



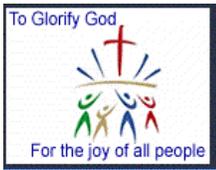
TO GLORIFY GOD
for the Joy of All People

SSEFC
Constitution
& Bylaws

May 21

2017

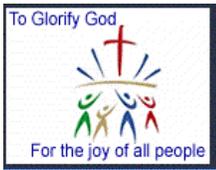
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SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Table of Contents

Constitution	3
PREAMBLE	3
ARTICLE I - NAME	3
ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION	3
ARTICLE III - PURPOSE	3
ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH	3
ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP	4
ARTICLE VI - PROPERTY	5
ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS	5
Bylaws	6
Article I – Membership	6
A. Admission	6
B. Categories	6
C. Responsibilities	6
D. Accountability	7
Article II – Staff	7
A. Senior Pastor	7
B. Associate Ministers	8
C. Staff Directors	9
D. Support Staff	9
Article III – Meetings	10
A. Annual Meetings	10
B. Other Meetings	10
C. Protocol	10
Article IV – Officers of the Congregation	11
A. The Chairman	11
B. The Vice Chairman	11
C. The Secretary	11
D. The Financial Overseer	11
Article V – Overseers	12
A. Qualifications	12
B. Selection	12
C. Composition and Organization	12
D. Responsibilities	12
E. Termination	13
Article VI – Teams	13
A. Team leaders	14
B. Staff	14
Article VII – Committees	14
A. Standing committees	14
B. Special committees	14
Appendix	16
Revision History	16



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Constitution

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the South Suburban Evangelical Free Church, in order to more effectively carry out the commission given by Jesus Christ to His church in Matthew 28:18-20, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the "South Suburban Evangelical Free Church."

ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION

A. Authority

The congregation, at its annual, quarterly, and special business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this organization.

B. Affiliation

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America through its North Central District Conference. This church shall also be entitled to send delegates to their conferences, support their home and foreign missions, and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ in any measure the church may officially decide.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in every way prescribed or approved by the Holy Scriptures, and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent work as the Constitution and By-Laws of this organization may determine.

ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith of this organization shall be the same as that of the Evangelical Free Church of America, which reads as follows:

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

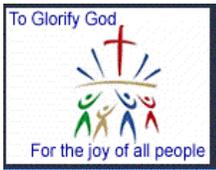
9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall be composed of those individuals who confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior and whose conduct is in accord with their confession.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

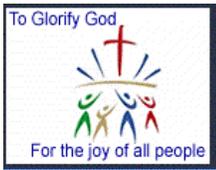
ARTICLE VI - PROPERTY

- A. This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold, such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Minnesota and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.
- B. In case of division of the church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and By-Laws.
- C. In case of dissolution of the church organization, the property shall be assigned to the North Central District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America, to enable said conference to renew the work or use the value thereof for further gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three (3) years, or when less than six (6) members remain.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a regular business meeting of the church at least three (3) months prior to the annual meeting. At the succeeding annual meeting they can be acted upon, but for adoption must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership presenting and voting.
- B. Articles IV, V, VI, and VII are irrevocable and unalterable. Their contents can never be changed.

Approved by the congregation on May 2008



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Bylaws

Article I – Membership

A. Admission

For admission to membership individuals must:

1. Meet the requirements for membership stated in Article V of the Constitution and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of South Suburban Evangelical Free Church (SSEFC).
2. Complete the SSEFC membership class or its equivalent.
3. Be personally interviewed by an Overseer to affirm the applicant's faith and spiritual life.
4. Following communication from the Overseers to the congregation, be accepted after a two-week period if there are no objections.

The Senior Pastor, Associate Ministers, and their spouses become members upon beginning their ministry.

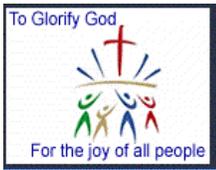
B. Categories

1. Active members actively fulfill membership responsibilities at SSEFC and are not members of any other church. They have voting privileges.
2. Associate members are those whose life circumstances prevent them from attending and/or supporting SSEFC on a regular ongoing basis or require them to maintain membership in another church. They do not have voting privileges.

