

# **Pantano Christian Church Elder's Governance**

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Revision **#11**

## Introduction

The governance document of Pantano Christian Church is a living document that informs the Elders and the staff leaders (specifically through the Lead Pastor) as to healthy and appropriate formation of the community. Further, it lays out responsibilities for both the Elders and the Lead Pastor as together—with the larger staff and the entire community—they seek to be faithful to PCC's ever-emerging mission. The document consists of four main areas:

**I. Vision, Ends and Mission:** The Vision reveals what the church community will look like as she more faithfully answers her mission and purpose. Ends define and shape our vision. They are the major pathways or critical steps that help us reach or accomplish our vision over time. The Mission describes what we do as a church. Elders are responsible for insuring that our Vision, Ends and Mission are in sync with the will of God for our church and that the staff is leading the church towards them. Means are the programs, personnel and resources that the Lead Pastor and staff use within the Limitations to fulfill our vision through the Ends and therefore are not a primary concern of the Elders.

**II. Executive Limitations:** Instructs the Lead Pastor as to the practices that *cannot* be used in the pursuit of the Ends. Any practices *not* listed, as Executive Limitations, are therefore within the purview of the Lead Pastor in pursuit of the Ends. Note that there are levels of limitations. Level 1 limitations are the broadest forms of limits. Levels 2 limitations are still broad areas, but cover a specific area or category of ministry. Level 3 drill down to more detail within a specific area of ministry.

**III. Lead Pastor-Elders Relationship:** This section describes how the Elders both delegate authority and monitor that authority in a variety of ways.

**IV. Elders Governance:** Instructs the Elders as to how the Board will govern itself and remain faithful to its mandate.

This is an internal Elder document rather than a public document. This document allows the Elders to lead the church by policy or guidelines of big picture matters, delegate authority and responsibility to the Lead Pastor, and monitor the delegated authority and responsibility.

## I. The Communal Purpose and Direction of PCC

### A. Vision

A catalytic force to bless Southern Arizona and the world.

### **B. Ends**

1. Every participant following Jesus well
2. Reaching people who are not currently connected to God or a church community
3. Multiplying healthy life-giving churches
4. Developing healthy communities within neighborhoods and villages

### **C. Mission**

Loving people to Jesus, launching passionate people to make a difference.

## **II. The Executive Limitations**

Level 1:

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is illegal, immoral, or unethical.

### **A. Financial:**

Level 2:

The Lead Pastor shall not cause the expenditure of funds that compromises the ends of the PCC community.

Level 3:

1. Four factors guide Level 3 financial limitations.
  - The following will be employed in a reasonably planned budget at the beginning of the ministry year.
  - Compliance may fluctuate due to income fluctuations at any given point during the ministry year.
  - These are to be monitored monthly by the Elders.
  - A final report regarding the limitations is given to the elders at the close of the ministry year.
2. The Lead Pastor shall not cause nor allow more than 60% of the annual operational budget to be spent on personnel costs without Elder approval.
3. The Lead Pastor shall not cause nor allow the Missions/Benevolence budget to be reduced below 10% of the annual operational budget without Elder

approval.

4. The Lead Pastor shall not cause nor allow the annual debt expense to exceed 20% of the annual operational budget without Elder approval.
5. The Lead Pastor shall not spend monies in the Contingency Fund without Elder approval. It is the intent of the Elders to insure a Contingency Fund that is 10% of the current general budget.
6. The Lead Pastor shall not spend nor cause to be spent over \$25,000 on any single (budgeted or unbudgeted) item without Elder approval.
7. The Lead Pastor will notify the Elders of any gifts (Bequests, Estates, Grants, etc.) given to the Church in excess of \$5K as soon as possible unless the donor requests anonymity.

## **B. Personnel:**

Level 2:

The Lead Pastor shall not treat any staff members in a manner incompatible with or contrary to biblical principles.

Level 3:

1. The Lead Pastor shall not hire or terminate personnel without following the established process for either action.
2. The termination of any pastor, key leader or staff member that might have significant influence throughout the congregation shall not occur without the direct involvement of the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor will keep the Elders informed, if possible, prior to the termination process.
3. The Lead Pastor shall not change an employee's merit-based pay rate (excluding adjustments due to promotions, job change, salary band equity or cost of living) by more than 5 percent (annual) without the approval of the Elders.
4. The Lead Pastor shall not lead and manage the staff without written policies and processes that protect and develop the staff.
5. The Lead Pastor shall not provide a severance package for any staff member who resigns or is terminated for cause without Elder approval.

## **C. The Church Community:**

Level 2:

The Lead Pastor shall not treat community members in a manner that would be incompatible with biblical principles.

