



Church
Governance

AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR ECO CHURCHES

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RESOURCE FOR ECO CHURCHES



Introduction to the Guiding Principles: Sample ECO Church

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ 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 4:11-13).

***The following is excerpted from our Discovery 101 – Discovering Membership course that people seeking membership in the church go through. The following are the guiding principles for ECO Church.*

"Let there be real harmony among you so there won't be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose." – 1 Corinthians 1:10 LB

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Why the Church Exists

To Love God, Love Each Other and Share God's Love With the World.

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

What We Do As A Church

The purpose of our church is summarized in the following sentence:

1

We are committed to being a Worshiping community who are Seeking those far from God, Strengthening followers of Christ, and Serving in ministry together.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

What We Believe

In essential beliefs - we have unity.

"There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all..." – Ephesians 4:4-6

In non-essential beliefs - we have liberty.

"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters...Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls...So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. – Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22

In all our beliefs - we show charity.

*"...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains - but have **no love**, I amount to nothing at all."*
– 1 Corinthians 13:2 PH

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE:

Scripture

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Trinity

We believe that there is one living God, and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-6).

- a. God the Father: We believe in God the Father: an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of man, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Psalm 90:2; 1 Peter 1:2).
- b. God the Son: We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He is eternal and shares all of the attributes of deity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as God's only begotten Son. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit to be born of a virgin, Mary. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into Heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and personal, visible return to earth (Matthew 1:22,23; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30).
- c. God the Holy Spirit: We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person and shares all the attributes of deity with the Father and the Son. He came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ, and that He is an abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide (John 16:7-13).

Salvation

We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, deserving of eternal condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated and become children of God by the Holy Spirit (John 1:12; Romans 5:6-8).

The Church

We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. It consists of all regenerated persons. We believe in local churches as visible manifestations of the invisible Body of Christ, the Church Universal. We believe that God has given the task of evangelism of the world to the Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22).

Christian Living

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others. Believers are called to live holy and godly lives (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 1:5-6; Matthew 22:37-40).

Ordinances

We believe that the ordinances of the New Testament church are communion (the Lord's Supper) and water baptism for believers by immersion as a public act of confession of faith (Acts 8:36-39; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgement, the eternal joy of the saved, and the endless suffering and separation of the lost (Acts 1:11; Isaiah 9:6-7; 2 Peter 3:7; John 3:16).

Christian Liberties

We believe in the personal Lordship of Christ over individual believers. Each believer must give account for himself to Christ. Therefore, in matters not strictly defined in Scripture, convictions of one should not be imposed on others (Romans 14).

OUR VALUES STATEMENT

What We Practice

Values are the nonnegotiable characteristics we want reflected in our life together as the Body of Christ. When we look at values, we are determining who we want to be - that is, the kind of character we wish develop.

Prayer

**We believe that through prayer we come to know the heart of God and therefore prayer will permeate all that we do.*

This includes the concepts of prayer partners for pastoral staff and ministries, intercessory prayer for the church, community and the world (Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 4:2; James 5:13-16).

Servanthood

**We believe that sacrificial servanthood embodies what it means to be a mature follower of Christ and therefore we will seek to serve each other and the community with humility.*

This includes the concepts of benevolence ministries, ministry to the poor and servant leadership. We will constantly strive to serve one another in love and to serve our community (Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:5-11; Galatians 5:13-14).

Grace

**We believe that healthy relationships are characterized by grace and therefore we will extend grace to those inside and outside the church.*

This includes the concepts of developing a heart devotion to Jesus Christ out of gratefulness for his love and the cultivation of caring, loving, and nurturing relationships with others (Luke 10:30-35; Acts 4:33-35; Romans 5:20-21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Colossians 4:6; Titus 2:11-14).

Stewardship

**We believe that because God gave everything to redeem us, we, in turn, owe all that we have and are to Him and therefore out of gratefulness and obedience to God endeavor to be faithful stewards of our finances and giftedness.*

This includes the concepts of honoring God with our time, treasure, and talents - i.e. stewardship through involvement, tithing, and spiritual gifts in service to God (2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Ephesians 4:7-16).

Celebration

**We believe that following Christ brings joy and fullness and therefore we will celebrate the blessings of God.*

This includes the concepts of life transforming worship, recognition of the giftedness and service of all ministers, and the celebration of those who commit their lives to Christ (John 10:10; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 3:16-17; Luke 15:7).

Lifestyle Evangelism

**We believe that lost people matter to God and therefore should matter to us.*

This includes the concepts of relationship-based evangelism, evangelism as a process and cultural sensitivity, and relevance in ministry to the lost (Luke 15, 5:30-32; Matthew 18:12-14).

Lay Ministry

**We believe that every follower of Christ has been uniquely gifted for service by the Holy Spirit - ministry to the community and in the church will be carried out according to the gifts of God's people.*

This includes the concepts of ministry being the privilege and responsibility of all believers, the commitment to discovery of spiritual gifts, abilities and passion, and the opportunity to minister according to spiritual giftedness (1 Peter 4:10-11, Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

Unity

**We believe that followers of Christ are called to be a community of faith that lives together in unity.*

This includes the concepts of spiritual leadership, team ministry, relationship building, and small group ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13, Psalm 133:1, John 17:20, Romans 15:5, Ephesians 4:3-6).

