

# CHURCH EMPLOYMENT GUIDE

ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

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CHURCH ALLIANCE

A LEGAL GUIDE FROM ADF CHURCH ALLIANCE

# INTRODUCTION

God has called His Church to be a beacon, to spread the Gospel and demonstrate Christ's love to those around us. This vital work isn't done in isolation – it's a collaborative effort, much of which is undertaken by churches through their paid employees. And your church is no exception. You've likely enlisted a team of employees to help do life-changing work. That team is probably comprised of people who believe what your church teaches and puts those beliefs into action in their daily lives as they live out their faith.

In the United States, churches still have broad freedom to determine their employment policies. However, as our culture changes and as the Church faces increased hostility for abiding by and living out biblical beliefs, it's crucial that the policies you have in place regarding employment clearly state your church's beliefs so that it can be better prepared and protected.

We've seen a rise in legal challenges against ministries stemming from sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) laws and ordinances in recent years. These laws and ordinances elevate sexual orientation and gender identity to protected class status at the expense of churches' and faith-based nonprofits' beliefs about biblical marriage and sexuality. SOGI laws are often enacted under the guise of equality. In reality, they pose a threat to religious freedom, and by extension, your freedom to make employment decisions that align with your religious beliefs.

We are here to help you navigate these issues at no additional cost beyond your annual membership fee. And you can have confidence that your membership connects you to a strong ally ready to advocate for the First Amendment rights of churches across the country.

In the following pages you will find brief explanations of fundamental rights and practical guidance on employment. You'll also find sample documents later in this guide. You can access these resources and more on our members-only website. If you need help accessing this site, please contact us at 1-833-ADF-ALLY or [ChurchAlliance@ADFlegal.org](mailto:ChurchAlliance@ADFlegal.org).

The information included in this guide is designed to be an educational resource and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions or legal issues related to religious freedom, we encourage you to contact us directly—we are here to serve you.

We want to thank you for being a member of ADF Church Alliance. We appreciate your partnership in this mission to keep the doors open for the Gospel.

For the Church,

The ADF Church Alliance Team

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## STARTING-POINT BEST PRACTICES

Your church can begin protecting its religious freedom today. Below are “best practices” every church should consider implementing:

- Adopt a comprehensive statement of faith which includes clear statements on your church’s beliefs about marriage, sexuality, and the sanctity of human life that all employees agree to in writing
- Adopt a Christian Code of Conduct which all employees sign
- List the religious nature of every employment position, taking special note of any ministerial positions
- List religious grounds for limiting any employment opportunities
- Consistently apply all employment standards

**IF ONE MEMBER  
SUFFERS, ALL  
SUFFER TOGETHER;  
IF ONE MEMBER  
IS HONORED,  
ALL REJOICE  
TOGETHER.”**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26



## CHURCH EMPLOYMENT IS FAITH IN ACTION

The theological and doctrinal beliefs your church holds speak directly into how people should live their lives. In other words, belief and action are two sides of the same coin. They are not separate as our culture often misunderstands.

This idea of faith in action applies in the context of employment policies at your church. For Christians, it's not enough to simply be able to hold beliefs about God and the world He created in one's head. Those beliefs should influence how someone lives his or her life – faith in action.

For instance, Christ calls us to care for the poor (Matthew 25). We are not supposed to merely *hold* Christ's command in our heads; we are called to take action and *serve* the least among us.

And, contrary to what is trendy in culture today, God created only two types of humans: males and females (Genesis 1:27), and human sexuality isn't on a spectrum, nor does it change. As Christians we are not supposed to just affirm these beliefs in our minds; we are called to live them out by practicing a biblical sexual ethic. As James 2:18 says, "I will show you my faith by my deeds."

The reality of faith in action is vital to remember when considering two important areas in church employment: religious hiring preference rights and the Ministerial Exception.

