

BYLAWS
OF
TRINITY CHURCH
OF MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA
2008

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

A. DESCRIPTION OF MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the church shall consist of persons who profess belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; whose character, conduct and reputation conform therewith; and who will abide by the Constitution and By-laws of this church.

B. ADMISSION

Any person desiring to become a member of this church shall meet the requirements for faith and conduct set forth in Article V of the Constitution of Trinity Church. Procedure for admission to membership shall be:

1. Applicants for membership shall complete a membership application form and submit it to the Elder Board.
2. The Elder Board shall publish the name of the applicant at least one Sunday prior to their interview for membership on the date set by the Elder Board. Any member with reason(s) for rejecting an applicant shall state in writing to the Elder Board his/her objections prior to the interview. The Elder Board shall then consider the validity of the objection.
3. Following the publication of the applicant's name, the Elder Board shall choose at least three members of the Elder Board to conduct the interview of the applicant and to unanimously accept the qualified applicant into membership.
4. The applicant shall be officially accepted into membership at a regular service in which he/she confesses his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Each applicant shall also indicate publicly his/her intent to participate in the life of the church and to be under the Scriptural discipline of the church.
5. Full-time pastoral staff members and their spouses shall automatically be members during their ministry at this church.

C. TERMINATION

Any member in good standing who moves to another locality and who wishes to join some other church shall upon request receive a letter of recommendation from this Congregation.

Members absent from the church for a period of one year shall be removed from the rolls after having been contacted in writing by the Elder Board prior to removal, unless the Elder Board decides to retain them.

Members found living contrary to the teachings of the Bible and the principles of this church shall be admonished by the Elder Board in brotherly love in accordance with Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 10:24,25; and Matthew 18:15ff.

Should a member continue to live in sin, the Elder Board may dismiss such a person from membership. Such a person, upon sincere repentance, may reapply for membership. Any member who has withdrawn or been dismissed from membership has no rights in any business meeting or property of the church.

D. DISCIPLESHIP

Making disciples of Jesus Christ is the task of Trinity Church.

We identify seven distinguishing traits of a maturing disciple:

1. Love, for Jesus and for others; Mt. 22:37; Jn. 15:12; Mt. 5:44.
2. Service, using gifts and abilities for God's glory; Jn. 15:15; I Cor. 12:7.
3. Scripture, study and meditation; Jn. 15:7; II Tim. 2:15.
4. Prayer, personal and corporate; Jn. 15:7; I Tim. 2:1,8.
5. Verbal witness, telling unbelievers the good news; Jn. 15:16,27.
6. Obedience, doing right and avoiding sin; Jn. 15:9-10; Mt. 5:6.
7. Joy, from inner peace, faith and hope; Jn. 15:11; Phil. 4:4.

While we recognize that God works in our lives both individually and corporately and that all of us are at different places in our discipleship, our sincere desire is for everyone associated with Trinity Church to be maturing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

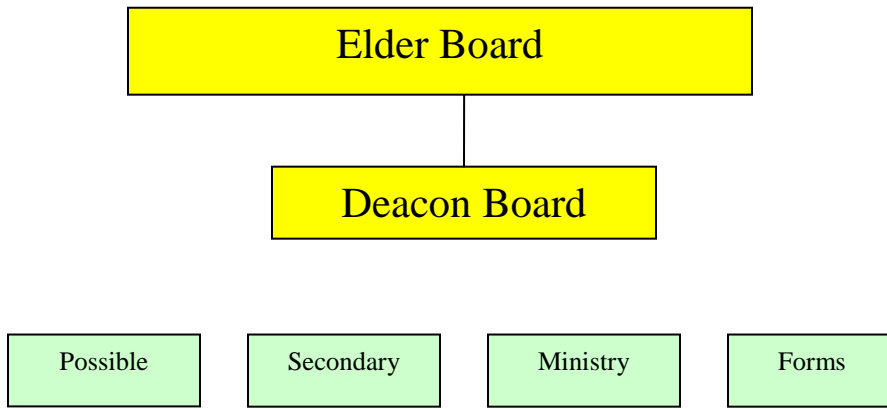
Members of Trinity Church are expected to:

