

Church Governance Packet

Bylaws, Founder's Rights, and Succession Plan

For: Union of Saints, 501c3, First and Second Chapter

Founder: Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey

Chapter 1 – Founder-Owned Bylaws

Article I – Name & Purpose

1. The name of this church shall be Union of Saints.
2. The purpose of this church is to establish and operate as a religious organization for worship, teaching, and outreach, consistent with Universal faith and practice.

Article II – Authority & Ownership

1. The Founder, Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey, is the sole and permanent governing authority of this church.
2. All church property, materials, digital content, teachings, recordings, writings, and media created under this ministry are owned exclusively by the Founder.
3. No board member, officer, or congregant shall claim ownership or distribution rights over church property or content.

Article III – Governance

1. The Founder shall serve as Senior Pastor and Spiritual Leader for life, unless voluntarily resigning.
2. The Founder has the sole authority to:
 - Appoint or remove any officers, leaders, or staff.
 - Establish or dissolve boards or committees.
 - Approve all doctrine, teaching, and publications.
 - Control financial expenditures and property use.
3. Any advisory board, elders, or committees shall serve at the Founder's discretion and in an advisory capacity only.

Article IV – Membership

1. Membership shall consist of those who accept the teachings of this church and commit to supporting its mission.
2. Membership does not confer voting rights, ownership, or legal claims upon the church or its assets.

Article V – Finances

1. All tithes, offerings, donations, and income become the property of the church, under the authority of the Founder.
2. The Founder has final authority over the use of all funds and resources.
3. No part of the income or assets shall be distributed to individuals, except as

reasonable compensation for services rendered.

Article VI – Amendments

1. These bylaws may only be amended by the Founder.

Chapter 2 – Founder-Controlled Nonprofit Bylaws

Article I – Name and Purpose

1. The name of this church shall be Union of Saints, 501c3.
2. This church is organized exclusively for religious purposes, including but not limited to public worship, teaching, charitable outreach, and the spread of the Universal faith, consistent with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article II – Governing Structure

1. Sole Member: The Church shall have one legal “member,” the Founder, Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey.
2. As Sole Member, the Founder has final and absolute authority over:
 - Appointment and removal of board members, officers, pastors, elders, and staff.
 - All decisions relating to doctrine, teachings, publications, and church content.
 - Approval of budgets, property transactions, and dissolution.
3. The Board of Directors (or Elders) shall exist to assist with administration and advice but serve at the discretion of the Founder.

Article III – Doctrinal Authority

1. All teachings, materials, recordings, digital content, sermons, and publications of the Church are under the spiritual and legal authority of the Founder.
2. No board member, officer, or congregant may alter or distribute such materials without the Founder’s consent.

Article IV – Membership

1. Membership shall consist of persons who accept the beliefs and practices of the Church and commit to its mission.
2. Members shall not have voting rights in governance matters. Spiritual participation does not confer ownership, authority, or entitlement to church property or assets.

Article V – Finances

1. All contributions, tithes, offerings, donations, and income become the property of the Church, to be used in furtherance of its mission.
2. The Founder, as Sole Member, has ultimate approval of all financial expenditures and allocations.
3. The Board may recommend budgets and expenditures, but the Founder retains final authority.

4. No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of private individuals, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.

Article VI – Dissolution

1. In the event of dissolution, assets shall be distributed to another religious nonprofit consistent with Section 501(c)(3), as designated by the Founder.

Article VII – Amendments

1. These bylaws may only be amended by the Founder, who retains sole authority to modify, repeal, or replace them.

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Section 1 – Authorship of Governance Content, Subchapter

The organizational structures, terms, and governance concepts set forth in these Bylaws are developed under the authorship of Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey, Founder of Union of Saints and are incorporated solely under her authority to guide the vision and governance of this Church.

Section 2 – Florida Law Compliance

Church Subchapters may be incorporated and operate under the laws of the State of Florida governing religious nonprofit corporations (Florida Statutes, Chapter 617). In any case where these Bylaws are silent, the applicable provisions of Florida law shall govern.

Section 3 – Other State Law Compliance

Church Subchapters may be incorporated and operate under the laws of the State of _____ governing religious nonprofit corporations (_____, Statutes, Chapter 617). In any case where these Bylaws are silent, the applicable provisions of Florida law shall govern.

Section 4 – Authority of Founder

Nothing in this Subchapter or in referenced statutes shall limit, alter, or diminish the Founder's permanent authority as defined in these Bylaws. In the event of any conflict between Florida law and these governing documents, compliance with Florida law shall be maintained while upholding the Founder's authority to the fullest extent permitted.

Subchapter A – Compliance with Florida Law

Chapter 3 – Founder’s Rights Declaration

Section 1 – Recognition of Founder

1. Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey (“the Founder”) is hereby recognized as the spiritual, legal, and organizational founder of Union of Saints.
2. The Founder shall retain lifetime authority and rights as outlined herein, regardless of any change in board, officers, or membership.

Section 2 – Lifetime Authority

1. The Founder shall be the final authority on all matters of:
 - Church doctrine, beliefs, teachings, and practices.
 - Worship style, liturgy, and spiritual direction.
 - Appointment and removal of pastors, leaders, officers, or staff.
 - Approval of budgets, property acquisitions, and major financial decisions.
 - Publication, distribution, and use of all church-created materials.

Section 3 – Intellectual Property

1. All content, sermons, teachings, publications, music, recordings, videos, websites, and digital media produced under the banner of the Church shall be recognized as the exclusive property of the Church, under the sole stewardship of the Founder.
2. No person, board, or committee may use or distribute such content without the Founder’s written approval.

Section 4 – Protection of Founder’s Vision

1. The Founder’s vision and mission for the Church shall be regarded as binding and unalterable, except by the Founder personally.
2. No bylaws, board actions, or policies may be adopted that override or conflict with the Founder’s authority as set forth in this Declaration.

Section 5 – Duration

1. The rights granted herein are lifetime rights of the Founder.
2. Upon the Founder’s death or voluntary resignation, authority shall pass in accordance with a succession plan written and signed by the Founder.

Section 6 – Acknowledgment

These Founder’s Rights are recognized and affirmed by the Board of Directors and are

binding upon the Church as its governing principle.

Chapter 4 – Succession Plan

Section 1 – Founder's Authority

The Founder, Dannielle Courchene, Cowdrey, is recognized as the lifetime leader and sole authority of this Church. The Founder reserves the exclusive right to determine succession.

Section 2 – Designated Successor

1. In the event of the Founder's death, permanent disability, or voluntary resignation, all spiritual, administrative, and legal authority shall pass to:
[Confidential] hereafter called the Successor.
2. The Successor shall assume the role of Senior Pastor and Sole Member, inheriting all rights, responsibilities, and authorities held by the Founder.

Section 3 – Alternative Successor

If the designated Successor is unwilling or unable to serve, authority shall transfer to:
[Confidential], as the Alternate Successor.

Section 4 – Founder's Option to Amend

The Founder reserves the right to amend, update, or revoke this Succession Plan at any time, by signed written statement.

Section 5 – Continuity of Vision

The Successor shall uphold the mission, vision, doctrines, and teachings established by the Founder, and shall protect the spiritual and organizational integrity of the Church.

Section 6 – Binding Effect

This Succession Plan shall be binding upon the Board of Directors, officers, members, and affiliates of the Church. No amendment, board action, or policy may override it, except by the Founder personally.