## RELIGIOUS HIRING PREFERENCE RIGHTS

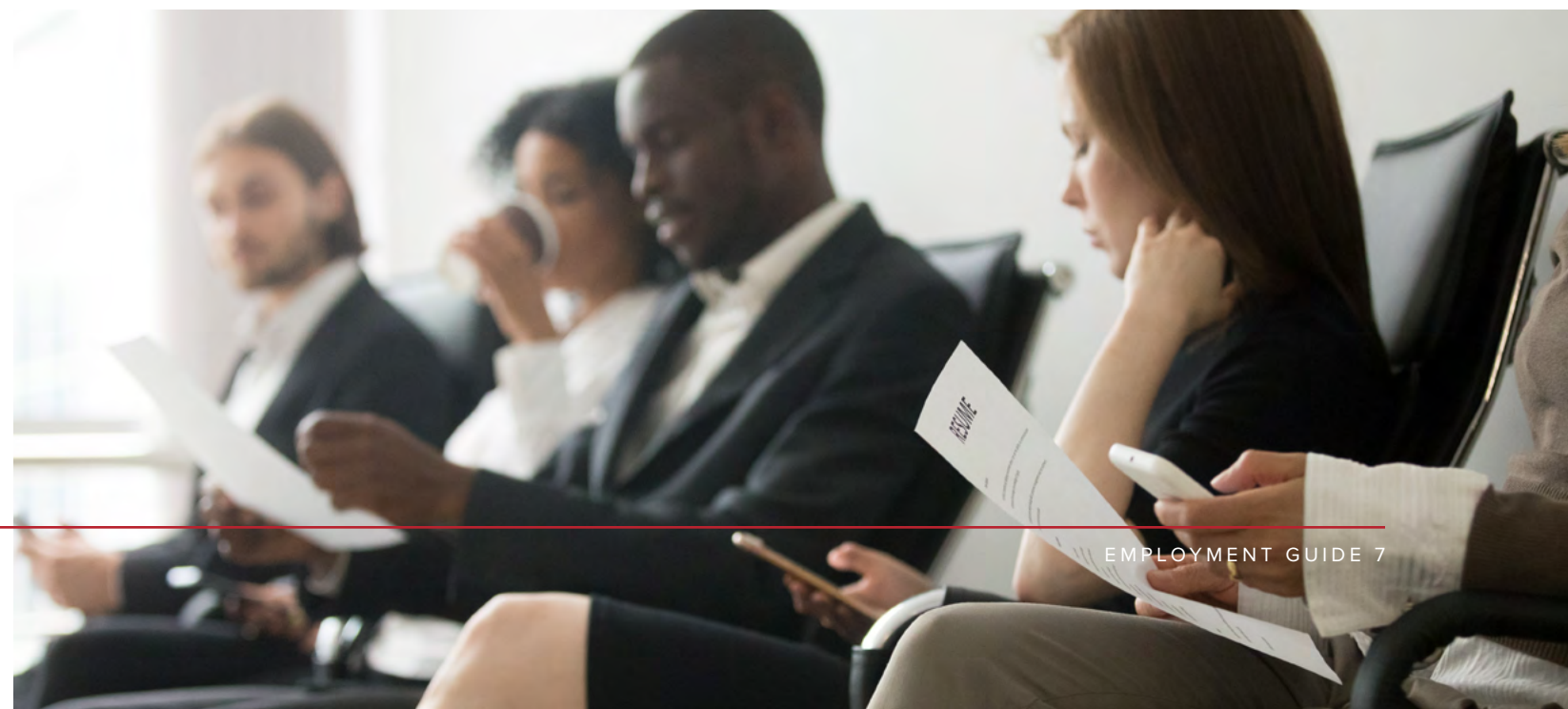
All churches, for every employment position, have the freedom to only hire people of the same faith. Meaning that a church can be selective and choose to only hire "coreligionists," which means individuals who agree with a church's beliefs and viewpoints.

Let's look at an example: If a Presbyterian applies for a staff opening at a Baptist church, the Baptist church can turn down the applicant in favor of another applicant who is a Baptist. This type of discrimination would be illegal in other employment contexts. However, the government allows churches to exercise preferential treatment in hiring out of respect for a church's autonomy in conducting its internal affairs.

This coreligionist principle is found in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In section 701 of the Act, Congress states that preferential treatment based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin is illegal. However, Congress realized how little sense it made to force churches and other religious organizations to hire staff members who don't hold the same religious views and beliefs. So, in section 702, Congress exempted religious organizations from the religious non-discrimination requirement. In short, religious organizations can prefer "coreligionists" in employment matters.

Religious freedom is bolstered by the section 702 religious exemption. After all, it makes sense for religious organizations to have the ability to only hire employees who share the same faith tradition or hold the same set of beliefs.

There is also another important legal principle that goes even further in upholding a church's ability to exercise its autonomy in decisions surrounding employment: the Ministerial Exception.



A light blue stylized outline of a church building with a cross on top, positioned on the left side of the page.

## THE MINISTERIAL EXCEPTION

As just discussed, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 allows for churches to hire ministers and pastors who are coreligionists. But the U.S. Supreme Court has gone even further for ministerial roles by affirmatively stating that “the authority to select and control who will minister to the faithful – a matter ‘strictly ecclesiastical’ – is the church’s alone.” *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. E.E.O.C.*, 565 U.S. 171 (2012). This means that when an employment position at any faith-based ministry is ministerial—meaning the employee leads a religious organization, conducts worship services or important religious ceremonies or rituals, or serves as a messenger or teacher of its faith—religious organizations have *total freedom* to make employment decisions based on their beliefs, including their beliefs on marriage and human sexuality. Thankfully, this robust religious liberty protection has been bolstered and expanded over the past decade. ADF recommends that every faith-based ministry take inventory of its “ministerial” positions.

On the following pages, you can learn about two cases that have helped to solidify the Ministerial Exception legal principle.

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a church interior, showing a person standing in a doorway or at the front of a sanctuary, with light filtering through the space.

## A CASE YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

### *HOSANNA-TABOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL*

*V.  
E.E.O.C.*

Hosanna-Tabor Lutheran Church is a church and school in Redford, Michigan, affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Its schoolteachers lead weekly chapel services, teach religion classes, lead prayer, and teach a morning devotional. As such, most teachers are considered ministerial employees.

After dismissing one of its teachers, the school was sued for discrimination. The former teacher, who the school considered a minister, claimed she was unlawfully terminated because of a disability. A trial court ruled in favor of the school, stating that the Ministerial Exception applied in the case. The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, however, and ruled in favor of the former teacher. But in a 9-0 ruling, the Supreme Court held that the teacher was a minister and that the Ministerial Exception prohibits the government from getting involved in the relationship between a religious organization and its ministers, thereby upholding the right of the church and school to make employment decisions consistent with its beliefs.