1. Strive toward a personal goal of being a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. II Cor. 13:11; Phil. 3:12.
2. Participate in the ministry activities that are designed to help contribute to Christian disciple making such as: worship, small groups, Christian education, giving, prayer, evangelism, congregational meetings, and an area of gifted service. Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:25.
3. Submit to the spiritual authority of the church leaders. Heb.13:17.
4. Resolve conflicts within the church in a biblical manner. Rom. 12:18, Gal. 5:14-15.

ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE¹

A. OUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE ILLUSTRATED

¹ The New Testament holds out two central ministry functions and offices which help define the church itself. Other ministries will come and go based on given circumstances, but these remain central for our viability as a Christian church. They are biblical shepherding (including teaching, leading and prayer) represented by the presence of biblically qualified elders (I Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9) and biblical care represented by the presence of biblically qualified deacons (Acts 6:1-7, I Tim. 3:8-13). The following diagram highlights the centrality of these functions and offices while also reflecting the important but more flexible nature of secondary ministries which may arise in various forms as our context and constituency changes.



= Fixed and extra-contextual ministry leadership forms for primary ministry functions



= Contextually fluid ministry leadership forms for secondary ministry functions

B. OUR AUTHORITY STRUCTURE

1. Our Authority Structure stated

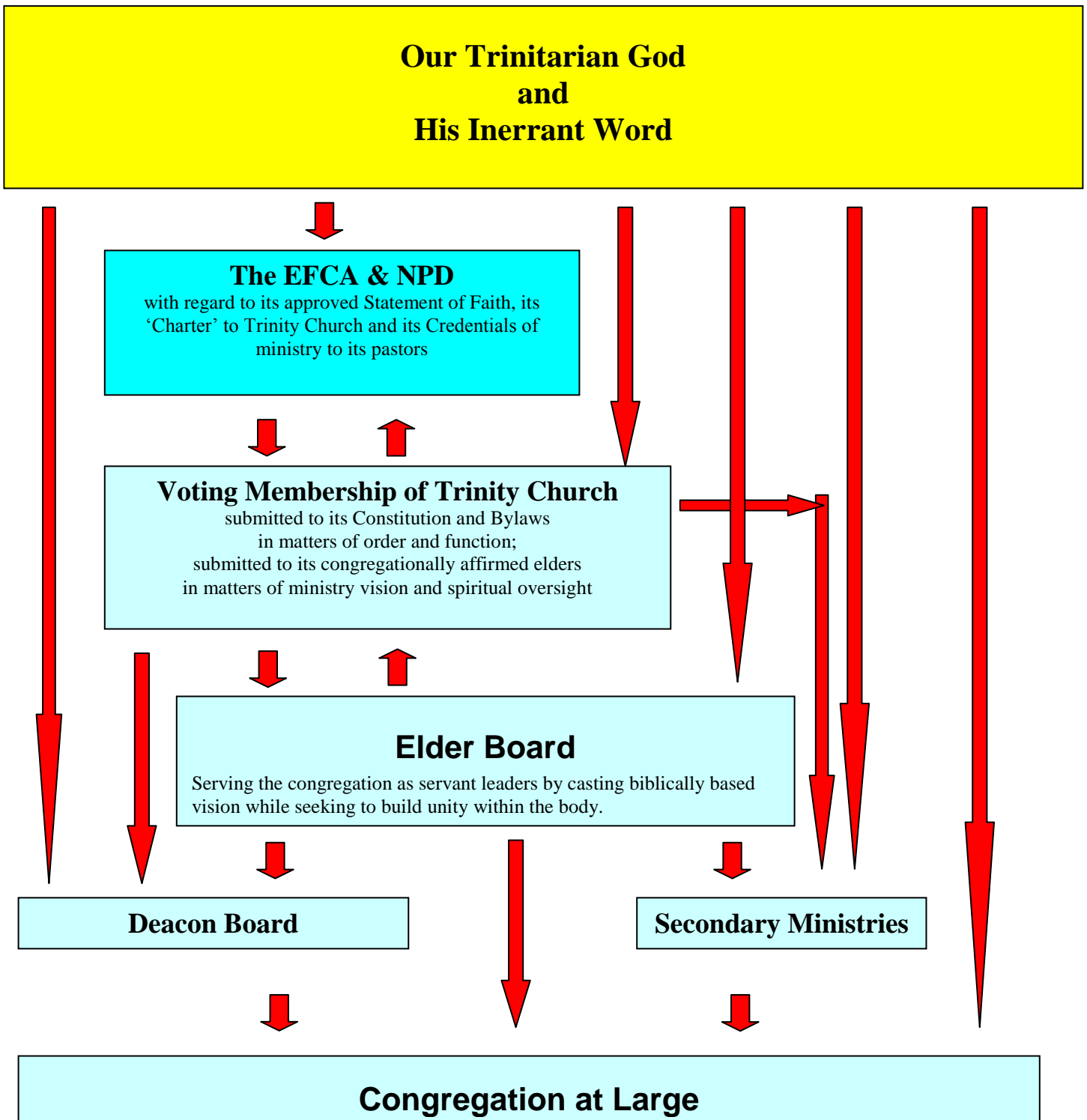
The final responsibility for all matters relating to the life and ministry of Trinity Church shall be with the members of the church.