Level 3:

1. The Lead Pastor shall not schedule more than 40 days annually for outside ministry engagements without Elder approval.
2. The Lead Pastor shall be visible (not sequestered) to the congregation on the weekends when on campus.

### **III. The Lead Pastor-Elders Relationship**

#### **A. Delegation:**

Level 1:

The Elders sole official connection to the staff, its achievement and conduct is the Lead Pastor or, in his absence, his assigned designee. The Elders empower the Lead Pastor to make all decisions and policies regarding staffing, programming and resourcing to accomplish the Ends within the Executive Limitations.

Level 2:

1. All authority and responsibility of the staff, as far as the Elders are concerned, is considered the authority and responsibility of the Lead Pastor.
2. The Elders primarily delegate authority and responsibility to the Lead Pastor through written policies that prescribe the Organizational Ends and describe organizational situations to be avoided (See I. Ends and II. Executive Limitations), allowing the Lead Pastor to use any reasonable interpretation of these policies.
3. The Elders will develop and maintain an "*Elder's Library*" folder of written policies and/or guidelines that address biblical and philosophical matters that are also binding on the Lead Pastor.

Level 3:

1. Only decisions of the Elders acting as a group are binding on the Lead Pastor.
2. The Elders will never give staff supervision, instructions or provide evaluations

without the involvement of the Lead Pastor.

## **B. Job Description of the Lead Pastor**

### **1. Role**

The Lead Pastor is the vision caster and communicator to the staff and congregation. He shall lead the staff to accomplish the mission, vision and ends of Pantano Christian Church in a manner that fully honors Christ, the Head of the Church, and in submission to the Elders as defined by the governance document.

The Lead Pastor is responsible to insure that all PCC resources are focused to accomplish the PCC vision, ends and mission established by the Elders.

The Lead Pastor is the primary link between the Elders and the staff.

### **2. Job Products**

- a. Progress toward the Vision and Mission within defined limitations
- b. Strategic plan aligned to Vision (Ends)
- c. Annual budget
- d. Competent and empowered staff
- e. Weekend teaching plan
- f. Leadership development

## **C. Monitoring Processes for Elders**

1. The Lead Pastor's job performance will be evaluated against the expected Lead Pastor output: a healthy church being created within the boundaries established by the Executive Limitations and fulfillment of the Job Products.

2. The "Internal" method of monitoring is a verbal or written report delivered to the Elders regarding Ends and Limitations (Personnel, Finances and Community Relations) on the specified time periods as follow:

#### **a. Monthly:**

- Financial - Report on limitations and budget summary
- Vision, Ends and Mission – Verbal report and updates
- Personnel, Policies and Programs – Verbal reports and updates

#### **b. Annually:**

- Elder Connect (direct involvement by elders meeting with departments or sub-groups of the staff)
- Financial – Independent CPA review report
- Ministry Year End report regarding all specified items in *II. The Executive Limitations*.

- Ministry Year End discussion of the health and well being of the Lead Pastor and the church.

## **IV. The Elders Governance**

### **A. Elder – Lead Pastor Affirmation/Responsibilities/Removal (Based on PCC Bylaws)**

*Below is Article VI: Government, from the By-Laws (Updated January 2011) that apply to Elders Governance*

#### **ARTICLE VI: GOVERNMENT**

##### **Section 1: Elders**

*The oversight of the congregation is vested in the Elders, who serve as the Board of Directors in corporate matters.*

##### *A. Affirmation*

*The Elders shall be affirmed for a three-year term except for first-time Elders who shall serve for one year. A candidate for elder must have been a participating member for at least one year. Nominees for elder shall be ratified by the Elders in office and affirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of ballots cast by the members present.*

##### *B. Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor*

*In keeping with 1st Timothy 5:17 and 1st Peter 5:1, the Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor will be an elder, except in relation to Article VI, Section 2 (of the By-Laws).*

##### *C. Responsibilities*

*The Elders will meet as needed to fulfill their responsibilities, but not less than once a month. A Chairman, Vice-Chair, and Secretary will be elected annually. Records shall become property of the church. A quorum shall consist of a two-third (2/3) majority. Decisions will be made whenever possible by unanimity; however, a two-third (2/3) majority vote will prevail.*

##### *D. Removal*

*Elders may be removed from service by the following means:*

1. *Resignation.*
2. *By a quorum vote of the elders.*

## **Section 2: Senior/Lead Pastor**

### *A. Call and tenure*

1. *The Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor shall be called by the recommendation of the Elders to the congregation and affirmed through the ratification of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members present. The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period.*
2. *Termination of the Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor will require church member involvement in the decision, but not a church wide vote.*
3. *The only staff member eligible for eldership is the Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor.*

### *B. Responsibilities*

1. *The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor and other staff members are those defined by Scripture and agreement as set forth in Pantano's Governance Document.*