C. Responsibilities

Members will be responsible to:

1. Pray for and respect the servant leadership of the Overseers and Staff.
2. Attend worship and congregational meetings regularly.
3. Support the church and its members through prayer, tithes and offerings, and exercise of spiritual gifts.
4. Keep the church office informed of a current permanent address.
5. Vote to approve the following:
 - a. Employment of the Senior Pastor.
 - b. Buying and selling of property.
 - c. Annual church budget.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

- d. Overseers.
- e. New members.

D. Accountability

1. Discipline will be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Overseers as referenced in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5, II Corinthians 2:5-11, and Galatians 6:1-2. Upon recommendation by the Overseers, an unrepentant member may be dismissed from membership by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.
2. Any member absent for 12 months from whom neither communication nor support has been received will be referred to the Overseers, who will attempt to contact and interact with them regarding membership responsibilities. If Overseer contact attempts are unsuccessful, the Overseers will notify the congregation. After a two-week period with no objections, the individual will be removed from the membership.
3. Withdrawal from membership will be granted upon request by the individual to the Overseers, and the congregation will be notified.

Article II – Staff

A. Senior Pastor

1. Qualifications

The Senior Pastor must:

- a. Be a man of established and true Christian character as described in I Timothy 3:1-7, 4:12-15, II Timothy 2:15, and Titus 1:5-9.
- b. Be in full accord with the Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws of SSEFC.
- c. Be ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America or a like-minded denomination or be willing to move his credentials to the EFCA within a reasonable length of time.

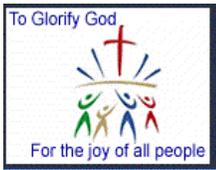
2. Selection

Upon recommendation by the Pastoral Search Committee, the Senior Pastor shall be called by a 3/4 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.

3. Responsibilities

The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Overseers, shall:

- a. Faithfully preach and teach the Word of God.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

- b. Lead the church.
 - c. Communicate and execute the mission and vision of SSEFC.
 - d. Oversee all church staff.
 - e. Be an ex-officio member of all committees and teams.
 - f. Be a voting member of the Overseer Board and be accountable to the Overseers.
4. Termination
- a. The Senior Pastor must give at least 30 days written notice of resignation to the Overseers.
 - b. In cases of suspected moral or ethical failure that would justify a suspension or revocation of EFCA ministry credentials, the Overseers may suspend the Senior Pastor and conduct an investigation. If the investigation confirms the suspected failure, the Overseers may dismiss the Senior Pastor.
 - c. Termination for doctrinal error or any other cause may be recommended by the Overseers after attempts to resolve the issues in question have failed and the Senior Pastor has been given opportunity to resign. The Senior Pastor may be retained by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.
 - d. A severance package may be negotiated by the Overseers, considering the reason for separation, the pastor's length of tenure at SSEFC, the financial condition of the church, and any other factors the Overseers deem relevant.

B. Associate Ministers

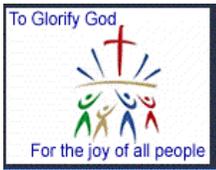
1. Qualifications

Associate Ministers must:

- a. Meet the same Scriptural qualifications as the Senior Pastor, except for gender.
- b. Be in full accord with the Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws of SSEFC.
- c. Be credentialed by the Evangelical Free Church of America or a like-minded denomination or be willing to move their credentials to the EFCA within a reasonable length of time.

2. Selection

- a. Upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Overseers, an Associate Minister position may be created by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.
- b. An Associate Minister candidate shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor and called by a 2/3 majority vote of the Overseers.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

3. Responsibilities

Associate Ministers shall:

- a. Be responsible to oversee specific ministry areas.
- b. Form and lead ministry teams as needed to accomplish their duties in accordance with the mission and vision of SSEFC as established by the Overseers.
- c. Be accountable to the Senior Pastor.

4. Termination

Associate Ministers may be dismissed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Overseers.

C. Staff Directors

These positions may be paid or unpaid.

1. Qualifications

Staff Directors must be active SSEFC members in full accord with the Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws of SSEFC.

2. Selection

Staff Directors shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Overseers.