Bible Centered

**We believe that God transforms lives through the understanding and application of His Word.*

This includes the concepts of discipleship, developing spiritual maturity, leadership development, and transformational ministry through gifted Bible teaching (Romans 10:17, Psalm 119:9-11, 2 Timothy 3:14-17).

Family Focused

**We believe that healthy families build healthy churches and healthy communities. We commit to strengthening all levels and areas of family relationships from babies to grandparents.*

This includes the concepts of teaching, training, and support of families and individuals in all life stages in our church and community (Ephesians 5 & 6; Hebrews 13:4).

OUR VISION

What We Are Becoming

We are a family of believers called to serve our world by:

Sharing the Hope of Jesus Christ, Providing Help in dealing with life issues and, Being a Home where people are connected in community, growth and ministry.



A “Carver Style” ECO Church Sample Guiding Principles

This document defines the principles by which Sample ECO Church (“Church” herein) leadership pursues its missions. It is divided into three sections:

- **Mission Principles** define what the mission is and broadly how the Church will accomplish that mission;
- **Boundary Principles** set boundaries around the Pastor/Head of Staff and staff that they shall not cross in the pursuit of the mission; and
- **Accountability Principles** define how the session will hold the Pastor/Head of Staff and staff accountable to their performance in the pursuit of the mission, and how it will hold itself accountable to the mission goals.

While this is a “living document,” the session will in particular monitor and adjust the Mission Principles as they discern the will of God for the Church. It is not intended as an “instruction manual”, rather it sets out the guidelines by which we set goals, pursue, and monitor our performance against our mission, keeping us within prudent behavioral and operational boundaries.

Mission Principles

The Mission of the Church is to invite, inspire, and ignite all who will come to Christ by holding fast to our core beliefs and by building up the body of believers in reliance on the Word of God and His Holy Spirit. Our Vision for carrying out our mission is to be salt and light in our community and in the world by sharing the Good News of salvation in Christ and by reaching out to help in His Name (Matthew 5:13-14).

As we live into this vision and mission, the broad culture we are seeking to create is a missional one, where we are disciples of Jesus making disciples of Jesus. Identifying and equipping a core group of people who can help shape this disciple-making culture is key. Within the larger culture that we seek to develop at the Church, we believe the following areas need particular attention:

- Facilities
 - Prioritize facility improvements
 - Raise capital funds and begin improvements
- Children
 - Create environment where kids want to be
 - Special events that bring kids and parents together
 - Growth – both spiritual and numerical
- Youth
 - Create environment where youth want to be
 - Reaching students where they are (school, activities, etc.)
 - Growth – both spiritual and numerical
 - Regular participation in ministry and outreach of the Church
- Adult Discipleship

- Vital adult classes during both services
 - Classes that encourage outward focus and disciples making disciples
 - Small groups strengthened and encouraged to further reflect the Mission Principles
 - Outreach and Communication
 - Become more missional and outward focused as the Church body
 - Be present and visible as Christians in the community and in our individual neighborhoods
 - Include outreach in all church activities and events
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Boundary Principles

The Pastor/Head of Staff's primary responsibility is to provide leadership for the congregation to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ...grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:12,16). The Pastor/Head of Staff together with the staff shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, unethical, or unbiblical within the ministry of the congregation.

Specifically, they shall not:

- **Biblical/Ethical** – Stray from upholding the highest standards of biblical teaching, ethics, and morality, and they shall not allow, encourage, or condone any teaching or practice that is unbiblical.
 - **Lawful** – Allow any decision, practice, or activity within the ministry of the congregation that is illegal.
 - **Prudent** – Cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.
 - **Finances and Personnel** – Stray from the budgetary guidance established by the session or the policies and procedures set forth in the church manuals for Finance and Personnel.
 - **Integrity** – Jeopardize the integrity or public image of the Church.
 - **Communication with session** – Permit the session to be uninformed or unsupported in its work. In order to protect the session and the Church from the sudden loss of the Pastor/Head of Staff's services, the Pastor/Head of Staff will have at least one other ministry staff member familiar with the session and the Pastor/Head of Staff's role and processes.
 - **Conflicts of Interest** – Allow a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict exists in financial, personnel, ministry, or any other matter of church leadership, the leader shall disclose the conflict to the supervisory body and that supervisor or supervisory board shall determine its resolution.
 - **Constitution and Bylaws** – Act in any way contrary to the constitution or bylaws of our church and denomination.
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Accountability Principles

The responsibility of the session, before God, is to (1) discern God's guidance and His will for the congregation and ministries of the Church, (2) keep the Guiding Principles updated and relevant to the Church and God's leading, (3) evaluate the progress of the Church in living into the Mission Principles as led by the Pastor/Head of Staff, and (4) be disciplined in its own role and responsibilities in the life of the Church.