*-- End of By Law Section --*

## **B. Governing Style**

1. Outward vision (i.e. ends) rather than internal preoccupation (i.e. means)
2. Encouragement of diversity of viewpoints within the team (which leads to a common voice)
3. Strategic leadership versus administrative detail
4. Clear distinction of Elders and Lead Pastor roles
5. Collective rather than individual decisions
6. Big picture thinking
7. Pro-activity rather than reactivity
8. Cultivating an environment of mutual trust (especially between Elders and Lead Pastor)

## C. Elder Job Description

### 1. Role of the Elders at Pantano Christian Church

a. Oversee (episkopos = “rule over”) or Care (proistemi = “to stand first”) for the church (Acts 6:3, 4; 1 Tim. 3:1, 5; 5:17). Elders are the leaders of the church. Overseers do not micro-manage or get mired in the details of the business or programs of the church. They lead the church or oversee it through:

i. Setting the vision, direction and policy of the church (Acts 15:4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 1 Tim. 5:17)

ii. Oversee the ordination process and ordain leaders like pastors, missionaries, etc. (1 Tim. 4:14)

iii. The primary leader is the Elder worthy of “double honor” (which we call the Lead Pastor). See 1 Tim. 5:17. The Elders oversee programming, finances and staffing through the Lead Pastor.

b. Shepherd the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Like a shepherd of sheep, the Elders insure the church is spiritually being fed, cared for and protected.

i. Teach or “feed the flock” – (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17). Elder’s engage in teaching and oversee the ministry of teaching through the Lead Pastor.

ii. Protect the unity of the “flock” and guard the church from false or dangerous teaching (Acts 20:29, 30; Titus 1:9)

iii. Discipline members (Matthew 18:17)

iv. Pray for the sick (James 5:14). James also talks about anointing with oil.

c. Model Christlikeness (1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:7). The basis of the Elder’s true authority is by their integrity as mature followers of Jesus. The Elders lead by example.

### 2. Job Products of the Elders

a. Establish the direction of the church through a clear vision, ends and mission.

b. Hire, evaluate, encourage and protect the Lead Pastor

c. Produce clear limitations to facilitate the delegation of responsibility of the means to Lead Pastor

d. Produce, evaluate and update written policies of governance that includes vision and ends, executive limitations, relationships and self-governance.

### 3. Chairperson's Role (or designee)

a. Assures integrity and fulfillment of Elder processes and occasionally represents the Elders to outside parties

#### b. Duties/Responsibilities:

i. Ensures meeting content is determined by the Elders not Lead Pastor; develops agenda with consultation of other Board members and Lead Pastor

ii. Chairs the Elders meetings, ensuring that dialogue and deliberation is fair, timely and to the point

iii. Make decisions that fall within governance policy, unless the Board/team has delegated authority to others (e.g., ensures that Elders and Lead Pastor function according to their roles; offers real time feedback when boundaries are crossed)

iv. Has no independent authority to make policy decisions or supervise the Lead Pastor

v. May delegate his duties and responsibilities

### 4. Code of Conduct:

a. The Elder Board conducts itself in ethical and lawful manners. This includes the appropriate use of authority and decorum

b. Must strive to represent the entire community

#### c. Avoid conflicts of interest:

i. Unfair acquisition of business

ii. If conflict of interest arises, the situation must be handled without the party involved— they should recuse themselves from situation

iii. Must not use position for employment opportunities

iv. Elders personal agendas or hot button issues may not dominate elder

meetings/decisions— issues must find traction for the whole Board

v. Identified issues requiring confidentiality will remain as such

5. Elder Committee Principles (ad hoc or participative committees derived of Elder members)

a. Committees help the Board, not the staff

b. Only have authority as given by entire Board and not to conflict with the Lead Pastor

c. Helps to create policy but entire Board evaluates outcome

d. Committees should be used with discretion

e. A committee is any group formed by the Board, but not a group formed by the Lead Pastor

6. Continual Growth as Elder Board

a. Invest in Board's capacity:

i. Training

ii. Outside mentoring

iii. Outreach mechanisms which seek the input and viewpoints of others (can be within or outside the church community)

iv. The Elder Board can define a budget (contained within the operating budget) for its own ongoing growth

v. Board members will pursue the Ends in their individual and collective relationships

7. Leave of Absence

An Elder may request a leave of absence for a maximum period of one year upon approval of the eldership after discussion. However, if their term limit ends during their leave of absence, they will need to be affirmed by the eldership and the congregation before they can resume. The Chairman of the Elders will contact the elder on leave of absence every six months for an update and report to the full eldership. If the elder does not return to active participation by the end of the year, their term will automatically be ended.