

1 **THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF PERU, NEW YORK**

2
3 **CORPORATE BY-LAWS Adopted 1944**
4 **FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020**
5 **8th Revision**
6

7 **ARTICLE 1**

8 NAME

9 The name of this church corporation shall be provided in said order; namely "The Community
10 Church of Peru, New York" hereafter known as the "Church"

11 **ARTICLE 2**

12 A. CONNECTIONALISM

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14 1. The Church is a legal federation of two congregations officially merged in 1944. The
15 Church follows the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York, the Constitution
16 of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the standing rules of the Presbytery of Northern New
17 York, and by the rules established by The United Methodist Church through the Upper
18 New York Annual Conference.

19 B. APPORTIONMENT

- 20 2. For the purpose of determining annual denominational apportionment, the active
21 membership registry of the Church shall be defined as fifty percent (50%) United
22 Methodist and fifty percent (50%) Presbyterian. Payment shall be made through the
23 Upper New York Annual Conference and the Presbytery of Northern New York.

24 C. GOVERNING AUTHORITY

25 The By-laws of the Church is the authoritative document by which all Church activities shall be
26 governed. All activity of the Church must be conducted in accordance with these By-laws. A quorum
27 of all task groups and ministry teams shall require a presence of fifty percent of said members to
28 conduct official business. Matters and questions concerning stated By-laws shall be referred to the
29 Chairperson of the Church Council for interpretation and resolution.

30 **ARTICLE 3**

31 BY-LAWS

- 32
33 A. The By-laws represent the statement of operation and structure of the Church. The
34 By-laws can be changed only by congregational vote
35 B. A task group of five (5) members appointed by the Church Council shall review the
36 Rules of the Church every three (3) years
37 C. Amendments to the By-laws
38 1. Amended portions of the By-laws shall be read or submitted in writing to
39 the congregation two (2) weeks prior to a duly called meeting of the
40 congregation
41 2. Old and new amended portions must be read at said meeting and passage shall be
42 made by two-thirds (2/3) vote of active members present
43 3. Any active member of the Church is legally eligible to vote
44 4. Under no circumstances shall a vote be accepted by proxy
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46 **ARTICLE 4**

47 A. MEMBERSHIP

48 Persons seeking membership shall be received into the Church by means of baptism, letter of transfer,
49 or by their profession of faith, and then recorded as members in the appropriate registry. A registry
50 listing the names of all members, as well as baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials, which occur at
51 the Church, shall be kept on Church property..
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53 B. STATUS

- 54 1. As a federated church, the parent denominations are The Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
55 and The United Methodist Church .When joining the church, membership registration is

56 traditionally one or the other. However, registration as Community Church of Peru is a
57 third option

- 58 2. Active members are expected to participate faithfully through worship attendance,
59 service, witness, activities, ministries and financial support.
60 3. A person who does not contribute nor attend worship for two years will be placed
61 on an inactive membership roll through the annual action of the Church Council
62 at the Annual Meeting

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64 **ARTICLE 5**
65 **FINANCES**

66 The Church's budget shall be developed by the Church Council, and approved by the congregation at
67 the Annual Meeting. The authority to sign checks shall be consigned to the Treasurer, Assistant
68 Treasurer and Office Manager and they shall be bonded. Maintaining the security of all the financial
69 accounts and records shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer or designee, with all documents
70 being subject to an annual internal review, audit upon the completion of the Treasurer's term or
71 upon the request of the Church Council. An external audit shall be completed every five (5) years.

72 **ARTICLE 6**
73 **LEGAL PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS**

74 All legal papers, financial records and records pertaining to properties held by the Church shall be
75 stored in the fireproof/waterproof safe in on Church property. No original documents may leave the
76 premises. Copies of necessary documents may be made with approval of the Church Council. The
77 confidentiality and security of all original documents and copies shall be the direct responsibility of all
78 persons authorized to handle them. These documents should be handled, as little as possible and
79 future copies should be made only from a copy.

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81 The Office Manager, or designee, is responsible for Records Management in accordance with the
82 denominational affiliations including but not limited to: Council meeting minutes, records regarding
83 new members, baptisms, letters of transfer, weddings, funerals and burials.

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85 **ARTICLE 7**
86 **CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

87 **A. ANNUAL MEETING**

88 The Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church shall take place within thirty days prior to the end
89 of the Church year (7/1-6/30), with date, time and place to be designated by the Church Council.
90 Notice of this meeting shall be announced on two (2) consecutive Sundays at the Worship Service
91 prior to the annual meeting. This assembly shall serve as the Annual Meeting of both the Presbyterian
92 Church U.S.A. and The United Methodist Church. A quorum of a congregational meeting shall consist
93 of those active members present at a duly announced time with all matters to be decided by a
94 majority vote of active members present. Agenda will include but be not limited to Annual Report,
95 Adoption of Budget, and Nominating Committee presentation. As per Article 3 - By-Laws, no proxy
96 votes are permitted.