1. Discernment

- a. *Devotion to Prayer and the Word of God* – Under the teaching and guidance of the Pastor/Head of Staff, the session shall continually seek the wisdom and leading of Christ as the Lord of the Church, communicating their sense of discernment to the Pastor/Head of Staff and the congregation regularly.
- b. The session shall maintain an active connection with the congregation and the broader community to understand the spiritual needs and discern how the Church can serve people more effectively.

2. Guiding Principles – Through prayer, discernment, and the evaluation of the progress of the Church in its ministry, the session will update the Guiding Principles as often as need to keep them relevant so that the Church can effectively live into its Mission and Vision.

3. Budget – The financial budget for the Church shall be developed by the Pastor/Head of Staff and staff and submitted to the session for review and approval.

4. Monitoring the Performance of the Pastor/Head of Staff

- a. *Unity of Control* – Only decisions of the session acting as a whole by consensus or majority vote are binding on the Pastor/Head of Staff.
- b. *Delegation to the Pastor/Head of Staff* – The session will instruct the Pastor/Head of Staff through written principles that prescribe the mission to be achieved and establish boundaries to be observed, allowing the Pastor/Head of Staff to use reasonable interpretation of these principles.
- c. *Authority of the Pastor/Head of Staff* – The Pastor/Head of Staff will act as the Head of Staff and has authority to lead the staff and congregation in all aspects of fulfilling the Mission Principles.
 - i. This authority includes establishing, directing, modifying, or ceasing ministry activities.
 - ii. This authority includes establishing the structure of the church staff and selecting and managing all staff personnel in accordance with the church's Personnel policies. Volunteer staff positions may be created at the discretion of the Pastor/Head of Staff. Budget for paid staff positions must be approved by the session. Ordained positions must be created and filled following denominational policy and procedure.
- d. *Accountability of the Pastor/Head of Staff* – The Pastor/Head of Staff is the session's primary link to operational achievement and conduct and is accountable to the session for the performance of the staff and the success of all ministries of the Church.
- e. *Annual Goals of the Pastor/Head of Staff* – The Pastor/Head of Staff will write and submit to the session, for review and approval, measurable goals each year that correspond to each of session's Mission Principles.

- f. *Performance Review of the Pastor/Head of Staff* – At least annually, the session shall review the results achieved by the Pastor/Head of Staff on each of the annual goals together with the Mission and Boundary Principles. Salary increases, other compensation changes, or corrective action shall all be based on the results of these reviews.
- 5. **Governance of the Session** – The session shall conduct itself with discipline and integrity with regard to its own process of governance, always keeping in view the Mission and Vision of the Church.
 - a. *Governance Style* – The session will govern with an emphasis on:
 - i. Outward vision rather than internal preoccupation
 - ii. Consideration of diversity in viewpoints
 - iii. Strategic leadership rather than administrative details
 - iv. Clear distinction of session, Pastor/Head of Staff, and staff roles
 - v. Individual elders are to submit to the decisions of the session
 - vi. Future rather than past or present
 - vii. Proactivity rather than reactivity
 - b. *Session Elders' Code of Conduct*
 - i. Session elders seek to be faithful to the interests of Jesus Christ regarding those they have been called to serve. This commitment supersedes any personal or group interest among our outside participants in the church's services. A member of session must disclose any conflict of interest and withdraw from any decision-making affected by it.
 - ii. Members of session shall honor the principles and decisions of the session acting as a whole. They shall not foster dissent or attempt to exercise individual authority over the staff or congregation.
 - iii. Session elders shall respect the confidentiality of sensitive issues and shall avoid facilitating gossip or other triangulation of people involved.
 - c. *Responsibility of the Elder for Accountability* – An active elder shall be appointed by the session each year to assure the integrity of the session's process for monitoring the performance of the Pastor/Head of Staff.



Sample Guiding Principles

Mission Principles

MP1.0 Comprehensive Mission Statement

In order to glorify God by bearing much fruit, ECO Church exists to lead people into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ. ECO Church will do this by growing warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry, and larger through evangelism.

MP1.1 Component: Worship

The highest priority of ECO Church shall be demonstrating love and commitment to Jesus Christ.

MP1.2 Component: Evangelism

The second highest priority of ECO Church shall be reaching people in the community who need to be welcomed into the body of Christ, whether seekers or unchurched believers, and sending out missionaries, empowering each church member for a personal life mission in the world, and planting new churches.

MP1.3 Component: Discipleship

A significant priority of ECO Church shall be helping believers to become grounded in the Christian faith and to grow in their participation with the body of Christ.

MP1.4 Component: Ministry

A significant priority of ECO Church shall be equipping and deploying each believer for a ministry by developing their God-given gifts, talents, and experiences.

MP1.5 Component: Fellowship

A significant priority of ECO Church shall be helping others develop meaningful relationships with other believers and connecting church members in small groups.

Boundary Principles

BP1.0 Comprehensive Boundary Statement

The Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, unethical, or unbiblical.

BP1.1 Component: Biblical and Moral Integrity

With regard to the teaching, leadership, and membership of the church, the Senior Pastor shall not fail to uphold high standards of biblical teaching and morality.