3. Responsibilities

Staff Directors shall:

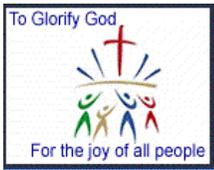
- a. Coordinate major task areas within the church.
- b. Form and lead ministry teams as needed to accomplish their duties in accordance with the mission and vision of SSEFC as established by the Overseers.
- c. Be accountable to the Senior Pastor.

4. Termination

Staff Directors may be dismissed by the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Overseers.

D. Support Staff

Support Staff, paid or unpaid, shall be hired, supervised, and terminated (when necessary) as directed by the Senior Pastor, with advisement as appropriate from Overseers and/or Team Leaders.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Article III – Meetings

A. Annual Meetings

Congregational meetings to celebrate God's work shall be held during or near every May and November. The May meeting business shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Approval of the fiscal church budget (July-June), which shall be available to the congregation at least 2 Sundays prior to the meeting.
2. Recognition of new members.
3. Election of Overseers and other positions as needed.
4. Reports from the Senior Pastor, Associate Ministers, and others, as requested by the Overseers.

B. Other Meetings

Other congregational meetings may be called as necessary by:

1. The Overseers.
2. A 2/3 majority of votes cast at a previous congregational meeting.
3. The Church Chairman upon written request from 15% of the church membership.

C. Protocol

1. Notice of the date, time, and agenda of all congregational meetings must be given at least 2 Sundays prior to the meeting. Any significant additions to the published agenda must be submitted to the Church Chairman at least 2 days prior to the meeting.
2. Members must be at least 18 years old and present at the meeting to vote.
3. A quorum shall consist of at least 15% of the church membership. A quorum must be re-established following any recess longer than 20 minutes.
4. Unless otherwise specified, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority of votes cast. Secret ballots shall be used for elections, calling and affirmation of staff, terminations, and any other sensitive issues.
5. A motion for any non-budgeted financial expenditure or a motion to change the current or proposed fiscal budget cannot be approved by the congregation without prior review by the Overseers unless the individual item is equal to or less than 2% of the budget and the total cumulative deviation is equal to or less than 5% of the budget.
6. Parliamentary procedure shall be generally in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, the overriding consideration being the grace, fruit, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Article IV – Officers of the Congregation

The following active SSEFC members will represent the church in legal matters as necessary. The Senior Pastor is not eligible for these offices.

A. The Chairman shall:

1. Be appointed by the Overseers from among their number.
2. Chair the Overseer meetings and preside over congregational meetings.
3. Give legal notice of all meetings as necessary.
4. Issue credentials as necessary to members representing the church.

B. The Vice Chairman shall:

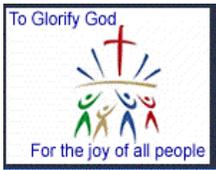
1. Be appointed by the Overseers from among their number.
2. Assist the Chairman and perform all duties of the Chairman when necessary.

C. The Secretary shall:

1. Be appointed by the Overseers from among their number.
2. Oversee recording of minutes for Overseer meetings and congregational meetings.
3. Oversee maintenance of the following within the church office:
 - a. Copies of Overseer meeting minutes. Those not deemed confidential are to be posted in the church.
 - b. All congregational meeting minutes, to be made available to members upon request.
 - c. A church membership register.

D. The Financial Overseer shall:

1. Be appointed by the Overseers from among their number to act as legal Financial Officer.
2. In conjunction with the Senior Pastor, appoint or hire, oversee, and terminate (when necessary) a Finance/Accounting Team to perform the following functions: Stewardship, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Bookkeeping, and Payroll.
3. Oversee and apply financial policies, procedures, and budgets approved by the Overseers and/or the congregation.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Article V – Overseers

A. Qualifications

An individual nominated for the position of Overseer must:

1. Meet the spiritual requirements for leadership as stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and be in full accord with SSEFC's Statement of Faith.
2. Be a spiritually mature man and active SSEFC member who has regularly attended SSEFC for at least one year and has demonstrated leadership ability and consistent Christian witness.
3. Be willing and able to commit to the priority of serving as an Overseer.