97 **B. SPECIAL MEETINGS** Special Meeting shall be

98 called whenever deemed necessary by:

- 99 1. The Church Council
100 2. The Church Council when requested in writing by one-fourth (1/4) of the active
101 members of the congregation
102 3. The Presbytery or the Methodist Conference

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104 **ARTICLE 8 - CHURCH COUNCIL**

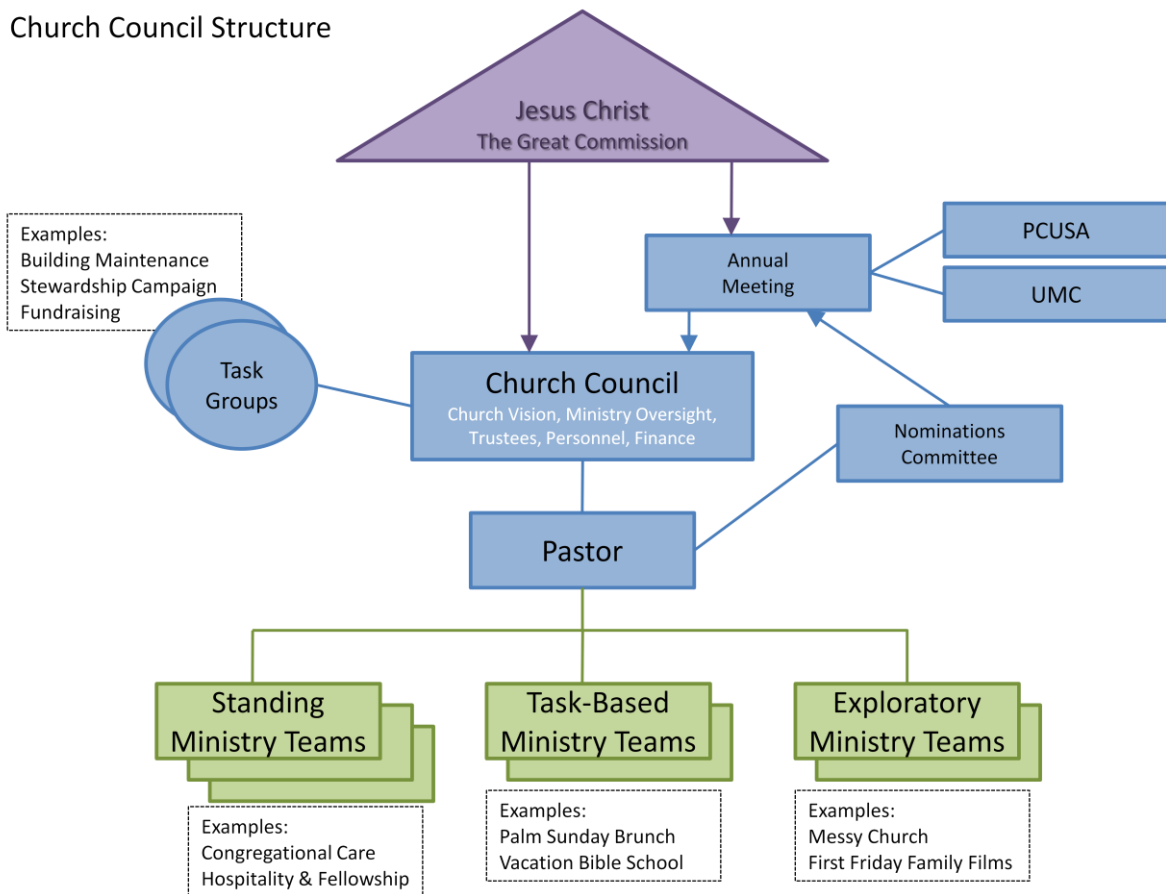
105 **A. THE CHURCH COUNCIL STRUCTURE (See Appendix A)**

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109 1. The Church Council is the governing body of the Church
110 2. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members shall be members of the church; the Chairperson
111 shall be a member of the church.