The Elder Board, Deacon Board and other elected ministry leaders exist to serve the church in specific and complimentary areas.

The Deacon Board and other ministry leaders all fully respect, and defer to, the spiritual oversight and authority of the Elder Board.

All Pastoral Staff and elected leaders are considered servants of Trinity Church and are accountable to its members for all service done on behalf of the church. Pastoral Staff and elected leaders are accountable to the Elder Board.

The Authority Structure for Trinity Church Illustrated



C. PRIMARY MINISTRY FORMS

1. ELDERS²

a. General

Though the practical administration of the church's ministry is invested in its elected and appointed leaders, we recognize the spiritual oversight and shepherding of the congregation to rest with the Elder Board. In accordance with Scripture, recognized elders are entrusted with a noble task (I Tim. 3:1) of responsible, eager and exemplary spiritual oversight of all individuals and ministries in the local church (I Pet. 5:2ff.). Such men are called by God to give themselves proactively to shepherd God's people, proclaim the whole will of God, keep watch over the flock and be on their guard against those who would distort the truth (Acts 20:25-31). In as much as the elders remain faithful to teach and lead the church in accordance with the Bible, God's people are called to respect them and submit to their authority, following their guidance so as to make their work a joy and not a burden (Heb. 13:17, I Thes. 5:12-13).

b. Qualifications

1) Elders shall be men at least thirty years of age meeting the spiritual requirements for leadership as stated in I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:4 and I Peter 5:2-5. In addition all nominees shall be in agreement with the EFCA Statement of Faith.

2) Only active, resident voting members may be eligible for eldership. No member shall be eligible for an elected position until they have been a regular attender of this church for at least one year.

3) No person may simultaneously serve as an elder and another elected position in the church.

4) Eligible candidates shall be those whose private and public lives conform to the qualities set forth in such passages as Rom. 12:1-2, I Jn. 3:16-18, Ps. 15, II Cor. 5:17, Gal. 5:13-26, Eph. 4:22-32, 5:1-28, Phil. 2:1-5, 3:7-11, Col. 3:5-10, I Pet. 2:1, 3:7-9 & 5:2-3. In addition they shall be those who have a demonstrable track record of godly leadership in the church of Jesus Christ, not least an increasing desire to proactively help unbelievers know Christ and believers grow in His grace.

