# Rockland Community Church

# BYLAWS

# Article 1 General Organization

The fundamental organization of the church is based on the revelation of God in Jesus, one God who is also threefold – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4: 2-6

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

The government of the church is vested in its members who are represented by the Board of Elders – see Rockland Constitution, Article 4.

# Article 2. Board of Elders

## A. Qualifications and Purpose

Elders must be men or women who are active members of Rockland, individuals of strong faith and good character (1 Timothy 3:1-7) and must agree to Rockland’s full doctrinal statement (Articles 5-7 in the Constitution and acknowledge Other Doctrinal Matters in the Elder Policies and Procedures). It is preferred Elders to have served as a Deacon prior to becoming an Elder

Elders are overseers, shepherds, and guardians of a church's doctrine (1 Peter 5:1-3, Acts 20:17, 28). Elders exist as the vanguard in protecting the doctrine of the teaching of the church (Acts 15:1-6). The elders of a church gather to pray over the needs of the church, shepherd those in need, and must be able to guide the teaching of the church. The Board of Elders shall prayerfully focus on the vision, direction and overall health of the church and be guided by God.

## B. Description and Election

The Board of Elders shall consist of the Lead Pastor and seven members of Rockland. Elders are elected to three-year terms at the annual meeting. Terms are to be staggered such that the term of approximately one-third of elders expire each year. An elder may serve two consecutive terms and is prohibited from serving as an elder for one year subsequent to finishing two terms.

## C. Function and Responsibilities

1. A Lead Elder shall be elected annually at the first elder meeting held after the annual meetingThe Lead Pastor shall not be eligible to be the Lead Elder.
2. The Clerk shall be responsible for taking minutes of each elder meeting and for transmitting the approved minutes to the appropriate church staff member for archiving.
3. Five affirmative votes are required to pass any action taken by the Elder Board. A quorum of five is required at each meeting. The Lead Pastor is a full voting member of the Board of Elders.
4. Elders shall determine policies and procedures used to govern meetings and general church processes. The policies and procedures shall be written and maintained by the appropriate staff person.
5. Elders shall establish ministry teams and provide appropriate guidance to those teams (see Article 3C).
6. Elders are responsible for reviewing and recommending the annual budget, including capital investments, to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.
7. Elders shall fill vacancies in all elective offices until the next congregational meeting.
8. Elders shall appoint, upon the opening of the Lead Pastoral position, a Pastoral Committee to select a candidate for the Lead Pastor. The committee shall be composed of at least five members of the Church, at least one of whom shall be an Elder. The committee shall report its findings directly to the Board of Elders.
9. Elders may terminate a member of the Pastorate, upon a determination of the Board of Elders made upon consultation with the remaining members of the Pastorate, that such member of the pastorate has or is acting detrimentally to the welfare of the Church, provided that the Lead Pastor may only be terminated upon a vote of the Congregation at a regular or special congregational meeting.
10. Elders may remove and replace a deacon or elder upon a determination that such deacon is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities.
11. The Lead Pastor is accountable to the Board of Elders (see Rockland Constitution, Article 4). The Lead Elder is responsible for conducting a written annual review of the Lead Pastor approved by the Elder Board.

# Article 3. Deacons

## A. Qualifications and Purpose

The Deacons shall be active members of Rockland and individuals of strong faith and good character (1 Timothy 3:8-12) as they are an important part of Rockland’s leadership. They are elected to serve on specific Ministry teams.

The term used biblically is ‘diakonos’ and is translated ‘servant’ (Matt 20:26, Rom 16:1, 1 Tim 3:8). Acts 6:1-6 describes the deacons as the ones appointed by the Apostles to take on the responsibility for helping the church with a pressing need. In this case distribution of food. The Deacons were selected because they “are well respected and full of the Spirit and wisdom”. Deacons are those individuals who have the ability to provide wise guidance, counsel and support to a specific ministry team in addition to being the ones who get the job done.

## B. Description and Election

Deacons make up ministry teams who support the pastors and staff of the church. Support for the staff occurs through wise counsel, prayer, direct activity and through organizing and directing various volunteer groups.

Deacons are elected to two-year terms at the annual meeting. Terms are to be staggered such that the term of approximately one-half of deacons in a specific ministry team expire each year. A Deacon may serve two consecutive terms and is prohibited from serving as a Deacon on that same team for one year.

## C. Function and Responsibilities

The Deacons shall:

1. Execute the mission of their ministry area within the church.
2. As part of the ministry team, work with the staff member to provide advice and counsel for the ministry team to which they are assigned.
3. Support and encourage the staff person or persons that are affiliated with their ministry team.

# Article 4. Ministry Teams

## A. General Responsibilities of the Ministry Teams

Ministry teams are created by the Board of Elders (see Article 3 of Elders By Laws) to support specific goals and objectives established by the Elder Board in consultation with the staff and Ministry team deacons. The Board of Elders may eliminate Ministry Teams no longer necessary to fulfill specific goals. Ministry teams are comprised of elected elders, deacons and affiliated staff. Specific responsibilities are detailed in the Policies and Procedures established by the Elder Board.

Ministry Teams shall:

1. Be responsible for establishing and guiding committees as necessary to achieve their goals.
2. Determine their own mode of procedure and seek out other persons to assist when necessary.
3. Meet as often as necessary with a majority of its members constituting a quorum.
4. Adhere to the following meeting guidelines: Any vote that is taken by the Ministry teams must pass by a majority of the members of the ministry team, regardless of the number of members present at a particular meeting.
5. Have the authority to spend up to the amount that is assigned to them in the annual budget.

# Article 5. Committees

## A. Committee Descriptions

Much of the work of Rockland Church shall be performed by various committees that are overseen by the Elder Board or relevant Ministry teams. Such committees will be formed on an as needed basis by the Ministry teams, or the Board of Elders. These shall be called general committees.