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3. Council members are nominated and elected to three (3) year terms with a rotation of classes (e.g. class of 2020, 2021, 2022). Council members can serve two (2) consecutive terms. The Lay Leader and Lay Delegate are exempt from the three-year term.
4. The Council shall have a minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of fifteen (15) members as determined by the Nominations Committee.
5. Members of the same household should not serve together.
6. Members of the Council represent and lead the whole church, are committed to the church's mission and vision, and not to a particular interest group of ministry team.
7. Specialists (such as personnel specialists) may be designated from the Church Council membership for particular tasks, yet the whole Council is responsible for Finance, Trustees and Personnel.
8. Members of the Church Council may serve in multiple roles. A Council member may also be on a Ministry Team or Task Group.
9. A separate Nominations Committee, chaired by the Pastor, will be responsible for the nomination of members of the Church Council. The members of the Nominations Committee will be voted upon at each Annual Meeting.
10. Council members need to be completely dedication to Jesus Christ, be growing as disciples, and be personally invested in the ministries of the church.

Church Council Structure



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B. CHURCH COUNCIL PURPOSE

1. The Church Council is accountable to Jesus Christ to guide the congregation in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. (Matthew 28: 19-20). All Council members are expected to follow a covenant agreed upon by all Council members.
2. The Church Council shall be responsible for governance, strategy, accountability, and administration of its organization and temporal life. The Church Council shall function as the administrative agency of the denominations.

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3. The Church Council shall provide for the resources necessary for the ministries of the congregation such as mission, education, worship, Christian formation, hospitality and fellowship, small groups, and congregational care.
 4. The Church Council shall synchronize and align all the church's ministries with the mission, vision, and goals of the church.
 5. The Church Council shall be implemented in a manner that allows people to use their time, gifts, talents, for hands-on ministry and engagement in missions.
 6. The Church Council shall empower the Pastor to lead the spiritual and missional work of the church.

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C. CHURCH COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Church Council:

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1. Confirms the vision cast by the Pastor and establish annual and long-term goals for the church.
 2. Ensures regular accountability to the annual goals that are set.
 3. Envisions, plans, implements, and annually evaluates the mission and ministry of the church.
 4. Works in partnership with programs and ministries to ensure ministries and teams fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
 5. Oversight of all ministry teams.
 6. Fosters role and work of the laity.
 7. Creates and oversees task groups including Building Maintenance Team, Stewardship Campaign, Fundraising Team, and Historian.
 8. Works with the District Superintendent and Presbyter of Northern New York to hold the Pastor accountable.
 9. Approves all hiring and termination of paid personnel, excluding the Pastor.
 10. Draws up and approves a covenant with a Pastor; reviews the work of the Pastor on an annual basis.
 11. Ensures that all reviews of staff conducted by the Pastor are in writing and signed by the Pastor, the Council chairperson and the individual being reviewed.
 12. Approves financial aspects and terms of the Pastor's covenants, as well as salaries and benefits of all paid personnel.
 13. Conforms to and implements standards set forth in the Safe Sanctuary Policy and all personnel practices required by the State of New York.
 14. Establishes the church's yearly budget utilizing projections gathered from ministry teams that have a line item in the budget and ensures alignment of calendar, budget, and staff.
 15. Responsible for oversight of investments, memorials, audit of accounts, financial procedures, and the annual Stewardship Campaign.
 16. Responsible for procedures that assure proper recording and receipt of all contributions.
 17. Cares for and maintains all church properties.

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D. MEETINGS

- 179 1. Meetings of the Church Council may be duly called either by the Chairperson or the
180 Pastor.
- 181 2. The Church Council cannot meet without a quorum of 50% of its members and without
182 the attendance or consent of the Pastor. All members of the Church Council shall have a
183 vote in regard to issues presented before the Church Council. Other than in unusual
184 circumstances, meetings of the members of the Church Council shall be given a minimum
185 of one week's prior notice of date, time, and location.
- 186 3. All members should review documents prior to the meeting and come prepared to either
187 vote approval for the items or to move the items toward the discussion phase of the
188 agenda.
- 189 4. Contents of Council meetings should include: agenda, covenant, minutes, statistical
190 measurements, stories of vital ministries, finances, goals, reports, and special reports,
191 information, bids, etc.
- 192 5. A commitment of one (1) to one and a half (1 1/2) hours for meeting time once a month is
193 required. Extra time may be required for retreats or special meetings.
- 194 6. Should it become clear to the Chairperson that it is necessary, the Council shall conduct
195 the meeting according to Robert's Rules of Order (Cheat Sheet for Nonprofits), Price, N.
196 (2018) located in the Church office.