5) As only men who have spent one year as an elder apprentice will be considered for congregational affirmation as a Trinity Church elder.³

c. Selection

1) Elders and elder apprentices shall be elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Those newly elected shall begin service on the first of the month following the Annual Meeting.

2) At least six weeks prior to the annual meeting the Nominating Committee shall ask the members of the congregation to present suggestions of men who,

² Standard operating procedures, structure, responsibilities and objectives for the Elder Board are detailed in the Elder Board Responsibility and Objectives Policy

³ If deacons were required to be tested in Paul's day (I Tim. 3:10), how much more important is a period of training/testing for elders!

in their estimation, meet the qualifications of a biblical elder. Members will be asked to present their suggestions in writing, filling out a prescribed form delineating such qualifications no less than four weeks prior to the election. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee without the nominee's consent. The Nominating Committee will prayerfully evaluate and screen the suggested candidates according to the qualifications listed above in section 1b1. Next, they will receive input on the suggested candidates from the Elder Board, finally presenting any number of former elders and no more than two elder apprentice nominees for affirmation at the Annual Meeting. Each elder/elder apprentice candidate under consideration for election at a Congregational Meeting must receive at least 80% of the votes cast.

d. Elder Apprenticeship

Elder apprentices are expected to participate in all elder gatherings and are responsible for carrying out many elder duties of ministry while not yet having voting privileges on the Elder Board. During the year of assessment the apprentice will both assess his own readiness for service as well as receive much corporate and one-on-one training from seasoned elders. At the Congregational Meeting one year after he was elected as an apprentice, should the candidate and Elder Board so recommend, the congregation will affirm the candidate in his elected position who will then complete two additional years for a full term of office.

e. Composition and Organization

Although it is the desire of Trinity Church always to maintain an Elder Board consisting of the Senior Pastor and no less than three elders elected from the congregation, in light of the necessary qualifications revealed by the Bible, Trinity Church agrees to wait for God to supply qualified candidates rather than lower the standard of the office.

The term of office for elders shall be three years. Elders shall be limited to two consecutive terms followed by at least one year off the Elder Board. After one year a qualified elder is eligible to be considered for election to additional service on the Elder Board.

In the event of Elder Board decisions, no vote shall be taken until all presently serving elders have been amply informed and have opportunity to consider the matter in prayer, study and contribute to the discussion. Since the purpose of the Elder Board is to discern the Lord's will and oversee the ministries of the church for the congregation's care, the elders shall work toward unanimity in spirit and consensus in decision (Phil. 1:27, Eph. 4:2-6). A majority vote shall be required for an action to be carried out.

f. Relationship to other ministry categories

1) Relationship with the deacons:

- Casting the diaconal vision
- Delegating crisis and other care needs to the deacons
- Advising the deacons in unusually complex cases of care
- A pastor or elder may serve as an official elder representative to the deacons

2) Relationship with secondary ministry leaders:

- Cast the broad vision and generally define the philosophy of ministry for each ministry category in keeping with the vision/philosophy of ministry of Trinity church

- Delineate specific ministry goals to certain secondary ministries when needed
- Advise leaders on locating/training/discipling future secondary ministry leaders

3) Relationship with the congregation

- Regularly review the congregational rolls, praying for each person and proactively initiating contact with individuals and small group leaders in an effort to know and provide for specific shepherding needs
- Seek to locate and train potential elders

g. Pastoral Staff Members⁴

The Pastoral Staff shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor and pastoral staff shall strive "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry".

Job descriptions with administrative arrangements for the Senior Pastor and the Pastoral Staff shall be negotiated and maintained by the elders and pastors involved, and shall include qualifications, responsibilities, and lines of accountability. All job descriptions shall be available to all members upon request. Ninety days notice is required to terminate employment by either party unless other terms are mutually agreed upon with the congregation.

1) Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is to provide spiritual, preaching, and teaching leadership for the church in the discharge of the functions of the ministry. He is to make his aim the "equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

In the exercise of this divine purpose, the Senior Pastor shall be a man who meets the biblical qualifications for elder as set forth in I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:4, and I Peter 5:2-5.

The Senior Pastor shall automatically be an elder, serving as a voting member of the Elder Board and shall be recognized as an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. However, the Senior Pastor shall not serve in another elected leadership position or as Church Chairman.

The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Elder Board and to the congregation. He shall report to the Elder Board at their meetings and to the congregation at its annual business meeting. He shall be evaluated annually by the Elder Board.

2) Other Pastoral Staff

Other Pastoral Staff are those pastors who are called to fill specific areas of ministry and are approved by congregational vote.

These Pastors shall meet the biblical qualifications for leaders as set forth in Acts 6:3-4; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:2-5.

These Pastors shall be responsible to the congregation, directed by the Senior Pastor, and accountable to the Elder Board.

⁴ Though the category of staff pastors in general are included in this section under elders for the sake of organization, we recognize that some future pastoral staff may not meet all the qualifications to serve on the Elder Board.

They shall submit regular reports to the Senior Pastor and Elder Board, to the congregation at its annual business meeting, and shall be evaluated annually by the Elder Board.

3) Call of Pastoral Staff

a) Search Committee

The purpose of the Search Committee shall be to bring the most qualified applicant for the position to the congregation for consideration.

The specific areas of ministry for new pastoral staff shall be prioritized by the Elder Board, presented to the congregation and recommended to the Search Committee.

The Search Committee for Senior Pastor shall consist of one elder who is not pastoral staff, and four members-at-large elected by the congregation. The Search Committee for other Ministerial Staff shall consist of the Senior Pastor and one elder who is not pastoral staff and 3 members at large. The Search Committee shall elect its own chairperson. The Search Committee may consider input from other pastoral staff and will maintain good communication with the congregation during the process.

b) Call

The name of the recommended candidate shall come before the congregation for voting at a business meeting. The candidate must be approved by no less than 85% of the members present. The general salary package for Pastoral Staff shall be approved by the congregation.

h. Church Chairman

The Church Chairman is to serve the Congregation as a facilitator, coordinator and communicator.

The Church Chairman shall be an elder and shall:

1) Facilitate communication between the Congregation and the elected church leaders.

2) Facilitate communication among the elected church leaders.

3) Preside over all regular and special congregational meetings as a voting member of the congregation.

4) Preside over all regular and special Elder Board meetings as a voting member of the Elder Board.

5) Initiate any processes or procedures required by the Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Church.

6) Initiate any processes or procedures required in resolutions approved by a vote of the congregation at any regular or special congregational business meeting.

The Church Chairman shall be elected by the congregation from among its members and shall serve a one-year term which may be repeated through the course of his current term of service on the Elder Board. The Church Chairman shall not serve in any other elected ministry position.

In the event of the absence of the Church Chairman from an Elder Board meeting or a Congregational meeting, the Elder Board shall designate another Elder to preside at that meeting.

2. DEACONS⁵

a. Qualifications

- 1) Men exhibiting the character qualities of Acts 6:3 and I Tim. 3:8-13
- 2) Only active, resident voting members may be eligible as deacons. No member shall be eligible until they have been a regular attender of this church for at least one year.

b. Functions

The deacons are the front-line leaders at Trinity Church ensuring the execution of ministries of mercy, practical and crisis care to those connected primarily to our church family and secondarily to our community.

c. Selection

1) Deacons and deacon apprentices shall be elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Those newly elected shall begin service on the first of the month following the Annual Meeting.

