

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

The Board of Elders is calling a Special Congregational Meeting to be held Sunday, May 1, 2022 for the purpose of approving two elder nominees and three constitutional amendments. The meeting will occur immediately after the conclusion of both the 9:00 am and 11:00 am services. At one of our Town Halls, it was suggested to have our congregational meetings earlier than June when many members are out of town for summer vacations. Having the meeting on a Sunday morning will make it easier for more members to participate in voting. We have had congregational meetings on Sunday mornings in the past, most recently in January 2015 to approve three elders. Please note that we will still have an Annual Congregational Meeting to approve the annual budget on Sunday, June 12.

After thorough evaluation and prayerful consideration, the Board of Elders has selected Don Bell and Jason Pugh as elder nominees for your approval. These two godly men have been serving Trinity Church well and will be great additions to the Elder Board. Having them join the Board now will allow them to get up to speed before two of our current elders, Thad Riley and George James, complete their terms at the end of June. Also, the Board of Elders will be making a number of important decisions in this transition season. Bringing these two men onto the Board now will allow them to be part of the discussion process rather than having them catch up later. A photo and brief bio of each nominee will be available on April 10, 17 and 24 at the Start Here booth as well as on the Trinity website. If you have any reservations about either of these men serving as elders, submit a signed letter expressing your reservations in writing to the Board by mailing it to the church, dropping it off at the front office, or emailing TCelders@trinityonline.org. Please submit the letter no later than April 24 to permit review of these concerns prior to the meeting.

The three proposed amendments to our Trinity Evangelical Free Church Constitution as well as the rationale for each are on the following pages.

The elders will hold two identical meetings to explain the amendments and answer any questions you have about them. We will also hold a meeting to explain and answer questions about the annual budget. Below are the dates, times and places of these meetings.

Congregational Meetings

May 1	Special Congregational Meeting (after each service, in the Worship Center)
June 12	Annual Congregational Meeting (time and place to be announced)

Informational meetings

April 24	Meeting to explain and answer questions about the proposed amendments (4:00 pm in the Worship Center)
April 28	Identical to the meeting on April 24 (7:00 pm in Worship Center)
June 5	Meeting to explain the budget and answer questions about the budget (time and place to be announced)

For His Glory,

Dan Flaming
Elder Chairman

First Proposed Amendment

Rationale: This first proposed amendment will change the procedure for the congregation to propose amendments to the Constitution. It would change the number of member signatures required from a flat number of 15 to a percentage, specifically ten percent, of the current members. The current number of members at Trinity is 717, so ten percent is currently 72. For an amendment to be approved, it will still require a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority at a congregational meeting. This line in the Constitution has not changed since 1988, the oldest version of the Constitution we have. Requiring only 15 signatures made sense when our church was smaller, but this is only 2% of our current membership, and seemed too small a number to the Constitution Revision Committee and the Board of Elders when a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority is needed to approve an amendment. It will also require that the signatures be collected within 60 days, which keeps amendments unlikely to be approved from circulating indefinitely.

Proposed Amendment:

Note: In all of the excerpts from the constitution, the text to be removed is marked with ~~strikethrough~~. The new text is in red.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this constitution must involve the following procedure:

- A. The amendment must be submitted to the Board of Elders in writing for its discussion, signed by ~~fifteen~~ **ten percent of the** voting members of the congregation, and then submitted in written form to the members of the congregation two weeks prior to a congregational meeting. **The amendment must be submitted to the Board of Elders within 60 days of the first signature.** A three-quarter-majority vote of the votes cast at the congregational meeting is necessary to pass the amendment.

- B. The Board of Elders shall periodically review this constitution and recommend amendment(s) to the congregation in written form two weeks prior to a congregational meeting. A three-quarter-majority vote of the votes cast at the congregational meeting is necessary to pass any amendment.

Second Proposed Amendment

Rationale: The second proposed amendment will make our voting standards more consistent and allow members to abstain. When determining the outcome of votes there are currently two denominators: *votes cast* (occurring twice in the Constitution) and *members present* (occurring four times). The proposed amendment would change each occurrence of *members present* to *votes cast*. To illustrate how these differ, consider a congregational meeting with 100 members present and two motions that each require a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority to pass. The first motion's denominator is *votes cast* and the second is *members present*. In each case, 74 members vote **YES**, 16 members vote **NO**, and 10 members abstain. The first motion achieves a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority and passes, the second motion does not achieve a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority and fails. In the *members present* scenario, abstention is equivalent to a **NO** vote. This is summarized in the following table.

