus they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples for Jesus Christ. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows which are a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the church.

- To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sins;
- To accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil injustice and oppression;
- To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;
- To remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;
- To be loyal to Christ through the Church and do all in their power to strengthen the ministries;
- To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts their service and their witness;
- To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Members shall be expected to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life; habitually to attend the services of this church; to give regularly for its support and its causes; and to share in its organized work.

**The Pastor:**

It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Word of God, exemplify God's Commandments, lead in worship, read, and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness. Further the Pastor is to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4: 12-13).

To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian Faith.

The Pastor will attend meetings as needed.

The Pastor is responsible for the spiritual growth of the congregation. The Pastor serves as church leader, positively and consistently representing God's Church.

The Pastor performs the sacraments of baptism and communion. The Pastor performs confirmations and presides over funerals as needed. The Pastor performs marriages between one man and one woman as outlined in the church by-laws.( Reference by-law number 7.)

A Pastor may be called at any regular or special business meeting of the church for which proper notice has been given for such meeting. Notice of the proposed choice of Pastor shall be given from the pulpit by the transitional Leadership Council after careful prayer and concern for the qualifications of a pastoral candidate. Voting shall be by secret ballot and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the votes cast by the members present and voting shall be required to call.

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. If the work of the Lord prospers under their leadership in the church, they shall continue to serve as Pastor. However, if they find after 6 months that they are not accomplishing the work of the Lord in the church they should, after prayerful consideration, present their resignation as Pastor of the church.

The Pastor shall give the church a written notice not less than sixty (60) days prior to the date they intend to terminate their ministry with this church. The Pastor may be dismissed by a majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at a called meeting for that purpose. Such meeting must be announced for 2 Sundays preceding the called meeting. Following such action, the Pastor will be given notice in writing of not less than 60 days in which to terminate their pastorate. Actual severance of the relationship may occur within the 60-day period so long as it is agreed upon that no hardship be on the Pastor or Church.

**May 7, 2023**