2) At least six weeks prior to the annual meeting the Nominating Committee shall ask the members of the congregation to present suggestions of men who, in their estimation, meet the qualifications of a biblical deacon. Members will be asked to present their suggestions in writing, filling out a prescribed form delineating such qualifications no less than four weeks prior to the election. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee without the nominee's consent. The Nominating Committee will prayerfully evaluate and screen the suggested candidates according to the qualifications listed above in section 2A1. The Nominating Committee will, then, receive input on the suggested candidates from the Elder Board, finally presenting any number of former deacons and no more than two deacon apprentice nominees for affirmation at the Annual Meeting. Each deacon/deacon apprentice candidate under consideration for election at a Congregational Meeting must receive at least 80% of the votes cast.

d. Deacon Apprenticeship

In keeping with our desire for deacons to grasp the full weight and responsibility of deaconship, men who have never before served as a Trinity Church deacon are nominated not initially to full deaconship privileges and responsibilities. Instead they are nominated to a one-year apprenticeship under the auspices of the pastoral staff and Deacon Board to better assess their maturity, calling,

⁵ Standard operating procedures, structure, responsibilities and objectives for the Deacon Board are detailed in the Deacon Board Responsibility and Objectives Policy

gifts and ministry. Deacon apprentices are expected to participate in all deacon gatherings and are responsible for carrying out many deacon duties of ministry while not yet having voting privileges on the Deacon Board. During the year of assessment, the apprentice will both assess his own readiness for service as well as receive corporate and one-on-one training from pastoral staff and seasoned deacons. At the Congregational Meeting one year after he was elected as an apprentice, should the candidate and Deacon Board so recommend, the congregation will simply affirm the candidate in his elected position who will then complete a full term of office. Trinity Church seeks to have at least one deacon apprentice always in training for ministry.

e. Composition and Organization

Though it is the desire of Trinity Church always to maintain a Deacon Board consisting of one pastoral staff member and no less than three deacons elected from the congregation, in light of the necessary qualifications revealed by the Bible we agree to wait for God to supply qualified candidates rather than lower the standard of the office.

The term of office for deacons shall be three years. Elections shall be held in such a way that approximately one third of the positions shall be filled annually. Deacons shall be limited to two consecutive terms followed by at least one year off the Deacon Board to provide them sufficient opportunity to rest from their labor. After one year's rest, a qualified deacon is welcomed to be considered for election to additional service on the Deacon Board.

f. Relationship with other ministry categories

1) Relationship with the elders:

- Looking to the elders for specific care needs in the church
- Looking to the elders for assistance in unusually complex cases of care
- Looking to a staff pastor as an official elder representative
- Regularly reporting to the elders significant instances of financial assistance provided and specific shepherding needs which their ministry reveals

2) Relationship with secondary ministry leaders:

- Availability to leaders with knowledge of significant care needs within their area of ministry

3) Relationship with the congregation:

- Regularly review the congregational rolls and initiate contact with individuals and small group leaders in an effort to know and provide for specific care needs
- Seek to locate and train potential deacons
- Enlist, deploy and seek wisdom from their wives and other maturing women with a heart for ministry and compassion in care issues involving women and families as such needs arise

D. SECONDARY MINISTRY FORMS

No organization shall be formed with in or considered to be a part of the church activities before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the Elder Board for their approval and sanction.

The various organizations are requested to confer with the Church Chairman from time to time regarding their plans and activities, and to submit copies of their minutes to the Elder Board regularly. All matters of importance which affect the church shall be submitted to the Elder Board for approval in advance.

No organization shall be permitted to function under the name of Trinity Church whose supervisor is not a member of Trinity Church.

E. ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

All elected leaders shall be chosen from among the members of the church.

F. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OF ELECTED LEADERS AND MINISTERIAL STAFF

Elected church leaders and ministerial staff may be removed from office for reasons related to doctrine or conduct only after the proper exercise of church discipline in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and/or I Timothy 5:19-20. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational business meeting is required to dismiss an elected leader or pastor when the issue is before the church. No accusation shall be made by the congregation nor entertained by the Elder Board against elected leaders or pastors except by written complaint of at least two witnesses (I Tim. 5:19).

