

Rafter J Cowboy Church Bylaws and Constitution

Values

Creative

Rafter J Cowboy Church actively seeks creative ways to present the gospel to the old west culture. Among the methods used in taking the gospel message to where these people interact outside of a church environment, as well as bring people into a non-traditional worship atmosphere.

Hospitable

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Rafter J Cowboy Church understands that the greatest of all spiritual gifts is love. But love expresses itself in the caring concern for others and the action it produces. How can we love God without caring for those God Loves.

Integrity

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Rafter J Cowboy Church believes that doing the right thing is always right. That by making every effort to be above reproach we will also be beyond average. Therefore our integrity is one of the most recognizable value we share.

Leadership

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Rafter J Cowboy Church seeks to build leaders. Through evangelism, lead the lost to Christ. Through discipleship lead believers to fullness of faith. Through training, lead the church to missions. Through practice, leads a life of obedience to Christ.

Interactive

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Rafter J Cowboy Church believes that being the body of Christ requires the participation of all parts of the body. Every member having unique gifts, talents, and interests is influence on the body.

Rafter J Cowboy Church is like a bowl of C.H.I.L.I.

Everyone adds a little flavor!

Rafter J Cowboy Church

Vision Statement

The vision of Rafter J Cowboy Church is to establish and perpetuate a church with a ministry to the old west culture. To create a church family of individuals who have experienced the life changing effects of a relationship with Jesus Christ. We will put our faith into action by reaching out into the cowboy culture to

establish relationships with the lost, and share with them the good news that Jesus died for them and is longing to know them personally.

We envision a family of believers committed to making a positive impact on our culture and community by standing for biblical principles.

We have a vision of creating a place where worship is an act of the heart, soul, and mind; a place where the people we are reaching out to, feel at ease; a place of spiritual comfort for the weary; a place where those who have fallen find a hand to help them up.

We have a vision of establishing a place to teach the gospel from the pulpit, in the classroom, and in the arena of life (literally). We have a vision of teaching life skills, ministry skills, and cowboy skills in an environment that supports physical as well as spiritual growth. For the equipping of the Saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Rafter J Cowboy Church Constitution

PREAMBLE

Under the guidelines and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, we the members of the Rafter J Cowboy Church adopt the following constitution in order to declare and preserve the principals of our faith, the freedom of our church, and the rights and responsibilities of our individual members.

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The Name of the church, located at 10701 County Road 305, Terrell, Texas and incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas, is the Rafter J Cowboy Church .

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The church is organized and maintained to fulfill the following Mission Purpose Statement:

The mission of the Rafter J is to share the love of God with the unchurched and lost people of Kaufman County area and the world in such a way that they have the best opportunity to become fully developing followers of Christ.

A fully developing follower of Christ

Worships God: Honors God by worshiping Him corporately, in both large and small gatherings, and by maintaining private devotions.

Lives by God's Word: Understands the Bible as the ultimate authority for daily living and is involved in corporate, small groups, and private Bible study.

Contributes to God's Work: Uses their time, abilities, spiritual gifts, and finances for

God's glory.

Connects With God's People: Pursues Christ honoring relationships at home, in the church, at work, and in the community.

Impacts God's World: Reaches out to the lost and unchurched by praying for them, witnessing to them, and inviting them to the Cowboy events.

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINE

This church affirms the Holy Bible, the inspired word of God, as the authority in all matters of faith and practice. We further identify ourselves as a distinctive body of faith by affirming the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message.

ARTICLE IV. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIP

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, the true source of all that the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. It is before Him that all the other leadership must bow.

He communicates His will for the church through His word, the Bible. He gives additional guidance by means of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit who indwells the heart of each believer. He calls forth leaders for the church to whom He gives responsibility for the oversight of the church body and the shepherding of its members,

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership and leadership. Persons meeting the membership requirements shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall exist to further the purpose of the church. They will be accountable to the church.

As an autonomous local church, this church is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body. However, it relates to and cooperates with the Kauf-Van Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and other entities of like faith in sharing the gospel with the whole world.

ARTICLE V. ORDANCES

SECTION I. BAPTISM

A church is understood to be a fellowship of baptized believers brought together to carry out the work of Jesus Christ.