## A CASE YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

*OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE SCHOOL*

*v.*

*MORRISSEY-BERRU*

In the summer of 2020, the Supreme Court reaffirmed and expanded the scope of the Ministerial Exception in its *Our Lady of Guadalupe* opinion. This case resulted from two Catholic schools in California being sued after they chose not to renew the contracts of two teachers, both of whom had many religious duties. The schools asserted their constitutionally protected freedom to determine who could teach the Catholic faith at their institutions. Thankfully, the Court recognized that religious organizations have autonomy to make employment decisions about their ministers. It also provided clarity on who is considered a “minister.” The Court rightly concluded that any definition of a minister should be primarily based on the religious functions an employee is asked to perform as defined by those qualified to make that judgment: the religious groups who know their faith best.

## OPEN LEGAL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO CORELIGIONIST STATUS AND THE MINISTERIAL EXCEPTION

Coreligionist status and the Ministerial Exception are established legal principles. However, there still remain some open questions related to both.

Since unanswered questions exist, it’s essential that your church put itself in the strongest position possible – especially when considering non-ministerial employees. Clearly communicating your church’s beliefs in and through its core documents and consistently applying church policies can help strengthen your religious freedom protections.

# THREE C'S THAT HELP PROTECT YOUR CHURCH'S RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## CLEARLY COMMUNICATE YOUR CHURCH'S BELIEFS

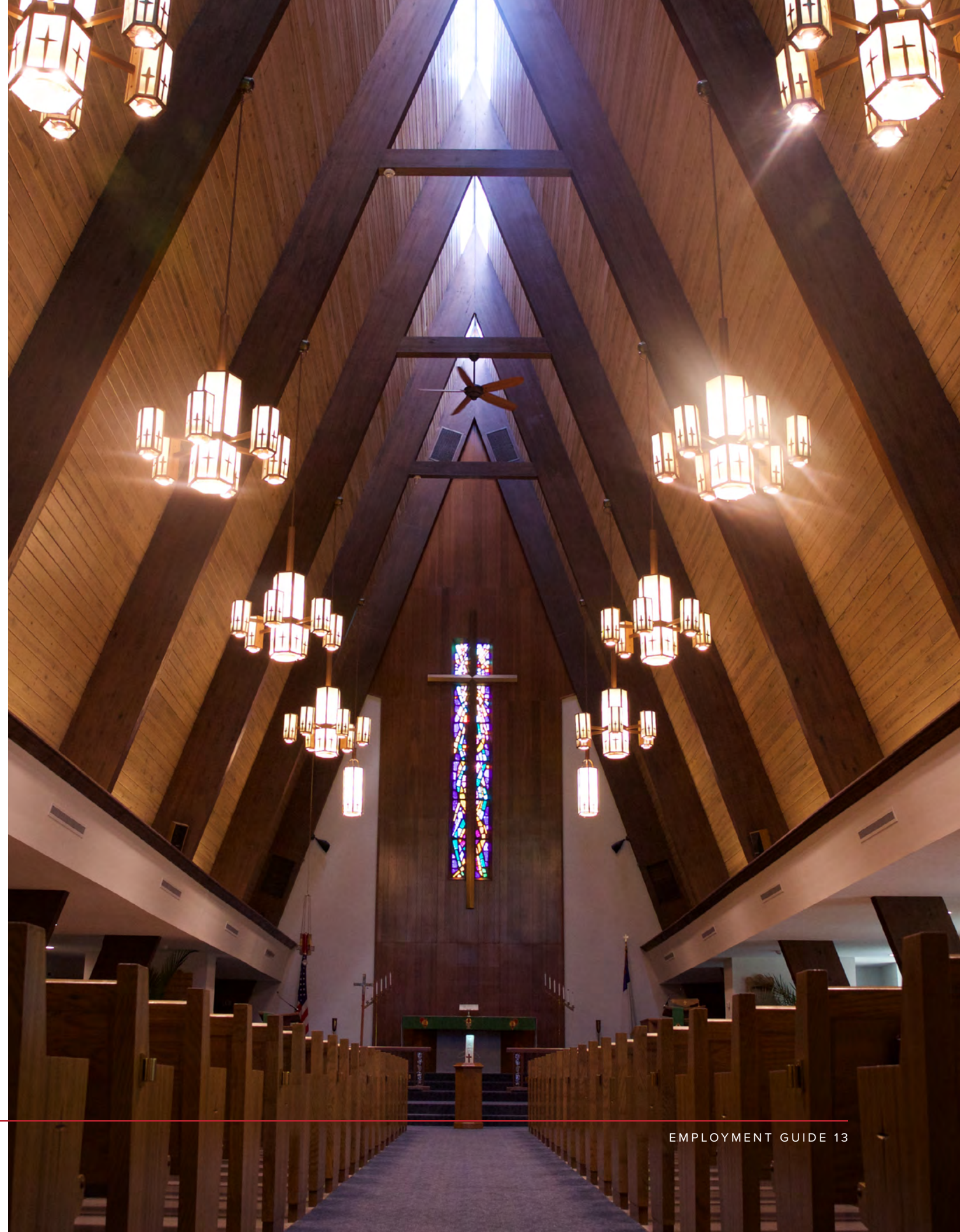
Make sure your core beliefs and convictions are clear. This is especially important in the areas of marriage, sexuality, and the sanctity of human life. Clearly communicating your faith helps serve as evidence for what your church holds as sincerely held religious beliefs and how those beliefs connect to your mission and conduct requirements.