197 **E. COMMUNICATION WITH THE CONGREGATION**

- 198 1. Through the Study Window, the monthly newsletter
199 2. Website and other appropriate Social Media platforms
200 3. Congregational annual/special meetings and State of the Church brunches held
201 after worship on a quarterly basis in March, June, September, and December; times
202 to alternate after each worship service.
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F. ACCESS TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- 205 1. All meetings of the Church Council are open meetings and active members of the
206 congregation and guests are welcome to attend the Church Council meetings and
207 observe the business brought before the Council. The primary exception is when the
208 Council engages in conversation about personnel issues. The Chairperson will move
209 the meeting into a closed session restricted to Council members and those requested to
210 attend by the Chairperson.
- 211 2. Any person or representative of a Church group or Church program, who wishes to make
212 a presentation to the Church Council, may have access to the Council by contacting the
213 Chairperson or the Office, requesting placement on the agenda using the Report/Request
214 for Action Form (Appendix A).
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216 **ARTICLE 9**

217 **A. TASK GROUPS AND MINISTRY TEAMS OF THE CHURCH**

218 **a. TASK GROUPS**

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- 221 1. Task groups are created by the Church Council as needed for specific assignments or
222 on-going roles related to the administration of the church and its functioning.
- 223 2. Task groups report to the Church Council.
- 224 3. Task groups serve at the pleasure of the Church Council and may be enduring or ad
225 hoc in nature.

226 **b. MINISTRY TEAMS**

- 227 1. Teams are dynamic and may serve for a particular project, or on an ongoing basis.
228 2. Teams will be led by a volunteer and will be accountable to the oversight of the Pastor.
229 3. Teams are not nominated or elected and have no predetermined length of service.
230 4. Ministry teams can be identified, recruited by team leaders and/or the Pastor.
231 5. All ministry teams will use Ministry Team Formation Form (Appendix B).
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B. ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE CONGREGATION 1.

LAY LEADER

The lay leader is elected by the congregation at its annual meeting as nominated by the Nominations Committee. The term of office is two (2) years. Each person shall be eligible to succeed him/herself once for another two- year term. No one shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms for a total of four (4) years. The lay leader shall function, as the primary lay representative of the laity of the Church. The Lay Leader is responsible for:

- A. Fostering awareness of the role and work of the laity within the congregation as well as through ministry in the home, workplace, and community, and discovering ways within the community of faith to recognize all the various ministries
- B. Participating as a member of the Church Council with the responsibility of discussing the state of the Church, the various needs for ministry and the possible opportunities through which ministry can take place
- C. Assisting the Pastor (s) in interpreting the actions and programs of the Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and the Church at large, while simultaneously serving as the Church lay representative to the Annual Conference and the liason to the Northern New York Presbytery

2. COUNCIL SECRETARY

The Council Secretary is elected by the congregation at its annual meeting, as nominated by the Nominations Committee. The term of office is two (2) years. Each person shall be eligible to succeed him/herself once for another two (2) year term, a total of four (4) consecutive years. The Council Secretary serves as a member of the Church Council and shall preserve Council Meeting minutes and Church registries.

The Council Secretary will be recognized as the The Clerk of the Session for the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and will also serve as the Recording Secretary as defined by The United Methodist Church. The Council Secretary is responsible for recording and maintaining all transactions of the governing body.

- A.

3. TREASURER

The Treasurer is selected by the Church Council at its first meeting of the fiscal year from among the Council members. The Treasurer and any other designees who receive or disperse monies shall be bonded through either the Presbyterian Church U.S.A or The United Methodist Church as determined by the Church Council The term of office is two (2) years. Each person shall be eligible to succeed him/herself once for another two (2) year term, a total of four (4) years. The Treasurer is a member of the Church Council.

4 DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

The Church Council shall select two (2) Church Representatives: one representative to serve as a representative to the Upper New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and one to serve as a representative to the Presbytery of Northern New York. The elected denominational representatives are encouraged to attend their respective denominational meetings. They shall inform the Laity of training and educational opportunities provided by the United Methodist Church and Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