# Article 6. Other Lay Leadership Positions

## A. Clerk

The Church Clerk shall take the minutes of all congregational meetings and meetings of the Board of Elders and shall deliver such minutes to the appropriate staff member for archiving. The Clerk shall be elected at the annual congregational meeting for a term of two years with no term limits.

## B. Historian

The Church Historian shall be knowledgeable about Rockland history and preserve and protect the archives of the church consisting of items of a historical interest to the church, including photos. The Historian shall be elected at the annual congregational meeting for a term of three years, with no term limits.

## C. Eligibility

To be eligible to hold an elected position an individual shall be an active member of Rockland Community Church. No individual, other than the Clerk and Historian, shall concurrently hold more than one elected position.

# Article 7 Staff

A. Pastorate

The pastorate, consists of the Lead Pastor and such Associate Pastors and Assistant Pastors as may exist. The Lead Pastor is responsible to the Board of Elders (see Rockland Constitution Article 4). The other pastors and staff report to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall be a member of the Board of Elders, however, cannot serve as Lead Elder.

### (1). Resignation or Termination

The Lead, Associate, or Assistant Pastor shall give sixty days’ notice in case of a voluntary resignation and the Lead Pastor shall vacate the parsonage within the same period of time.

The church may request the resignation of the Lead Pastor by a two-thirds vote of the voting members who are present at a properly called congregational meeting and the relationship shall be dissolved within sixty days. The parsonage shall likewise be vacated by the Lead Pastor within sixty days.

An associate pastor or assistant pastor may be terminated for cause by the Lead Pastor with the concurrence of the board of Elders.

## B. Lead Pastor

### (1). Selection

A Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed to identify qualified ministers, select one who in their judgment shall be called to the Lead Pastor position, and discuss with him or her the terms and conditions of the call. The Board of Elders shall, upon selection of a candidate, introduce him or her to the congregation, and at a properly called congregational meeting and propose his or her election by the membership. A two-thirds vote of the members at that meeting shall constitute a call. When a candidate has accepted a call, he or she shall, be considered a member of the church.

### (2). Function and Duties

The Lead Pastor is responsible for achieving the goals and objectives established in consultation with the Board of Elders. His or her functional role is preaching, prayer, caring, shepherding, and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Acts 6:1-7 and Eph 4:11-14). Organizationally he or she reports to the Board of Elders and the staff of the church reports to him or her.

## C. Associate and Assistant Pastors

The number and roles of the Associate and Assistant pastors shall be determined by the Board of Elders in consultation with the Lead Pastor. Any Associate or Assistant Pastor may be hired on a part-time, interim or full-time basis.

### (1). Selection of an Associate or Assistant Pastor

### Associate and Assistant Pastors report to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board is responsible for forming a search committee to select of a qualified individual. That selection, however, must be approved by the Board of Elders.

### (2). Function and Duties

### Each Associate and Assistant Pastor shall serve on the staff of Rockland; be accountable to the Lead pastor; normally be responsible for a particular area of ministry within the church, as well as normal pastoral duties such as caring, shepherding, hospital visits, memorial services, weddings, in accordance with Rockland theology and policy.

## D. Church Staff

The church staff reports directly or indirectly to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor is responsible for organizing the staff such that the church effectively and efficiently achieves the goals and objectives agreed between the Board of Elders and the Lead Pastor.

The Lead Pastor is responsible for establishing job descriptions and compensation levels consistent with the approved annual budget.

# Article 8 Meetings

## A. Congregational Meetings

The purpose of the annual congregational meeting is to elect Elders, Deacons, and other lay leaders for the ensuing year; to adopt the annual budget; and to transact whatever other business may be necessary.

### B. The Official Church Year and Annual Congregational Meeting

The official year of the church shall begin on January first and end on December thirty-first. The annual congregational meeting shall be in February unless changed by the Board of Elders and thirty days’ notice is given to the membership.

### C. Special Meetings

Special congregational meetings shall be called by the Clerk upon the direction of the elders after a receipt of a written request from at least ten percent of members of the church or the Board of Elders.

## D. Decisions made by the congregation

The following decisions may only be made by the church in a congregational meeting:

1. Final approval of annual budget,
2. Calling or termination of the Lead Pastor,
3. Election of Elders, Deacons, and other elected lay leadership,
4. Constitution and bylaw changes.
5. A decision to join or affiliate with a specific denomination.

## E. Rules and Regulations of Congregational Meetings

A membership meeting which is called and conducted according to the following rules and regulations shall constitute a properly called congregational meeting:

### (1). Notices

1. The nature, purpose, place and time of the congregational meeting shall be set forth in writing and such notice communicated to each member family.
2. Notices for the annual congregational meeting shall be mailed or emailed to each member family not less than thirty days prior to the date of said called meeting and shall be communicated by other means for an equal period of time.
3. Notices for special congregational meetings must be communicated to all member families at least seventy-two hours prior to the meeting time.

### (2). Voting

1. All voting members of the Church shall be entitled to vote (see Article 9 of the Constitution).
2. All voting shall be done by voice unless otherwise requested by the lead Elder.
3. A majority vote shall be decisive on all matters.

### (3). Quorum

A quorum shall be required at all congregational meetings and shall consist of ten percent of the voting members of the church.

### (4). General

1. Roberts Rules of Order, as revised, shall govern all meetings.
2. All congregational meetings shall be presided over by the Lead Elder or the Lead Elder’s designated substitute.

# Article 9 General Issues

## A Policy and Procedures Document

The Elder Board shall create and maintain a document or series of documents that describes operational policies and procedures for Rockland. This documentation will be maintained by appropriate church staff and made available to all members as requested.