A Baptized believer is one who has been scripturally immersed and understands baptism to be a symbol of the salvation which has already been accepted in their life by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

SECTION II. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The church will observe the Lord's Supper on a regular basis as led by the Pastor.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act whereby by the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His

second coming.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present at a church conference called for that purpose. Amendments may be proposed by the Elders or by written petition signed by 25% of the resident members and duly presented to the Elders. Proposed amendments shall be in written form and mailed to the last known address of all resident members eligible to vote at least two weeks prior to the election. Amendments will be numbered, dated and attached to the original instrument.

RAFTER J COWBOY CHURCH BY LAWS, REVISED ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Rafter J Cowboy Church is open to anyone who meets the following qualifications:

- A. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.**

- B. Baptism by immersion after faith in Christ as a testimony of salvation.**

Membership may be established in the following ways:

A. Letter

Candidates who are members in good standing of another church of like faith and order may petition the Cowboy Church to acquire a letter of membership from the previous church.

B. Statement

Candidate who have previously been members of another church of like faith and order, but are unable to obtain a letter of membership from said church, may join by affirming that they are baptized (immersed) believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, holding to the historic teachings of Christianity, and desiring membership in the Cowboy Church.

C. Baptism

Candidates accepting Christ as their Savior and requesting Christian baptism by immersion will be accepted as members upon baptism.

All candidates for membership shall give a verbal testimony of their conversion, baptism, and walk with Christ to a pastor or elder.

SECTION 2. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A person's membership in the Rafter J Cowboy Church may be terminated in one of

the following ways:

A. Death

B. Letter

A letter of dismissal for any member in good standing shall be granted to any church of like faith and order upon request from said church.

C. Exclusion

If a member conducts himself in a manner which brings the name of Christ and the church into disrepute, it will be the responsibility of the elders under the guidance of the pastor to attempt to restore the member in a spirit of love according to the guidelines set fourth in Matthew 18:15-17. If the member fails to respond positively to these attempts, exclusion will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the church membership present and voting at a called church conference.

D. Erasure

If a member requests erasure of offers proof of membership in a church of another denomination, his name will be removed from the roll.

SECTION 3. RIGHTS OF MEMBER

Each member present, 16 years of age and older, shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter submitted for a vote at any called church conference. The right of a member to vote shall cease upon the termination of his membership in the church. Members have the right to vote on the following matters: the call of the pastor and other professional ministerial staff, the election of elders, the annual church budget, indebtedness associated with land acquisition and/or building improvements, cumulative indebtedness for all other aspects of church business that exceeds 20% of the annual church budget, the disposition of all substantially all of the assets of the church, the merge or dissolution of the church, and any other matter submitted by the elders to the church for a vote.

ARTICLE II. MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. PASTOR

A. Call

Upon the pastor's termination, a church conference will be called and the church will elect a pastor search team. This team will consist of no fewer than two and no more than eight members. This team will seek out and evaluate prospective pastoral candidates until they have achieve complete consensus on a single candidate. They will then report to the elders who will set a time and date for the candidate to be received by the church. On that date, a church conference shall be called and after a full discussion, a vote will be taken by secret ballot. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the church members present and voting is required to extend a call. If a call is not extended by the church to the candidate, or if the candidate declines to accept, then the pastor search team

will begin a new search and come before the church with a second recommendation. This method will proceed until a pastor is secured.

B. Duties

The pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the congregation. In the capacity, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, he shall preach and teach the word of God, lead the church in regular worship services, administer the ordinances of the church, serve as moderator at church conferences, provide leadership to the ministerial staff, serve as over all administrator of the church, and generally fulfill all his pastoral duties as set forth in Scripture.

C. Termination

The pastor's duties with the church may be terminated by resignation, death, or dismissal. Such dismissal will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a called business meeting. The moderator for such a meeting will be a disinterested third party appointed by the elders.

D. Qualifications

This person must adhere to the western culture.

SECTION 2. PROFESSIONAL MINISTERIAL STAFF

A. Call

Professional ministerial staff sufficient for fulfilling the church's mission will be employed by the church. Such ministerial staff will require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation upon the recommendation of the search team.

B. Duties

Professional ministerial staff persons will have specific and written job descriptions as outlined by the pastor and Personnel Team.

C. Termination

The service of professional staff persons may be terminated by resignation, death, or a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a church conference called by the elders for that purpose.

D. Qualifications

This person must adhere to the western culture.