## CREATE CORE DOCUMENTS MEMORIALIZING YOUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Core documents are your church's policies. Core documents can range from your church's Constitution and Bylaws to its employee handbook and facility use policy. Core documents memorialize your church's beliefs and how your church operates in accordance with and as a result of those beliefs.

## CONSISTENTLY APPLY CORE DOCUMENTS

Your church's religious freedom is more easily defended when you consistently abide by the documents you create. Consistency demonstrates that you not only hold strong convictions and beliefs, but that your convictions and beliefs are genuine because you actually live them out.





## DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES THAT HELP PROTECT YOUR CHURCH'S FREEDOM IN EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Governing documents and policies communicate what your church believes about specific issues and how it operates according to those beliefs. These documents can either help provide legal protection or put your church at greater risk. ADF attorneys can review your documents and policies to ensure they avail your church of the greatest religious liberty legal protections possible. This service is included as a part of your membership.

When crafting or modifying your governing documents, the key thing to remember is to communicate what your church believes—to the congregation, the culture, and the court.

### SIGNED STATEMENT OF FAITH

Your statement of faith should be the foundational document for your church. The statement expresses your church's core religious beliefs. The statement also serves as the backbone of your church's policies and procedures.

Because of its importance, your church's statement of faith should appear prominently in its bylaws or other policy documents. Churches that fall under a denomination's statement of faith or religious position statement should either expressly adopt that statement or incorporate it by referencing to it in their bylaws or other policy documents. Courts will not necessarily assume that a church adheres to the beliefs of its denomination or faith tradition unless the church affirmatively makes that connection clear.

The statement of faith for your church should address a broad range of religious beliefs—and the more detailed, the better. Courts generally regard a clear statement of faith as an expression of the church's doctrine and defer to it as the First Amendment requires.

As a matter of best practice, employees should sign these documents on an annual or semiannual basis. Employers should retain these signed statements as part of the individual's permanent record.

It is also good practice to note on the signed statement or in the employee handbook that violation of the organization's statement of faith constitutes good cause to terminate employment.



## STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

God's design for marriage and sexuality matters. He uniquely and divinely inspired them at the start of Scripture, uses them as a picture of His relationship with His people throughout Scripture, and describes the Christian's eternal destiny through them at the conclusion of Scripture. But our culture's embrace of unbiblical views about marriage and sexuality is now confronting churches across the country.

As a result, it is important that churches develop a clear statement on marriage and sexuality for your staff to agree with. Ideally, the statement should be added to an already existing statement of faith. Every employee should be aware of the church's religious position on these (and other) issues before entering an official employment relationship with the church.

A church's statement of belief concerning marriage and sexuality can take various forms. While there is no magic language that must be copied verbatim, the statement (or statements) should cite specific scriptural basis for these beliefs, including chapters and verses.

This statement is not intended to limit a church's ability to serve all persons—believers and non-believers alike—consistent with the church's beliefs. It simply serves as written evidence of what the church already believes. And it's those beliefs that avail the church of First Amendment protections enabling it to operate in accordance with its sincerely held religious beliefs.

We recommend all employees sign this statement annually.

## STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Churches should consider adopting a statement of belief concerning the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. This statement should exist within your church's statement of faith and clearly define your religious beliefs on the issue.

Some churches face difficult employment decisions concerning employees who either choose or publicly advocate for abortion or who advocate for physician-assisted suicide contrary to the church's religious beliefs. Churches should review their insurance policies and contact their insurance brokers and agents to ensure their policies aren't inadvertently covering life-ending drugs and devices that violate their conscience. If a state or local regulation requires you to provide such coverage in your policies, please contact us immediately.

We recommend all employees sign this statement annually.





## CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Churches should adopt a code of Christian conduct, grounded in the statement of faith, which establishes behavioral expectations for employees.

Your code of conduct should address a variety of behaviors pertinent to your church's particular context. While the level of detail and specific types of conduct addressed will vary from congregation to congregation, all churches are encouraged to clearly address issues of marriage and sexuality. Make clear that your church believes God ordained marriage as being between one man and one woman. Also make clear that your church believes God immutably creates each person as either male or female and that efforts to change or deny one's biological sex violates Scripture. In addition, your code of conduct should clarify that employees are expected to conform their conduct and dress to reflect these beliefs. Cite your church's statement on marriage and sexuality to highlight why this conduct is biblically required.

For a good example of a Christian Code of Conduct, see the sample included later in this guide. ADF recommends each church have all of its employees sign this document annually.



## CRAFTING JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

Your church should have unique, written job descriptions for every employment position. Job descriptions should, at a minimum, explain the following:

- How the role furthers your church's religious mission
- What the religious responsibilities and duties of the position are
- What religious training or skills are necessary for the position
- Why the position is important in the life of your church
- Whether the position is or is not ministerial

Although every position within a church furthers its religious mission, for legal purposes, the link between an employment position and the church's mission cannot be assumed. Clearly articulate this link in writing by indicating how the position leads the church to impart the faith's teachings or conducts worship and other important religious exercises.

Take particular care to highlight responsibilities that involve communicating the faith or other spiritual duties that directly further the religious mission of the church and spread its religious message.

Employees with some duties usually performed by (or associated with) clergy are more likely to be viewed as ministerial by the courts. Consequently, courts are more likely to apply the Ministerial Exception to these positions.