Votes Cast Scenario

74 **YES** votes
16 **NO** votes
10 members abstain
90 votes cast
74/90 = 82.2%
Motion Passes

Members Present Scenario

74 **YES** votes
16 **NO** votes
10 members abstain
100 members present
74/100 = 74%
Motion Fails

ARTICLE XII
AMENDMENTS

[The text in the two sections below is the current wording and will not change. It is here to provide a comparison to the following section. Emphasis added.]

Proposed amendments to this constitution must involve the following procedure:

- A. The amendment must be submitted to the Board of Elders in writing for its discussion, signed by fifteen voting members of the congregation, and then submitted in written form to the members of the congregation two weeks prior to a congregational meeting. A three-quarter-majority vote of the **votes cast** at the congregational meeting is necessary to pass the amendment.

- B. The Board of Elders shall periodically review this constitution and recommend amendment(s) to the congregation in written form two weeks prior to a congregational meeting. A three-quarter-majority vote of the **votes cast** at the congregational meeting is necessary to pass any amendment.

[The text in the two sections above is the current wording and will not change.]

Proposed Amendment:

ARTICLE VI
GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1: STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT

- C. This church shall be governed by a group of godly men called elders. The Board of Elders shall have the authority to increase the general fund annual budget by no more than ten percent. Otherwise, expenditures may not exceed the general fund budget except as approved by majority vote of ~~those members present~~ **the votes cast** at a congregational meeting.

SECTION 2: ELDERS

- B. Selection
 - 7. Each elder will be individually approved on a written ballot by three-fourths majority vote of the ~~voting members present~~ **votes cast for that elder**.

C. Term of Service

2. An elder may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the entire Board of Elders (excluding the elder under question from the vote and for the purpose of determining the percentage of the Board of Elders required), or by a three-fourths vote of the ~~voting members of the congregation present~~ **votes cast** at a special meeting properly called according to the procedures described in Article IX, Section 3, Point B.

ARTICLE VII
PASTORAL RELATIONS

SECTION 1: CALLING THE SENIOR PASTOR

The Board of Elders shall act as the pulpit or pastoral search committee. It may delegate portions of the pastoral search process to a subcommittee of the Board of Elders but may not delegate the decision as to which pastoral candidate is to be presented to the congregation for consideration. The congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time. When the Board of Elders agrees by consensus that the candidate meets the qualifications, it shall present the candidate for a vote of the congregation at a congregational meeting. The congregation may not consider a second candidate until the first one has been voted on and rejected.

Notice of the meeting and its purpose shall be given at least two weeks in advance from the pulpit and in the weekly printed bulletin or handouts. Any member having reservations about the candidate must submit a signed letter expressing these reservations in writing to the Board of Elders, no later than three days prior to the stated congregational meeting to permit review of these concerns. A three-fourths vote of ~~members present~~ **the votes cast** shall be necessary to extend a call. The vote shall be by written ballot.

Third Proposed Amendment

Rationale: The third proposed amendment will change the majority required for the congregation to remove an elder. This amendment is in the same section as the previous amendment, but covers a different topic, so it will be voted on separately. Currently, the congregation may dismiss an elder at a special congregational meeting by $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority. The amendment will change that to a simple majority (more than $\frac{1}{2}$). If more than $\frac{1}{2}$ (50%) of the congregation believes an elder is not fit to continue serving as an elder, it is not wise to have him continue to lead the church as an elder.

Proposed Amendment:

ARTICLE VI
GOVERNMENT

SECTION 2: ELDERS

C. Term of Service

2. An elder may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the entire Board of Elders (excluding the elder under question from the vote and for the purpose of determining the percentage of the Board of Elders required), or by a ~~three-fourths~~ **majority** vote of the voting members of the congregation present at a special meeting properly called according to the procedures described in Article IX, Section 3, Point B.