B. Selection

1. A written recommendation for the position of Overseer may be submitted by any member to the Nominating Committee at least 40 days before the election.
2. Information about Overseer nominees must be provided to the congregation at least 2 Sundays prior to the election, at which the nominee must be affirmed by a 2/3 majority of votes cast.
3. If there are no candidates who meet the qualifications and are willing to accept the nomination, the vacant Overseer position(s) shall go unfilled until such candidates are available.

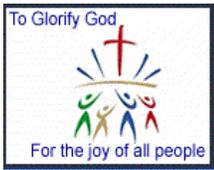
C. Composition and Organization

1. The Overseer Board shall consist of no more than 10 members and no fewer than 7 members including the Senior Pastor.
2. Terms of office are 3 years with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms, after which an Overseer must be off the Board for 1 year before he is eligible to serve again. Elections shall be held such that approximately an equal number of positions are filled annually. If an Overseer is appointed to fill an unexpired term, he is eligible to serve for 2 additional consecutive terms.
3. A quorum shall be 2/3 rounded down of the total Overseer membership. Overseers shall work toward unanimity and consensus.

D. Responsibilities

The Overseers shall:

1. Be devoted to prayer and the ministry of God's Word (Acts 6:4) by:
 - a. Reading and studying God's Word and praying, individually and together.
 - b. Ensuring that all aspects of SSEFC's ministry faithfully proclaim God's Word.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

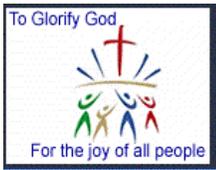
- c. Providing for the conduct of worship services including the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- d. Praying for the sick in accordance with James 5:14-15.
2. Shepherd God's flock (Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2-4) by:
 - a. Refuting false doctrine.
 - b. Rebuking inappropriate conduct and administering church discipline.
 - c. Communicating needs within the congregation.
 - d. Holding one another accountable and encouraging one another, the Senior Pastor, and Associate Ministers.
3. Manage the church (I Timothy 3:5) by:
 - a. Establishing the mission and vision of SSEFC.
 - b. Establishing and supporting ministry teams in the areas of missions, church finances, building maintenance and upkeep, and any other functions deemed necessary.
 - c. Reviewing and assessing need for staff expansion or reduction.
 - d. Preparing the fiscal budget for approval by the congregation. The Overseers may enact budget deviations up to 5% of the current budget during one ministry year without prior approval by the congregation.
 - e. Annually evaluating the Senior Pastor and receiving staff evaluations from the Senior Pastor.
 - f. Establishing and maintaining SSEFC's Policy Manual, to include policies regarding use of church funds and property, employment, and legal matters, which shall be available to the congregation for reference.

E. Termination

An Overseer may be removed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Overseers or a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.

Article VI – Teams

Teams are the basic organizational structure for ministry. All property and funds held by teams belong to SSEFC unless otherwise designated by the Overseers.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

A. Team leaders shall:

1. Be individuals who are involved in the ministry they coordinate.
2. Be accountable to the church staff and operate in accordance with the mission and vision of SSEFC as established by the Overseers.

B. Staff shall oversee teams by:

1. Working with the Overseers to encourage individuals to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in using their gifts and talents to develop and serve within ministry teams that meet needs and promote spiritual growth throughout the church.
2. Ensuring that team leaders meet the spiritual requirements for membership at SSEFC and support the Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws of SSEFC.

Article VII – Committees

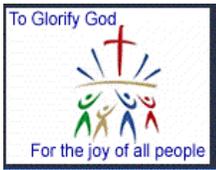
A. Standing committees

These permanent committees function on a continuing or intermittent basis. Each shall appoint its own chair. Members are elected annually for no more than 6 consecutive one-year terms (or removed if necessary) by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.

1. The Auditing Committee shall:
 - a. Consist of 2 active SSEFC members including its chair.
 - b. Oversee an annual audit of church financial records and any other audits requested by the Overseers, also cooperating with any outside audits.
 - c. Report its results to the congregation.
2. The Nominating Committee shall:
 - a. Consist of the Senior Pastor, 2 Overseers, and 4 active SSEFC members.
 - b. Select candidates for Overseer and other elected positions as needed.
 - c. Consider all Scriptural and practical requirements for each office to be filled.