However, it is critical to remember that the term "minister" is not limited to clergy, those with the word "minister" in their title, or those with theological training. As the Supreme Court noted in *Hosanna-Tabor*, the Court held that Christian school teachers can be "ministers" if they perform key religious functions such as teaching religion, praying with students, and taking them to religious services. In the *Our Lady*

*of Guadalupe* decision, the Supreme Court emphasized the importance of the religious employer clearly indicating in its policies and paperwork that it considers a particular position to be ministerial.

These descriptions should also include any religious grounds for limiting employment opportunities, especially if the limitations involve any categories protected by law (such as religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity). It is also vital that churches consistently apply their employment standards and handle similar cases alike.

For example, churches should not terminate an unmarried female employee, based on religious grounds, who becomes pregnant but retain a male employee known to have engaged in extramarital sexual relations. Or, if a church terminates an employee for entering into a same-sex marriage, it should also terminate another employee for conduct that similarly represents a public and permanent repudiation of the church's teachings. Along these lines, always keep in mind that, as a Christian ministry, the issue is not targeting a particular group of people but rather encouraging and enforcing biblical standards of marriage and sexuality. Doing so helps churches remain consistent in their employment decisions and consistency in employment decisions is critical.

One final note: some churches have included a general nondiscrimination provision in their employment and other policies. These provisions often say that the church does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, disability, etc. While there are well-meaning motives behind these nondiscrimination provisions, these types of provisions can be problematic if not properly vetted by legal counsel. If a church wants or needs to include a nondiscrimination provision for a specific reason, seek the advice of an attorney before doing so.

You can find sample job descriptions for various staff positions later in this resource. If you have questions or would like to discuss appropriate requirements, roles, and boundaries to bolster religious freedom protections, please contact us.



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In addition to asking standard interview questions to determine if the applicant is qualified, you should absolutely ask questions that help decipher whether an applicant will abide by your church's core beliefs as stated in your governing documents. Remember, section 702 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 gives you the statutory right to only hire employees who agree with your church's beliefs. And this right applies to every employment position, not just the ministerial ones. This is a right your church cannot afford to not take full advantage of.

While the specific wording of questions will vary, a best practice involves pointing to aspects of your church's beliefs and asking the applicant to explain what they mean to him or her. This approach can help uncover the applicant's beliefs on the sanctity of human life, marriage and sexuality, and more. Keep in mind that because you are always allowed to only hire people that agree with your church's beliefs, the more questions you ask candidates about their views on your faith, the more likely you are to discover who's a good fit for employment and who isn't. We also recommend that your church document the applicant's answers to these questions. Having this documentation could help bolster your position if you're ever involved in a wrongful termination suit.

ADF can advise you further on crafting interview questions. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

## ADF IS HERE FOR YOU

ADF Church Alliance is here to help keep the legal doors open for the Gospel. As one of your member benefits, ADF Church Alliance attorneys can review your employment-related documents and policies through a religious freedom lens. They will work with you and your leadership team to help ensure that your church is availing itself of the maximum amount of religious freedom protections in this critical area.

If your church has missing or incomplete documents, please see the sample documents included in this resource and that are also available on our members-only website. You can download and customize them to meet the needs of your church.

Then, when you are ready, submit them to our team for review by following these simple steps:

1. Go to [ADFLegal.org/request-legal-help](https://ADFLegal.org/request-legal-help).
2. Fill out the form, and in the "Brief description of your legal situation" section, indicate that you are an ADF Church Alliance member requesting document review.
3. Once you submit the form, you will be assigned an attorney who will contact you shortly thereafter.

# SAMPLE STATEMENTS

## SAMPLE: CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

### 1. Policy Inclusions

This church's code of conduct is rooted in its sincerely held religious beliefs and is consistent with the following:

- a. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17)
- b. The Greatest Commandments as stated by Jesus Christ (Matthew. 22:37-40)

### 2. Personal Conduct

All persons connected with this church community (e.g., employees, volunteers, etc.) shall hereinafter be referred to as church community members. All such church community members must conduct their personal affairs so there can be no opportunity for unfavorable reflections upon the Christian beliefs and mission of the church, either expressed or implied. The use of common sense, good ethical standards and discretion will guide all who are called into community with the church in proper conduct. Failure to maintain reasonable standards is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, from the church community. It is expected that all members of our church community will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with biblical standards, values, and character.

### 3. Rules of Conduct.

In every church, where many people interact on a regular basis, some specific rules and policies are necessary to establish acceptable standards of conduct, assure fair treatment of all members of the community, and enhance the smooth operation of the church. Church community members are expected to become familiar with and abide by the standards outlined in this policy. The purpose of these rules is to maintain a community environment that protects the safety and dignity of each community member without placing unreasonable restrictions on anyone.

Church community members are expected to model appropriate behavior and conduct both on and off church property and model relationships that demonstrate a growing Christ-likeness manifested in a lifestyle that serves and gives itself to reconcile others. Church community members are also expected to model appropriate language on and off church property and model speech that demonstrates a growing Christ-likeness (Ephesians 5:4). Church community members shall maintain appropriate attitudes of concern for others. Problems concerning ministry community members' roles, relationships, and professional conduct should first be handled directly with the person involved. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be concluded, the matter should move up the relevant chain of responsibility. Specifically, church community members shall respect the integrity and confidences of other community members and those outside of our community attending any of our church's functions. Church community members are expected to operate within their respective roles.

In summary, biblical ethics demand that church community members act in love and integrity, in confidentiality, and in alignment with the mission/purpose of this church.