SECTION 3. LAY PASTORS

A. Purpose and Function

Lay pastors shall serve as an extension of the ministry of the senior pastor and in that capacity may serve as ex-officio members of teams, administer the ordinances of the church, assist in leading worship, and generally perform any other ministerial function of the senior pastor with his approval or at his request.

B. Qualifications

Since lay pastors represent the ministry of the senior pastor, they must be men beyond reproach who meet the biblical the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. This person must adhere to the western culture.

C. Selection

Lay pastors shall be appointed as needed by the senior pastor and elders.

D. Duties

Each lay pastor will have specific responsibilities as assigned by the senior pastor.

E. Term of Office

Lay pastors will be appointed to three year terms, but may serve multiple terms by mutual consent of the senior pastor, the elders, and the lay pastor involved.

F. Removal

A Lay pastor may be removed before their term of office expires by death, resignation, or consensus decision of the elders.

SECTION 4. ELDERS

A. Purpose and Function

Elders shall serve to provide spiritual leadership and accountability to the church accordance with scripture. They will provide a brotherhood of support and accountability for the pastor, assist the ministry teams with difficult

issues, serve as arbiters in matters of conflict or church discipline, and in general provide spiritual leadership, guidance, and assistance wherever and whenever appropriate. The elder body shall be made up of three elected elders plus the pastor, who is also an elder.

B. Qualifications

Because elders may be called on to handle the weightiest matters of the church, they should above all be men filled with wisdom, love, and the Holy Spirit. All elders must meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The senior pastor shall be an elder. This person must adhere to the western culture.

C. Selection and Terms of Office

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- 1. On or about January 1st of each year a list of names will be developed by the elders from eligible men from the congregation (submitted by the congregation, or asked to be nominees by the elders). These names will be screened by the pastor and the elders to ensure that the nominees meet the qualifications set forth. If it is determined that a nominee is qualified and he is willing to serve, his name will be placed before the church as a candidate. However, if the elders, the pastor, or the nominee determine that he is not qualified, then he will not be a candidate.**

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- 2. Once qualified candidates have been qualified, an election will be held on or before January 31st each year to elect one elder. Using the process of secret ballot a vote held by the members present shall elect a person to serve as elder unless precluded by death, resignation or removal. One elder will be elected each year resulting in the stability of two experienced elders**

at all times. An elder may not serve more than three consecutive terms.

D. Removal

Any member of the church may bring a written scriptural reason for removal of an elder. Elders may be removed from office by their own decision or by consensus decision of the other elders. Removal shall be based upon being spiritually unqualified or the inability to serve.

E. Vacancies

Elders vacancies can occur by death, resignation, or removal. When a vacancy occurs, the existing elders shall select an interim to fill the vacancy until the next election.

ARTICLE III. SUPPORT STAFF

The pastor and Personnel Team will employ and terminate other employees as necessary for the efficient conduct of the business of the church.

ARTICLE IV. MINISTRY TEAMS

SECTION 1. GENERAL MINISTRY TEAMS

A. Purpose and Function

Ministry teams shall be organized to carry out the specialized ministries of the church. Each ministry team shall have specific functions and responsibilities as assigned or approved by the pastor and/or elders.

B. Structure

Ministry teams will be made up of an even number (usually 4-10) of people organized to carry out a necessary ministry or function of the church. Each team member will have individual functions and responsibilities as assigned by the team. A staff member or lay pastor will be assigned to each team to offer assistance and serve as a liaison between the team and the senior pastor and elders. One member of the team shall be designated by the lay pastor or staff member to be team leader and will be responsible for ensuring that the team function properly. Teams will function by consensus, not majority vote. This means that teams must arrive at decisions that can be supported by each member of the team. If consensus cannot be reached, the matter shall either be tabled or placed before the pastor and elders for final decision.

C. Qualifications

Team members must: be members of the church in good standing, love the Lord and have a desire to see His kingdom grow, have credibility with other church members, have a passion for the mission of the team, be determined to make the team a top priority in their lives (this means that they are willing to rearrange their daily schedule or do whatever it takes to participate in team meetings and activities), and desire to use their talents and abilities to

accomplish the team's mission.

D. Formation of Teams

General Ministry teams may be formed as needed by the pastor and/or elders, by the Leadership Team, or by any lay pastor, ministry team leader, or church member with the pastor's approval.