B. Special committees

These committees are established for a specific purpose and dissolve when their assigned task is complete. Each shall appoint its own chair. Members are elected to serve on the committee until dissolution (or removed if necessary) by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

1. The Pastoral Search Committee shall:
 - a. Consist of the Church Chairman or an Overseer of his choosing, 2 additional Overseers, and 4 active SSEFC members.
 - b. Follow procedures recommended by the Overseers to select and present one candidate at a time for Senior Pastor until a new Senior Pastor is installed.
2. The Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee shall:
 - a. Consist of 2 Overseers and 3 active SSEFC members.
 - b. After consulting with the Senior Pastor, Associate Ministers, and Overseers, present its proposed Constitution and Bylaws revisions at least 2 Sundays before a congregational meeting at which those revisions may be approved by a 2/3 majority of votes cast.

Approved by the congregation on May 21, 2017

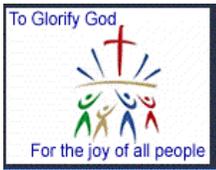


SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

Appendix

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
3/17/2012	Initial Draft	Presented Draft to Overseer Board and Staff.	2011 - 2012 CBRC
3/30/2012	Revised Draft	Made updates based on CBRC conversations on Overseer Board and Staff questions from 3/17/2012 meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified Credentials for Sr. Pastor and Associate Pastor • Added Associate Minister position information. • Clarified Financial Overseer description. 	2011 - 2012 CBRC
4/17/2012	Revised Draft to create Proposed Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Article I.D.2 for More clarity on termination from membership • Updated Article II.B.3 for clarity on associate pastor / minister responsibilities. • Updated Article III.B.3 Changed back to 15% of church membership to call congregational meeting. • Update Article IV.D.2.A from Overseer to administrate. 	2011 – 2012 CBRC
5/2012	Revised Proposed Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Pastoral staff to Pastoral/Ministerial staff • Simplified the use of secret ballots by updating Article III.C.4 to include terminations and removed secret ballots references from other articles. • Changed Article I.D Termination word to Accountability 	2011 – 2012 CBRC
6/2012	Revised Proposed Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Operations Council resulted with the following tweaks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article I.B – rearranged wording for clarification of definitions for member and associate member. ○ Article II.D – Support Staff – updated to include either paid or unpaid positions. ○ Article III.A.1 – changed “annual” to “fiscal” and added ‘July – June’. ○ Article III.C.5 – changed “annual” to “fiscal”. ○ Article V.C.2 – changed 1/3 to an “equal number”. ○ Article V.D.3 – changed “annual” to “fiscal”. 	2011 – 2012 CBRC
7/2012	Revised Proposed Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Article II.B to separate the Associate Pastor/Associate Minister roles for clarification on gender concerns. As a result Article II.C Staff Directors is now referenced as Article II.D and Article II.D Support Staff is now referenced as Article II.E 	2011 – 2012 CBRC
9/2012	Revised Proposed Draft	Updates due to Congregational feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrected a few things that were overlooked, i.e. SSEFC definition, Teams definition, Staff Directors appointed in consultation with overseers, accountability for people serving. • Retracted proposed changes in favor of consistency with our current bylaws, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Ministers are called and dismissed by the overseers, not the congregation. • Collapsed Associate Pastors and Associate Ministers into one category called Associate Ministers, providing more flexibility and less confusion. Made the appropriate corrections throughout the bylaws to align with this terminology. 	2011 – 2012 CBRC
10/2012	Approved	Bylaws revision approved by SSEFC Congregation on October 21, 2012.	SSEFC Congregation



SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

5/2017	Revised Draft	Overseer Board recommendations resulted in the following revisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article I.A.4 – updated to approve members after a 2-week period without objections. • Article I.D.2 and 3 – updated to remove members after 12 months of unsuccessful contact attempts by the overseers and a 2-week period without objections. • Article III.A – changed congregational meetings from Feb., May, and Oct. to May and Nov. • Article IV.D.2 – updated to provide more flexibility and clarity for the Financial Overseer and team. 	2017 CBRC
5/21/2017	Approved	Bylaws revision approved by SSEFC Congregation on May 21, 2017.	SSEFC Congregation

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