### 4. Inappropriate Conduct

Violation of church rules and policies may result in an oral warning, a written warning, and/or termination of a member's role in the church community. There is no requirement that discipline be progressive or that a warning be given prior to demotion or any other disciplinary action, including discharge from the church community. Set forth below are some examples of misconduct which will not be tolerated by the church.

This list is not exhaustive, and examples are not listed in order of seriousness:

- a. Falsification of personnel records and information or other church records.
- b. Dating, or otherwise becoming romantically involved with, anyone under legal age.
- c. Engaging in any activity which a church community member knows, or has reason to know, will adversely affect the mission of the church.
- d. Engaging in sexual acts and/or relationships outside the confines of biblical marriage between one man and one woman.
- e. Deliberate damage or destruction of any church property or the property of any church community member.
- f. Engaging in criminal conduct.
- g. Insubordination, including but not limited to, failure or refusal to obey the orders or instructions of a supervisor, teacher, or other church leader, or the use of abusive or threatening language toward a supervisor, teacher, or other church leader.
- h. Using abusive language at any time on church property.
- i. Failure to notify a supervisor when unable to report to work.
- j. Sleeping on the job.
- k. Wearing unprofessional or inappropriate styles of dress (including dressing in such a way as to willfully reject one's sex assigned at birth (Genesis. 1:27)).
- l. Violation of any safety, health, security or church policies, rules or procedures.
- m. Committing a fraudulent act or a breach of trust under any circumstances.
- n. Unlawful harassment including harassment of a sexual nature (with the understanding that this church reserves the right to operate according to its sincerely held religious beliefs about biblical marriage and sexuality and therefore does not define "harassment" as including any enforcement of, or adherence to, its biblical principles and expectations in the areas of marriage, sexuality, dress, and discipline).
- o. Engaging in behavior that suggests a willful violation of the religious beliefs and practices of the church including engaging in sexual acts and/or relationships outside the confines of biblical marriage between one man and one woman and rejection of one's sex assigned by God at birth.

If a church community member has any doubt about whether certain conduct will constitute behavior that suggests a willful violation of the religious beliefs and practices of the church, the community member should ask an appropriate church leader.

By signing below, church community member acknowledges an understanding that this church only hires staff members who agree to abide by its Code of Conduct which is rooted in its sincerely held religious beliefs and which this ministry believes reflects a relationship representative of a walk with Christ.

In addition, by signing below, the church community member acknowledges he/she has read, understood, and agree to abide by this Christian Code of Conduct and that this church reserves the right to discipline said community member (up to and including termination from the community) for any action(s) in violation of this Code of Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE: STATEMENT OF FINAL AUTHORITY

### Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of [the organization]’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our [minister/executive committee/board of directors/congregation] is [the organization]’s final interpretive authority on the Bible’s application.

By signing below, the church community member acknowledges an understanding that this church only hires staff members and accepts volunteers who agree to abide by its Code of Conduct which is rooted in its sincerely held religious beliefs and which this ministry believes reflects a relationship representative of a walk with Christ.

In addition, by signing below, the church community member acknowledges he/she has read, understood, and agree to abide by this Christian Code of Conduct and that this church reserves the right to discipline said community member (up to and including termination from the community) for any action(s) in violation of this Code of Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE: STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis. 1:26-27). Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis. 2:18-25). We believe that marriage between one man and one woman, for life, uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church (Ephesians. 5:21-33). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians. 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew. 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of [the organization] as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to [the organization] members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by [the organization] in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 1:9).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of [the organization].

By signing below, the church community member acknowledges an understanding that this church only hires staff members and accepts volunteers who agree to abide by its Code of Conduct which is rooted in its sincerely held religious beliefs and which this ministry believes reflects a relationship representative of a walk with Christ.

In addition, by signing below, the church community member acknowledges he/she has read, understood, and agree to abide by this Christian Code of Conduct and that this church reserves the right to discipline said community member (up to and including termination from the community) for any action(s) in violation of this Code of Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE: STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image (Genesis. 1:27). Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Psalm 139.)

By signing below, the church community member acknowledges an understanding that this church only hires staff members and accepts volunteers who agree to abide by its Code of Conduct which is rooted in its sincerely held religious beliefs and which this ministry believes reflects a relationship representative of a walk with Christ.

In addition, by signing below, the church community member acknowledges he/she has read, understood, and agree to abide by this Christian Code of Conduct and that this church reserves the right to discipline said community member (up to and including termination from the community) for any action(s) in violation of this Code of Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: CHURCH SECRETARY

**Position:** Church Secretary

**Ministry Purpose:** Consistent with Romans 12:9-15 and Ephesians 4:11-12, the Church Secretary is responsible for assisting the Pastor and staff in carrying out the daily service practices of the New Testament Church.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Spiritual Responsibilities

The Secretary shall:

1. Seek to be a role model in attitude, speech, and actions in a consistent daily walk with Jesus Christ.
2. Show by example the importance of Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and Christian fellowship.
3. Explain the church's religious beliefs and practices to visitors and callers when asked.
4. Pray with those who contact the church in need.
5. Provide religious resources and assistance to those who inquire.