BP1.2 Component: Financial Planning and Budgeting

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the board's Mission Principles, risk financial jeopardy, or fail to be derived from a multiyear plan.

BP1.3 Component: Financial Condition and Activities

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial conditions and activities, the Senior Pastor shall not allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in Mission Principles.

Detail BP 1.3.1 Component: Check Signing Procedure

The Senior Pastor shall not release any check without two signatures. The Senior Pastor and members of the management shall not sign any check written to themselves. The Senior Pastor shall not release any check over \$2,500.00 without the consent of the board chairperson or in the event of the chairperson's absence, the board secretary.

Detail BP1.3.2 Component: Financial Reports

The Senior Pastor shall provide the Board of Directors with financial reports at least on a quarterly basis.

BP1.4 Component: Treatment of Members

With respect to interactions with members or potential members, the Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decision that are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.

BP1.5 Component: Compensation and Benefits

With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, contract worker, and volunteers, the Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image.

BP1.6 Component: Treatment of Staff

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Senior Pastor may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair, undignified, or unlawful.

BP1.7 Component: Communication and Support to the Board

The Senior Pastor shall not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

BP1.8 Component: Emergency Senior Pastor Succession

In order to protect the board from the sudden loss of Senior Pastor services, the Senior Pastor may have no fewer than two other ministry staff members familiar with board and Senior Pastor issues and processes.

Accountability Principles

AP1.0 Comprehensive Accountability Statement

The responsibility of the board before God, on behalf of people of ECO Church and the surrounding region who need to be led to Christ and nurtured in Him, is to see that ECO Church through the leadership of its Senior Pastor, (1) achieves the fulfillment of its Mission Principles, and (2) avoids violation of its Boundary Principles.

AP1.1 Component: Stewardship to Christ for Those He Calls Us to Serve

The board shall maintain an active connection the “moral ownership” of the church: Christ and the people he has called his church to serve.

AP1.1.1 Detail: Community Research and Public Relations

The board will invest significant resources each year to enhance its understanding of the needs of people in the community and to enhance the church’s reputation of service to the community.

AP1.1.2 Detail: Church Feedback and Assessment

The board will collect and/or review input and feedback from members, attenders, and non-returning visitors to better understand their needs. Every three years or less, the board will arrange a full church assessment by a competent consulting group.

AP1.1.3 Detail: Devotion to Prayer and the Word of God

Under the teaching and guidance of the Senior Pastor, the board will continually seek the wisdom and leading of Christ as the Lord of church. To this end, significant attention will be given to prayer and study of Scripture as a group.

AP1.2 Component: Disciplining the Process of the Board

The board shall conduct itself with discipline and integrity with regard to its own process of governance.

AP1.2.1 Detail: Board Style

The board will govern with an emphasis on (1) outward vision rather than internal preoccupation, (2) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (3) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (4) clear distinction of board and staff roles, (5) collective rather than individual decisions, (6) future rather than past or present, and (7) proactivity rather than reactivity.

AP1.2.2 Detail: Board Job Description

The essential job outputs of the board are linkage to the people served, definition of guiding principles, and monitoring of Senior Pastor performance. In addition to these three essentials, the board shall exercise authority granted to it in the bylaws and not delegated to the Senior Pastor.

AP1.2.3 Detail: Board Member Code of Conduct

The board commits itself and its members to the following code of conduct:

- a. Members of the board must represent unconflicted loyalty to the interests of Christ regarding those whom he has called his church to serve (Matthew 28:18-20). This loyalty supersedes any personal or group interest among or outside consumers of the church's services. A member must disclose any fiduciary conflict of interest and withdraw from any decision-making affected by it.
- b. Members of the board must honor the principles and decisions of the board acting as a whole. They may not foster dissent or attempt to exercise individual authority over the staff or the organization except as explicitly stated in the guiding principles.
- c. Members of the board must respect the confidentiality of sensitive board issues must avoid facilitating gossip or other "triangulation" against the practice of direct, biblical resolution.

AP1.2.4 Detail: Responsibility of the Chairperson for Integrity of Process

The chairperson enforces the integrity and fulfillment of the board's process including the monitoring of Senior Pastor performance. The chairperson is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the Accountability Principles as he or she acts to ensure the integrity of the board's process.

AP1.2.5 Detail: Responsibility of the Senior Pastor for Visionary Leadership

The Senior Pastor has the responsibility, authority, and accountability to serve as the primary leader of the church at every level: congregation, board, and staff. With respect to the board, the Senior Pastor will provide communication to the board on all actions except for monitoring of the Senior Pastor's performance. If a question of process arises with regard to the bylaws or guiding principles of the church, the Senior Pastor will defer to the judgment of the board chairperson.

AP1.2.6 Detail: Use of Board Committees

Board committees, if used, will be assigned so as to reinforce the wholeness of the board's job and never to interfere with the delegation from the board to the Senior Pastor or with the work of the staff.

AP1.2.7 Detail: Cost of Governance

The board will invest amply in its own governance capacity through training, outside expertise, research mechanisms, and meeting costs.

AP1.3 Component: Monitoring the Performance of the Senior Pastor

The board's sole official connection to the operating organization of the church, its achievement, and conduct shall be through the Senior Pastor.