G. ADMINISTRATION BOARD

The Administration Board is ultimately responsible to the congregation and philosophically guided by the elders in an effort to organize and administer, strengthen and maintain the physical and the financially administrative aspects of the ministry of Trinity Church.

In performing these functions the Administration Board, shall have among its members:

- a. Administrator
- b. Building and Grounds Coordinator
- c. One at large member

H. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A nominating Committee shall be elected at the annual meeting to serve for the following year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members of the church, one of whom shall be an Elder. The ballot of nominees formulated by the committee shall be published and publicly announced at least one week prior to the annual meeting.

I. BYLAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE

A Bylaws Review Committee shall be elected periodically, at the discretion of the congregation at the annual meeting from the membership of the church. The Committee shall review the bylaws and constitution and propose any necessary changes in writing to the Elder Board.

ARTICLE III - MEETINGS

A. SERVICES

The Congregation may hold such services as it may decide.

B. ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

An annual business meeting shall be held in the month of April⁶. Annual reports of the Pastoral Staff, the Elder Board, the Deacon Board and all elected leaders shall be printed and made available at least one week prior to the meeting date. Any business that concerns the work for the year shall also be transacted at the annual meeting. The agenda for the annual congregational business meeting shall be printed and made available at least one week prior to the meeting date.

⁶ As voted on June 1, 2008 by the congregation

A Nominating Committee shall be elected at the annual meeting to serve for the following year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members of the church, one of whom shall be an elder. The ballot of nominees formulated by the committee shall be published and publicly announced at least one week prior to the annual meeting.

A Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term. He/She shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and decisions at all business meetings of the Congregation. He/She shall preserve the records of the church and keep an accurate record of the church membership and shall execute all necessary correspondence pertaining to the business of the church.

C. ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING

An annual budget meeting shall be held in the month of November⁷. Proposed Budget reports shall be printed and made available at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

D. SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special business meetings of the Congregation may be called at any time by the Elder Board. Twenty-five percent of the church membership may also call a business meeting through a letter to the Elder Board. The purpose of all special business meetings must be announced to the Congregation publicly one week prior to the date of the meeting. Only such matters as have been announced may be taken up for consideration and decision.

E. QUORUM

A quorum for any business meeting of the congregation shall be thirty percent of the resident members. Fifty percent of the members of the Elder Board shall constitute a quorum for Elder Board meetings.

F. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The annual Congregational Business meeting shall include an opportunity for:

1. The reading of God's Word and prayer.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting to be read and approved.
3. Reports from the Elder Board and Deacon Board.
4. Reports from the other ministry leaders.
5. Decisions on undecided, unfinished or tabled business.
6. Election of elders, deacons and other elected leaders.
7. Election of those committees the congregation deems presently necessary (e.g. Nominating, By-Laws Review, Financial Review, etc.).
8. New business for discussion:
 - a. First, that which is occasioned by the reports from the Elder Board, Deacon Board and other elected leaders.
 - b. Second, that which may be proposed by members at the meeting.
9. Closing prayer.

⁷ As voted on June 1, 2008 by the congregation

The rules of order contained in Robert's Rules of Order (revised) shall govern this organization's meetings when it is consistent with Scripture, its Constitution and Bylaws.

G. VOTING

Nominations for the Elder and Deacon Boards are not permitted from the floor.

All members 18 years of age or older are eligible to vote in all matters of business.

All matters shall be determined by a majority of those members present and voting except when otherwise specified in these Bylaws. The chairman of the meeting may exercise discretion as to the precise procedure of voting on a particular issue unless any voting member present requests a written ballot.

It is the desire of the congregation that elections for ministry bodies operate in such a way to promote incremental inclusion and retirement.

ARTICLE IV - AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Any proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be submitted in writing to the Elder Board, who, at its discretion, may propose them to the congregation. The proposed amendments must be published and publicly announced one week prior to the officially-called business meeting of the congregation in which the amendment is to be considered. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting at this meeting shall be necessary to ratify the amendment as part of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE V - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each year.