#### II. Office Administration

1. Greet and assist all visitors to the church office.
2. Answer the telephone.
3. Process all incoming and outgoing mail and email.
4. Prepare correspondence and miscellaneous documents as needed.
5. Create weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter.
6. Maintain the church calendar and bulletin boards.
7. Maintain church records.
8. Organize and schedule office personnel.
9. Keep ministerial staff, deacons, and others informed of crises and ministry opportunities within the congregation and community.
10. Assist the Treasurer and Finance Committee with all church budget reports and accountability.

### Qualifications:

The Secretary shall:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Faithfully attend and financially support the Church.
- Possess strong written, verbal, and organizational skills.
- Possess excellent people skills and a friendly demeanor.
- Agree to uphold the Church's statement of faith and be willing to submit to the standards outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- [Insert academic qualifications].

**Reports to:** Pastor

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: CHURCH CUSTODIAN

**Position:** Church Custodian

**Ministry Purpose:** Consistent with Romans 12:9-15 and Ephesians 4:11-12, the Church Custodian is responsible for assisting the Pastor and staff in maintaining the upkeep of church facilities so that the Church can fulfill the regular practices the New Testament calls it to.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Spiritual Responsibilities

The Custodian shall:

1. Seek to be a role model in attitude, speech, and actions in a consistent daily walk with Jesus Christ.
2. Show by example the importance of Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and Christian fellowship.
3. Explain the church's religious beliefs and practices to the public and give a reason for the hope he/she has (1 Peter 3:15) when asked.
4. Pray with those who contact the church in need.
5. Provide religious resources and assistance to those who inquire.

#### II. Custodian Duties

1. Clean and maintain church facilities weekly.
2. Coordinate with pastoral staff and church secretary regarding the scheduling of cleaning and maintenance.
3. Keep ministerial staff, deacons, and others informed of the status of church grounds and facilities.
4. Coordinate, in conjunction with Church Secretary and other pastoral staff, building maintenance and repair.

### Qualifications:

The Custodian shall:

1. Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Faithfully attend and financially support the Church.
3. Possess an exceptional work ethic.
4. Possess excellent people skills and a friendly demeanor.
5. Agree to uphold the Church's statement of faith and be willing to submit to the standards outlined in the Employee Handbook.
6. [Insert academic qualifications].

**Reports to:** Pastor

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**Position:** Director of Children's Ministry

**Ministry Purpose:** Consistent with Romans. 12:9-15, Ephesians. 4:11-12, Proverbs. 22:6, Matthew. 18:1-6, Mark 10:13-16, and Psalm. 127:3-4, in conjunction with the Pastor and church staff, the Director of Children's Ministry is responsible for overseeing, stewarding, and leading the church's ministry to children, entrusted to him/her by God, as he/she directs the weekly instruction of children in accordance to the practices of the New Testament Church.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Spiritual Responsibilities

The Director of Children's Ministry shall:

1. Seek to be a role model in attitude, speech, and actions in a consistent daily walk with Jesus Christ.
2. Show by example the importance of Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and Christian fellowship.
3. Explain the church's religious beliefs and practices to the public and give a reason for the hope he/she has (1 Peter 3:15) when asked.
4. Pray with those who contact the church in need.
5. Provide religious resources and assistance to those who inquire.

#### II. Director of Children's Ministry Responsibilities

1. Develop, plan, and coordinate a clear vision for the discipleship and teaching of the faith to children in the church and surrounding community.
2. Organize and implement various gatherings and services for children, including, but not limited to, children's Sunday school, midweek programming, choir, and vacation bible school.
3. Create and implement the church's outreach efforts for children and their families.
4. Oversee and equip volunteers to run the church's nursery.
5. Implement and oversee CPR training and certifications and other child safety resources on an annual basis.
6. Coordinate and implement training of volunteers to effectively recognize, report, and prevent child abuse of any kind.
7. Maintain a vibrant prayer life.

### Qualifications:

The Director of Children's Ministry shall:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Faithfully attend and financially support the Church.
- Have experience caring for, mentoring, or teaching children.
- Possess strong written, verbal, organizational, and leadership skills.
- Possess excellent people skills and a friendly demeanor.
- Have a strong capability to engage with children and bring them up in the Faith.
- Have up-to-date certifications related to child safety.
- Undergo and pass a background check.
- Agree to uphold the Church's statement of faith and be willing to submit to the standards outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- [Insert academic qualifications].

**Reports to:** Pastor



## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**Position:** Director of Music

**Ministry Purpose:** Consistent with Romans 12:9-15, Ephesians 4:11-12, Psalm 150:1-5, Ephesians 5:18-20, and Hebrews 2:10-12, and in conjunction with the Pastor and church staff, the Director of Music is responsible for overseeing, stewarding, and leading the church's music ministry, entrusted to him/her by God, as he/she directs the weekly praise and worship practices of the New Testament Church.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Spiritual Responsibilities

The Director of Music shall:

1. Seek to be a role model in attitude, speech, and actions in a consistent daily walk with Jesus Christ.
2. Show by example the importance of Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and Christian fellowship.
3. Explain the church's religious beliefs and practices to the public and give a reason for the hope he/she has (1 Peter 3:15) when asked.
4. Pray with those who contact the church in need.
5. Provide religious resources and assistance to those who inquire.

#### II. Director of Music Responsibilities

1. Plan, coordinate, and arrange music and creative content for church services.
2. Oversee the recruitment, mentoring, and equipping of all music team members.
3. Help lead and direct community outreach programs in coordination with the pastoral staff.
4. Maintain a vibrant prayer life.