AP1.3.1 Detail: Unity of Control

Only decisions of the board acting as a whole are binding on the Senior Pastor.

AP1.3.2 Detail: Accountability of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is the board's only link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Senior Pastor.

AP1.3.3 Detail: Delegation to the Senior Pastor

The board will instruct the Senior Pastor through written principles that *define* the mission to be achieved and establish the boundaries to be avoided, allowing the Senior Pastor to use any reasonable interpretation of these principles.

AP1.3.4 Detail: Performance of the Senior Pastor

Systematic and rigorous monitoring of Senior Pastor job performance will be solely against the only expected Senior Pastor job outputs: the church accomplishment of the board's Mission Principles and church operation within the board's Boundary Principles.

AP1.3.5 Detail: Annual Goals of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor will be required to write measurable goals each year that correspond to each of the board's Mission Principles. At least one of these goals for each mission principle must project growth in the number of people who benefit or participate.

AP1.3.6 Detail: Annual Review of the Senior Pastor

Each year, the board shall review the results achieved by the Senior Pastor on each of the annual goals. A merit raise, cost of living raise, corrective action, or request for resignation shall be based on these results achieved within the board's Boundary Principles.

AP1.3.7 Detail: Periodic Goal Review of the Senior Pastor

At the meetings of the board, the Senior Pastor's goals will be discussed and reviewed for performance, modification, and accountability.



Sample ECO Church: Retained Board Authority Document

Sample ECO Church is a session-led church per our constitution and bylaws. This means we, as the session, are entrusted with authority and responsibility as shepherds and trustees for the mission and well-being of our church. As we read in Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Peter 5:1-3, the elders are accountable to God for governing with integrity, humility, and watchful care.

At Sample ECO Church, our Senior Pastor serves and governs alongside us as elders. We make decisions together. Yet, it is also important to state that on rare occasions our Lead Pastors may be asked to submit as employees to the governing authority of the non-staff elders when matters arise that could be reasonably construed as a conflict of interest.

In addition to co-governing with the elders, our Senior Pastor shoulders the professional and primary responsibility for the work of leading our staff and shepherding and teaching our church. Recognizing the great responsibility that they carry, the session likewise delegates and entrusts our Senior Pastor with commensurate levels of authority over most areas of leadership. We intentionally delegate much authority to our Senior Pastor that they may be empowered to lead our church well.

For brevity and clarity, areas of authority not delegated to our Senior Pastors, are addressed in this *Sample ECO Church: Retained Board Authority* document. We, the session of Sample ECO Church, delegate all responsibility and authority to our Senior Pastor except for the areas listed below.

Session will retain authority to...

1. Draft and maintain doctrinal statements and theological positions with our Senior Pastor.
2. Establish and update the focus of our mission, values, vision, measures, and strategy.
3. Determine long-term church wide goals.
4. Evaluate our Senior Pastor, hold him/her accountable, and provide support.
5. Work with nominating committee to select and present elder nominees to the congregation for approval and onboard elders accordingly.
6. Determine the annual budget.
7. Evaluate and approve any Sample ECO Church loans and any renegotiations.
8. Add or remove from membership any Sample ECO Church covenant partners/attenders as warranted.
9. Determine staff structure and salary bands for the senior leadership team level.
10. Determine whether an employee or elder has violated the Conflict of Interest Policy.
11. Evaluate and approve any changes to key aspects of ministry.
 - a. Regular observance of the sacraments
 - b. Worship times and schedule
12. Develop and maintain the following policies and philosophies:
 - a. Fiduciary Policies
 - b. HR Policies
 - c. Child Protection Policies



Sample Senior Pastor Limitations Policy

Our Senior Pastor is empowered with the responsibility and authority necessary to conduct the day-to-day affairs of the church in order to achieve the Sample ECO Church as defined by the session.

The purpose of this *Senior Pastor Limitations Policy* is for the session to establish and communicate certain broadly stated limitations to the authority of the Senior Pastor so that he/she may fulfill duties with great freedom and appropriate constraints. The Senior Pastor will be accountable to the elders and under their supervision to work within the general limitations defined below.

To the best of his/her ability, our Senior Pastor will reasonably interpret and apply these boundaries to the function and scope of practice. If our Senior Pastor operates outside these stated boundaries, they need to inform the elders as soon as possible and/or seek an exception. The following are the limitations or things that the Senior Pastor shall not do.

Biblical and Congregational Limitations:

- Participate in or allow behavior that is unbiblical, unlawful, imprudent, or against established practices.
- Participate in or implement any programs, activities, or teachings that are contrary to or undermine Biblical doctrine.
- Appoint or permit any individual to continue in a position of paid or un-paid leadership whose behavior is contrary to the Biblical values as determined by the session.
- Allow for conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, undignified, intrusive, or fail to provide appropriate confidentiality.