DEFINITIONS OF CHURCH ENTITIES

- 287 1. **ACTIVE MEMBER:** Participation through regular worship attendance, service, witness, activities
288 ministries or financial support
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- 290 2. **AD HOC:** For a specific purpose only
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- 292 3. **AMENDMENTS:** Amended portions of the By-laws shall be read or submitted in writing
293 to the congregation two weeks prior to a meeting of the congregation. Both the old and the
294 amended portions must be available to be read to the meeting and passage shall be a two-
295 thirds vote of the active members present. Any active member of the congregation is
296 considered eligible to vote
297
- 298 4. **ANNUAL:** The term “annual” implies the initiation and completion within the fiscal year
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- 300 5. **APPORTIONMENT:** Term used to define the assigned benevolence that is payable to the
301 denominational affiliation.
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- 303 6. **BY-LAWS:** Statement of policy and laws that govern
304
- 305 7. **COMMITTEE:** Persons chosen from the congregation, to represent the congregation to
306 accomplish a specific assignment under the guidance of the Pastor, e.g. Nominations
307 Committee.
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- 309 8. **COVENANT:** A solemn agreement between the members of a church to act together in
310 harmony with a written set of tenets.
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- 313 9. **EX OFFICIO:** Without vote – because of office or position
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- 315 10. **FISCAL YEAR:** Shall commence on July first and end on June thirtieth of each year
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- 317 11. **INACTIVE MEMBER:** No attendance or participation in service, witness, ministries and
318 worship or no financial support for two (2) years.
319
- 320 12. **INTERPRETATION/RESOLUTION:** Matters and questions concerning these By-laws shall
321 be referred to the Chair of the Church Council for interpretation and resolution
322
- 323 13. **LAITY:** The people collectively. Layperson as distinguished from clergy
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- 326 14. **MEETING GUIDELINES:** “Robert’s Rules of Order (Cheat Sheet for Non-Profits)”, Price, N. (2018)
327 shall guide the conduct of each meeting when determined by the Chair of the Church Council.
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- 329 15. **MINISTRY TEAM:** A number of people of the congregation, selected or volunteer, coming together
330 to support the nurturing ministries of the church, under the direction and guidance of the Pastor.
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- 332 16. **PROXY:** The authority to represent an active member in a voting situation.
333
- 334 17. **QUORUM:** A quorum shall consist of 50% of its members
335
- 336 18. **RESOLUTION:** A proposition offered to or adopted by an assembly
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- 338 19. **TASK GROUP:** A specific number of people of the congregation, selected or volunteer,
339 coming together to accomplish a specific assignment for a specific period of time, under

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the direction and guidance of Church Council.

342 **APPENDIX A**

343 **Report or Request for Action Form for Church Council**

344
345 Date: _____ Update/Action Request for: _____

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347 _____
348 *Please submit this form to the church office ten days prior to the next Church Council meeting.*

349 **For Information Only** **Needs Action from Church Council**

350 **Ministry Team** _____ **Task Group** _____

351
352 **Team Coordinator Contact:** Name: _____ Phone: _____

353
354 Email: _____

355
356
357 **ISSUE/PROPOSAL:** *Use this section to explain the actions, key strategies, and/or challenges with*
358 *which the team or task group is faced. Include proposed solutions or strategic plans.*

359 _____
360 _____
361 _____
362 _____

363 **PURPOSE:** *Explain how the proposed action helps the congregation fulfill its mission.*

364 _____
365 _____
366 _____

367 **FUNDING IMPLICATIONS**

368 None beyond budgeted funds

369 Yes. See below for costs and funding plan.

370 *Please include the financial implications of the proposal and fundraising plans*

371 _____
372 _____
373 _____
374 _____
375 _____

376 **ACTIONS TAKEN BY TEAM OR TASK GROUP:**

377 *Outline the actions planned or already taken by the team/task group under its own authority.*

378 _____
379 _____
380 _____
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383 **ACTIONS REQUIRING CHURCH COUNCIL APPROVAL:**

384 *This includes: Proposed changes in policy, actions requiring changes in the budget, and proposals that*
385 *would change a congregational strategic goal.*

386 _____
387 _____
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390 **APPENDIX B**

391 **Ministry Team Formation Form**
392 *(Complete and submit to Pastor)*

393 **Name of Ministry Team:** _____ **Date:** _____

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397 **Team Coordinator Contact:** Name: _____

398 Phone: _____ Email: _____

399 Team Members: _____

400 _____
401 **Brief Overview of Ministry Team Objectives:**

402 _____

403 _____

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405 **How does this team seek to support and further the mission of the church?**

406 Reaches New People to engage them in relationship with Christ

407
408 Engages in Growth of Christian Discipleship

409
410 Promotes Improved Stewardship of the God’s Creation

411
412 Expands the Disciple-making potential in the community

413
414 Encourages Christian Fellowship

415
416
417
418 **Team Goal(s):** *Use this section to explain the actions, key strategies, and aspirations of the*
419 *team and how this helps the church fulfill its mission of helping people encounter God.*

420 _____

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425 **ASSESSMENT OF MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS:** *Explain how this ministry can be*
426 *evaluated in its impact to the goals of the church. What is the desired outcome?*

427 _____

428 _____

429 _____

430 _____

431 _____