E. Selection and Term of Office

Members of general ministry teams may be appointed by the pastor and/or elders, or be enlisted by a lay pastor or ministry team leader. Ordinarily members will be enlisted by the team leader or lay pastor directly responsible for the team. The term of office for general ministry team members will be two years, but members may serve multiple terms by mutual consent of the team leader, lay pastor, and team member involved.

F. Removal

If a team member causes conflict, fails to carry out his or her responsibility to the team, or otherwise hampers the work of the team, every effort should be made by the team leader and assigned staff person to rectify the issue in a positive redemptive manner. However, if the problem persists, a team member may be removed by the pastor and/or elders, or by consensus decision of the other team members.

SECTION 2. STANDING MINISTRY TEAMS

A. Purpose and Function

Standing ministry teams shall provide oversight of the church's regular business affairs and assist in finding and providing the tangible resources necessary to effectively carry out the church's ministries.

B. Structure

Standing ministry teams shall be composed of six members serving three year terms with two members rotating off each year. A staff member or lay pastor will be assigned to each team to offer assistance and serve as a liaison between the team and the senior pastor and elders. Each year, one member of the team shall be designated by the lay pastor or staff member to be team leader and will be responsible for ensuring that the team functions properly. Teams will function by consensus, not majority vote. This means that teams must arrive at decisions that can be supported by each member of the team. If consensus cannot be reached, the matter shall be tabled or placed before the pastor and elders for a final decision.

C. Qualifications

Qualifications for standing ministry team members will be the same as those of general ministry team members. (Article IV., Section 1.)

D. Standing Teams

The standing teams of the church shall be:

1. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team will be responsible to ensure that the church has adequate support staff to effectively carry out its ministries. They will fill staff vacancies as needed or as directed by the church, conduct periodic staff evaluations, make salary recommendations, and mediate church/staff disputes.

2. Facility Team

The Facility Team will be responsible to ensure that the church has adequate facilities to effectively carry out its ministries. They will oversee the care, maintenance, and use of all facilities and grounds except the arena. They will also assist the pastor and elders with long range planning which will ensure that the church has adequate facilities to meet future needs.

3. Finance Team

The Finance Team will be responsible to ensure that the church has adequate financial resources to effectively carry out its ministries. They shall work cooperatively with the pastor, elders, lay pastors, professional staff, and team leaders to find maximum resources for meeting each ministry need. They shall also be responsible for the preparation of the

annual budget, for the oversight and accounting of all financial records, and for assisting the pastor and elders with long term planning which will ensure that the church has financial resources to meet future ministry needs.

4. Arena Team

The Arena Team will be responsible for providing the tools, resources, and personnel necessary for the church to effectively carry out its arena ministry. They shall be responsible for the oversight, care, maintenance, and use of the arena. They will work with the Leadership Team as well as other ministry teams to develop strategies and plan events that will utilize the arena to effectively reach the cowboy/western culture for Christ.

E. Selection and Term of Office

Members of standing ministry teams may be appointed by the pastor and/or elders, or be enlisted by a lay pastor or ministry team leader. Ordinarily members will be enlisted by the team leader or lay pastor directly responsible for the team. The term of office for standing ministry team members will be three years with two members rotating off each year.

G. Removal

If a standing team member causes conflict, fails to carry out his or her responsibility to the team, or otherwise hampers the work of the team, every effort should be made by the team leader and assigned staff person to rectify the issues in a positive redemptive manner. However, if the problem persists, a team member may be removed by the pastor and/or elders, or by consensus decision of the other team members.

SECTION 3. LEADERSHIP TEAM

A. Purpose and Function

The Leadership Team will serve to provide a forum in which the various ministry teams can brainstorm, coordinate activities and events, share resources, and generally work together to enhance the overall effectiveness of the church's ministries. It will be responsible for setting the church calendar.

B. Structure

The Leadership Team will consist of the team leaders from each ministry team, the pastor, the elders, the lay pastors, and staff. In addition, its meetings will generally be open to the participation and input of the entire church membership. Leadership team meetings shall be moderated by the senior pastor or a person who the senior pastor will designate.

C. Meetings

The leadership Team will meet as often as necessary to effectively plan and coordinate the activities and events of the church.

ARTICLE V. CORPORATE OFFICERS

SECTION 1. PRESIDENT

The senior pastor shall serve as the president and overall administrator of the corporation. He will serve as moderator at church conferences and be responsible for ensuring that the daily business affairs of the church are appropriately and effectively executed.