Employment Limitations:

- Cause or allow any treatment of staff that is unsafe, unfair, undignified, or unlawful.
- Hire or retain anyone who is unwilling to endorse the mission, vision, core values, and beliefs of the church or ECO's Essential Tenets.
- Allow program staff to function without current annual goals or allow staff to go more than fifteen months without a performance review.
- Hire relatives of another current staff member.
- Hire or terminate staff without consulting our executive pastor during the planning phase, throughout the full process, and according to best practices.

Business and Financial Limitations:

- Violate any policies or bylaws of the church.
- Spend more than is allocated in larger budget blocks nor gift additional salary or benefits to any staff.
- Allow the facilities to deteriorate without a plan for managing deferred maintenance.
- Allow potential fiduciary liabilities to be hidden from the elders or allow unreasonable exposure of the church to claims of liability.
- Fail to inform the elders of situations that could reasonably represent a conflict of interest.



Guiding Principles: Sample ECO Church

Dr. William R. Hoyt

Ministry Outcomes

Ministry Outcomes are the categories for which the Senior Pastor shall create annual ministry goals for board approval. Typically, there is at least one goal established for each outcome category. In instances where the church is not capable of pursuing a goal for each category, they minimally establish goals for conversions, attendance, ministry, and small group participation.

1. **Comprehensive Mission Statement**

The mission of ECO Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who love God, obey God, serve God, and help others become Jesus followers.

2. **Conversions**

Our church's highest priority shall be bringing unbelieving people into a saving, faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. **Attendance**

Our church will reach people in the community who need to be welcomed into the body of Christ, whether seekers or unchurched believers.

4. **Assimilation**

Our church will help visitors become fully integrated participants in the life and ministry of our church.

5. **Ministry**

Our church will equip and deploy each believer for a significant ministry by developing their God-given gifts, talents, and experiences.

6. **Leader Development**

Our church will intentionally and systematically develop new leaders – both ministry and governance leaders.

7. **Small Groups**

Our church will involve its members and attenders in small group life for spiritual growth, community, accountability, and service.

8. **Tithing**

Our church will help grow our members and attenders in the spiritual discipline of regular giving of tithes and offerings.

Boundary Principles

9. Comprehensive Boundary Statement

The Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful or contrary to Biblical principles or commonly accepted professional ethics.

10. Biblical and Moral Integrity

In the areas of the teaching, leadership, and church life, the Senior Pastor shall not fail to uphold high standards of biblical teaching and morality.

11. Communication with and Support of the Board

The Senior Pastor shall not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

- 11.1 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to provide the board with issues, points of view, or resource materials from staff, members, or non-church sources needed for the board to make fully informed decisions.
- 11.2 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to provide regular, periodic progress reports on the achievement of the approved Annual Ministry Goals.

12. Treatment of Staff (Paid and Volunteer)

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Senior Pastor may not cause or allow conditions that are unlawful, unjust, or unfair.

- 12.1 The Senior Pastor shall not operate without concise personnel policies that clarify rules for staff, provide for effective handling of grievances, and comply with government regulations.
- 12.2 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to insure the availability of the current policies and procedures manual to all staff.
- 12.3 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to conduct annual written performance evaluations complete with comparisons of staff ministry goals and their achievement.
- 12.4 The Senior Pastor shall not prevent staff expressing a grievance to the board when (1) internal procedures have been exhausted, and (2) the employee alleges either that board principles have been violated to his or her detriment or that board principles do not adequately protect his or her human rights.

13. Treatment of Members and Attendees

In interactions with constituents or potential constituents, the Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decision that are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.

- 13.1 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to promote a corporate climate where people are treated with the dignity and respect due creatures created and loved by God.
- 13.2 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to promote a corporate culture of grace where people are readily accepted as they are and patiently nurtured toward the Christlikeness that marks a mature follower of Jesus.

14. Financial Planning and Budgeting

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the board-approved Annual Ministry Goals, risk financial jeopardy, or fail to be part of a multiyear plan.

- 14.1 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to present a proposed budget to the board for their review and approval prior to the beginning of the new budget year.
- 14.2 The Senior Pastor shall not propose a budget that projects spending in excess of a reasonable projection of revenue for the budgeted period, unless special circumstances are adequately described including a realistic plan to make up the deficit.
- 14.3 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to include information supporting the projection of revenues and expenses in the proposed budget.
- 14.4 The Senior Pastor shall not present a proposed budget that fails to link expenditures with the church's Annual Ministry Goals.
- 14.5 The Senior Pastor shall not present a proposed budget that does not provide for the separation of capital and operational items.
- 14.6 The Senior Pastor shall not present a proposed budget that does not include a multi-year context and the disclosure of the multi-year planning assumptions.

15. Financial Conditions and Activities

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial conditions and activities, the Senior Pastor shall not deviate in actual spending from board priorities established in the Ministry Outcomes.

- 15.1 The Senior Pastor shall not spend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the amount can be repaid by reliable, otherwise unencumbered revenues within ninety days as approved by the board.
- 15.2 The Senior Pastor shall not use any long-term reserves.
- 15.3 The Senior Pastor shall not shift money between funds in amounts greater than can be restored by reliable, otherwise unencumbered revenue within ninety days as approved by the board.