### Qualifications:

The Director of Music shall:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Faithfully attend and financially support the Church.
- Have a strong background in music and or music theory.
- Possess strong written, verbal, organizational, and leadership skills.
- Possess excellent people skills and a friendly demeanor.
- Have a strong capability of engaging the congregation during times of praise and worship.
- Agree to uphold the Church's statement of faith and be willing to submit to the standards outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- [Insert academic qualifications].

**Reports to:** Pastor

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: PASTOR

**Position:** Pastor

**Ministry Purpose:** In accordance with 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Pastor is responsible for leading the church body in carrying out its mission as a New Testament Church. As such, the Pastor is responsible for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, conducting the ordinances and functions of worship, teaching and equipping the church body, engaging in pastoral care, providing administrative leadership in all areas of church life, and supervising church staff.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Worship

1. Regularly preach and teach the Word of God and ensure the faithful proclamation of the Gospel.
2. Plan and lead worship services, Bible studies, etc., in conjunction with other pastors/elders.
3. Officiate at weddings, funerals, nursing home services, etc.
4. To administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### II. Pastoral Care

1. Provide pastoral care through visitation, counseling, and prayer.

#### III. Outreach

1. Lead the church in evangelism and outreach with the good news of Jesus Christ.
2. Direct the assimilation of new members into the life of the congregation.
3. Encourage all organizations and ministries of the church to carry out their work with an emphasis on welcoming others to participate in the mission work of Christ.

#### IV. Administration

1. Oversee the administration and management of all areas of the congregation's ministry.
2. Support, supervise, manage, and evaluate the staff of the congregation.
3. Promote faithful financial stewardship and congregational benevolence.

### Qualifications:

The pastor shall be:

- [Religious training/educational requirements].
- Ordained/called by [ecclesiastical body].
- Devoted to his wife; a one-woman man who manages his household well (Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy. 3:2).
- Humble, gentle, peaceful, and a lover of good (Titus 1:7-8; 1 Timothy. 3:3).
- Sober, self-controlled, and respectable (Titus 1:8; 1 Timothy. 3:2, 7).
- Hospitable (Titus 1:8; 1 Timothy. 3:2).
- A faithful steward with financial integrity (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy. 3:3).
- Above reproach (Titus 1:8).
- Spiritually mature, respectable, and an example to the church (1 Timothy. 3:6-7; 1 Peter 5:3).
- Able to teach (Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy. 3:2).
- Able to unreservedly affirm the Church's statement of faith.

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: CHURCH TREASURER

**Position:** Church Treasurer

**Ministry Purpose:** Consistent with Romans 12:9-15, Ephesians 4:11-12, Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, and in conjunction with the Pastor and church staff, the Church Treasurer is responsible for overseeing and stewarding the church's financial resources entrusted to him/her by God, as he/she carries out the daily financial practices of the New Testament Church.

### Primary Responsibilities:

#### I. Spiritual Responsibilities

The Treasurer shall:

1. Seek to be a role model in attitude, speech, and actions in a consistent daily walk with Jesus Christ.
2. Show by example the importance of Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and Christian fellowship.
3. Explain the church's religious beliefs and practices to the public and give a reason for the hope he/she has (1 Peter 3:15) when asked.
4. Pray with those who contact the church in need.
5. Provide religious resources and assistance to those who inquire.

#### II. Financial Responsibilities

1. Collect and organize weekly tithes and donations.
2. Prepare financial receipts and reports for all donors.
3. Institute, monitor, and submit to accountability measures regarding the handling of church monies.
4. Execute bank reconciliation tasks monthly.
5. Carry out payroll duties for church staff on a monthly/bi-weekly basis.
6. Prepare and present detailed financial reports for church leadership and the congregation regularly.
7. Document and maintain all financial records of the church.
8. Arrange financial audits when necessary.
9. Submit tax statements to the IRS.
10. Prepare and distribute all tax forms to employees.
11. Provide tax statements to all donors.

### Qualifications:

The Treasurer shall:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Faithfully attend and financially support the church.
- Have a strong background in accounting and/or finance.
- Possess strong written, verbal, organizational, and accounting skills.
- Possess excellent people skills and a friendly demeanor.
- Have a strong capability to keep sensitive financial information confidential.
- Agree to uphold the church's statement of faith and be willing to submit to the standards outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- [Insert academic qualifications].

**Reports to:** Pastor



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS TO ADF FOR REVIEW

When you are ready to submit your church's governing documents and policies for review, please follow these five easy steps:

1. Review the sample statements included in this resource and compare them with your current documents.
2. If there are significant differences, make the necessary changes to your current documents.
3. Go to the legal intake form at: <https://adflegal.org/request-legal-help>.
4. Fill out the form, and in the "Brief description of your legal situation" section, indicate that you are an ADF Church Alliance member requesting a document review.
5. Once you submit this form, you will be assigned an attorney who will be in touch with you about your document review shortly thereafter.

An ADF attorney will work with you to review documents with religious liberty implications, according to the ADF Church Alliance scope of services. **To facilitate quicker processing of your documents, please save them in a Word document and follow the instructions outlined in the members-only website.**

ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

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CHURCH ALLIANCE



[ADFChurchAlliance.org](http://ADFChurchAlliance.org)  
833-ADF-ALLY  
[ChurchAlliance@ADFlegal.org](mailto:ChurchAlliance@ADFlegal.org)

The information included in this guide is designed to be an educational resource and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions or legal issues related to religious freedom, we encourage you to contact us directly.