SECTION 2. TRUSTEES

A. Purpose and Function

When authorized and instructed by the elders, Trustees shall sign the title to church property; all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property; all notes and loan instruments; and such other legal documents as may require execution on behalf of the church,. There shall be 3 trustees.

B. Selection and Term of Office

Trustees shall be appointed by the elders to three year rotating terms with one trustee rotating off annually.

C. Removal

A trustee may be removed by death, resignation, or consensus decision of the elders.

SECTION 3. CLERK/SECRETARY

A. Purpose and function

The church clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation. The responsibilities of each of the clerk will be to keep the minutes of all church conferences, insure that a proper file of all members is maintained, and prepare and annual report to be given to the Kauf-Van Baptist Association.

B. Selection and Term of Office

The Church Secretary shall serve as Church Clerk.

SECTION 4. VACANCIES

In the event a vacancy occurs in any corporate office, the elders shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH BUSINESS

SECTION 1. FINANCES

A. Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the church will be on a calendar year basis beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31 of each year.

B. Accounting Procedures

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for all the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Financial Team.

C. Budget

The Finance Team, in consultation with the pastor and ministry team leaders, shall prepare and submit a budget for the congregation's approval prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.

D. Checks, Drafts, Etc.

All checks, drafts or orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the church shall be signed by at least

two people who have been designated by the Finance Team for that purpose.

E. Deposits

All funds of the church shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the church in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as determined by the Finance Team.

SECTION 2. CHURCH CONFERENCES

A. Church Conferences

Church conferences may be called by the elders or by written petition of 25% of the active resident members presented to the elders. An active resident member is one who has attended the church's regular worship service at least 6 times in the 90 days preceding the circulation of the petition.

B. Notices

Notices of the time and place of all church conferences shall be given not later than the Sunday prior to such meeting by publication in the church newsletter or worship bulletin, or by public announcement at a regular Sunday morning worship service.

C. Place of Church Conferences

All church conferences shall be held on the premises of the church.

D. Quorum

The church members present at any duly called church conference shall constitute a quorum,

E. Proxies

Voting by proxy at any church conference shall not be allowed or recognized,

F. Will of the Church

All Ministry Teams, officers, and organizations of the church shall carry out the will of the church on any given matter, duly expressed by its vote.

G. Rule and Procedure

The order of proceedings at church conferences shall be determined by the rules of practice contained in Robert's Rule of Order, Revised.

H. Conduct of Church Business

All business of the church shall be conducted in a manner that honors Christ and respects others. The church shall strive to seek the will of God by prayerful deliberation and common Consensus.

SECTION 3. CONTRACTS

The Trustee's shall execute and deliver any contracts or instruments in the name of the church which may be authorized by the church to be so executed and delivered. In this connection, the church body as a whole shall be the ultimate authority for all actions taken by the church and no other person, organization or corporate officer shall have any authority to contract or otherwise bind the church without express authorization from the church body.

SECTION 4. BOOKS AND RECORDS

The church shall keep and maintain a complete and accurate records of all financial accounts, membership list, and church conference minutes at its principal office. All books and records of the church may be inspected by any member, or his agent or attorney, for any purpose at any reasonable time.

SECTION 5. PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING IN CORPORATE EARNING

No member, officer, or person connected with the corporation, or any other private individual shall receive at any time any of the net earnings of pecuniary profit from the operations of the corporation, provided that this shall not prevent the payment to any such person of a reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the corporation in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the church; and no such

person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets upon the dissolution of the corporation. All members of the church shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution or winding up of the affairs of the corporation, whether voluntary or involuntary, the assets of the corporation, after all debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the officers of the church shall be distributed, transferred, conveyed, delivered, and paid over, in such amounts as the church may determine or as may be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction upon application of the church, exclusively to charitable, religious, or educational organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

SECTION 6. EXEMPT ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these by-laws, no member, officer, or representative of the corporation shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of the corporation not permitted to be taken or carried on by any organization exempt under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended, or by any organization contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (C) (2) of such code and regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by the elders or by three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present at a church conference called for the purpose. Amendments may be proposed by the elders or by written petition of 25% of the resident membership presented to the elders. Proposed amendments for the church consideration shall be in written form and mailed two weeks prior to the conference to the last known address of

all members eligible to vote. Amendments will be numbered, dated and attached to the original instrument.