- 15.4 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to alert the board to any anticipated inability to settle payroll and debts in a timely manner.
- 15.5 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to alert the board if tax payments or other government-ordered payments of filings are overdue or been inaccurately filed.
- 15.6 The Senior Pastor shall not fail to alert the board of any actual or threatened suit, legal claim, lien, or other claim against the church.
- 15.7 The Senior Pastor shall not acquire real property on behalf of the church nor encumber or dispose of church-owned real property.

16. Asset Protection

The Senior Pastor shall not allow church assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, or unnecessarily risked.

- 16.1 The Senior Pastor shall not allow unbonded personal access to cash funds in excess of \$1,000.
- 16.2 The Senior Pastor shall not unnecessarily expose the organization, its board, or its staff to claims of liability.
- 16.3 The Senior Pastor shall not allow the church facilities and equipment to be abused or left in a state of disrepair.

17. Compensation and Benefits

In matters of employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, contract workers, and volunteers, the Senior Pastor shall not cause or allow jeopardy to the fiscal integrity or public image of the church.

- 17.1 The Senior Pastor shall not change his or her own compensation and benefits.
- 17.2 The Senior Pastor shall not promise or imply permanent or guaranteed employment to any employee, potential employee, or independent contractor.
- 17.3 The Senior Pastor shall not establish current compensation and benefits that deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed.
- 17.4 The Senior Pastor shall not establish health or pension benefits that conflict with government regulations.

18. Senior Pastor Succession

In order to protect the board from the sudden loss of Senior Pastor services, the Senior Pastor may have no fewer than two other ministry staff members familiar with board and Senior Pastor issues and processes.

Accountability Principles

19. Comprehensive Accountability Statement

The board is accountable to God first and to the people of the church by governing through effective policies, being good stewards of finances and talents, and holding the Senior Pastor accountable solely for the achievement of the church's Annual Ministry Goals and the non-violation of the Boundary Principles.

20. Stewardship to Christ for Those He Calls Us to Serve

The board shall maintain an active connection with the "moral owners" of the church: Christ and all the people he has called his church to serve.

- 20.1 The board will maintain its active connection with Christ by devoting significant meeting time to prayer and the Word of God. Through the teaching and guidance of the Senior Pastor, the board will continually seek the wisdom and leading of Christ as the Lord of the church.
- 20.2 The board will maintain its active connection with the members and attenders of the church by regularly collecting input and feedback from members, attenders, and non-returning visitors to better understand their needs. Every five years or less, the board will arrange a full church assessment by a competent consultant.
- 20.3 The board will maintain its active connection with the community by investing significant resources each year to enhance its understanding of the needs of people in the community and to enhance the church's reputation of service to the community.

21. Governing Style

The board will govern an emphasis on:

- 21.1 Outward vision rather than internal preoccupation
- 21.2 Encouragement of diversity in viewpoints
- 21.3 Strategic leadership more than administrative detail
- 21.4 Clear distinction of board and staff roles
- 21.5 Collective rather than individual decisions
- 21.6 Future rather than past or present
- 21.7 Acting proactively rather than reactively

- 21.8 The interests of the entire church, rather than individual constituencies

22. The Work of the Board

The essential responsibilities of the board are:

- 22.1 Loyalty to the Mission and Vision of the church expressed in observable behaviors that help the church accomplish them
- 22.2 Establish policy in the form of Guiding Principles
- 22.3 Achieve executive accountability by monitoring Senior Pastor performance
- 22.4 Empower and resource the Senior Pastor for success in achieving the annual Ministry Goals
- 22.5 Join the Senior Pastor in planning for the future of the church
- 22.6 Develop leaders for future board service. The board will invest appropriately in the cost of developing future board leaders.
- 22.7 Develop current board members for more effective service. The board will invest amply in its own governance capacity through training, outside expertise, research mechanisms, and meeting costs.
- 22.8 Fulfill fiduciary and all other legal responsibilities as required by state and federal law including but not limited to:
 - 22.8.1 The board will insure against theft and casualty losses to at least 80 percent of replacement value and against liability losses to board members, staff, and the church itself in an amount greater than the average for comparable organizations.
 - 22.8.2 The board shall not invest or hold operating capital in insecure instruments, including uninsured checking accounts and bonds of less than AA rating, or in non-interest-bearing accounts.
- 22.9 Insure funding for the Vision
- 22.10 Partner with the Senior Pastor in "Visioneering" which consists of:
 - 22.10.1 Vision Catching – staying with God and each other until His vision becomes clear
 - 22.10.2 Vision Catching – insuring that all appropriate "publics" know and understand the vision
 - 22.10.3 Vision Keeping – insuring that the mission and vision drive all actions and decisions

22.11 Self-evaluation based on:

22.11.1 A clear understanding of the church's mission and the board's relationship to the mission's achievement

22.11.2 A clear understanding of the board's mission, its functions, roles, and relationships

22.11.3 A clear definition of board objectives, goals, and tactics are established in its Ministry Goals for each year

22.12 The achievement of a minimum of two and no more than four board Ministry Goals

22.13 In addition to these eleven essentials, the board shall exercise authority granted to it by state and federal law, and in the constitution and bylaws not delegating them to the Senior Pastor.

23. Board Member Commitment

Board Members will be committed to the accomplishment of the Mission, Vision, and Goals of the church. If a Board Member's contributions are not patently obvious the Board Member will resign their position or be subject to removal by the board chair.

Board Members agree to abide by the following personal commitments:

23.1 Seek to maintain a close, intimate walk with the Lord by regularly spending time alone with Him in His Word and prayer.

23.2 Commit to pray regularly for fellow board members, staff, and the mission and ministry of the Church.

23.3 Give at least ten percent of the member's income to the work of the Lord at this church.

23.4 Serve in a ministry capacity other than board service.

23.5 Avoid conflicts in interest in all personal and family financial, employment, or business matters.

24. Board Member Code of Conduct

24.1 Members of the board must honor the principles and decisions of the board acting as a whole.

24.2 Members may not foster dissent.

24.3 Individual members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the staff or the church.

- 24.4 Members of the board must respect the confidentiality of sensitive board issues and must avoid facilitating gossip or other “triangulation” contrary the practice of direct, biblical resolution.
- 24.5 Members must conduct themselves at home, work, and the community in ways that enhance the reputation of the church and Jesus Christ.

25. Role of Board Chair

- 25.1 The chair protects the integrity and fulfillment of the board’s work by holding the board and its members accountable to abide by the Guiding Principles.
- 25.2 The chair ensures the effective monitoring of the Senior Pastor’s performance based solely on the material achievement of the Annual Ministry Goals and the non-violation of the Boundary Principles.
- 25.3 The chair has the authority to use any reasonable interpretation of the Accountability Principles as he or she acts to ensure the integrity of the board’s process.
- 25.4 The chair, in partnership with the Senior Pastor, will establish the agenda for board meetings.
- 25.5 The chair will lead board meetings.
- 25.6 The chairperson will constrain discussion at board meetings to those matters which constitute board work as opposed to staff work.
- 25.7 The chair may delegate the chair’s authority to other board members but will remain accountable for its use.

26. Principles Governing Board Committees

- 26.1 Board committees or task forces, if used, will serve the board in accomplishing its responsibilities. The work of board created committees and task forces outcomes shall not interfere with the work of the Senior Pastor or with the work of the staff.
- 26.2 The board shall not delegate any portion of the board’s authority to any committee or task force. Their work shall be advisory to the board only.
- 26.3 Board-created committees will typically exist for specified lengths of time with clearly defined responsibilities, mandates, and goals.
- 26.4 The board will provide any necessary resources for completing its mandate.

27. Senior Pastor Liaison Relationship

- 27.1 The Board's sole official connection to the church's operating organization, its achievement, and conduct shall be through the Senior Pastor.
- 27.2 The Senior Pastor is the board's only link to staff, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Senior Pastor.

28. Senior Pastor Accountability

- 28.1 Only decisions of the board acting as a whole are binding on the Senior Pastor.
- 28.2 The board will instruct the Senior Pastor in the form of Ministry Outcomes to be achieved and Boundary Principles to be avoided, allowing the Senior Pastor to use any reasonable interpretation of these principles.
- 28.3 The Senior Pastor will annually submit written, measurable goals that correspond to each of the church's Ministry Outcomes.
- 28.4 The Board will regularly, fairly, and systematically monitor the Senior Pastor's job performance. The measure of his performance will be limited to:
 - 28.4.1 The accomplishment of the church's Ministry Outcomes as expressed in the board-approved Annual Ministry Goals.
 - 28.4.2 Operation within the Board's Boundary Principles.
- 28.5 Each year, the board shall review the results achieved by the Senior Pastor on each of the annual ministry goals. A raise or corrective action shall result as follows:
 - 28.5.1 A cost of living adjustment plus a merit increase will be given for exceeding significant goals or achieving exceptional goals on the whole.
 - 28.5.2 A cost of living adjustment without a merit increase will be given for exceeding minimal goals or achieving significant goals on the whole.
 - 28.5.3 No compensation increase will be given for failing to achieve significant goals on the whole. Instead, the board will impose a performance plan with six-month goals to boost effectiveness to an acceptable level. If any of these goals are not achieved, the board will offer the Senior Pastor either a specified time to find other employment or a severance package, depending on the best interests of the church and on the pastor's degree of cooperation. If the Senior Pastor is not willing to resign, the board will make its recommendation to the congregation.

28.5.4 If the board either individually or collectively has not fulfilled its obligations as stated in these Guiding Principles, or successfully accomplished the board's Mission Objectives and Goals, the Senior Pastor shall not be held accountable for failing to achieve his Mission Outcomes. Instead, both the board and Pastor will establish remedial performance plan under the direction of an independent consultant appointed by the region.

28.6 The Senior Pastor has the responsibility, authority, and accountability to serve as the primary leader of the church at every level: congregation, board, and staff. With respect to the board, the Senior Pastor will provide leadership for the board on all actions except for monitoring of the Senior Pastor's performance. If a question of process arises with regard to the bylaws or guiding principles of the church, the Senior Pastor will defer to the judgment of the board chair.