



## **ABCRGR Bylaws Revision May 2, 2026 Explanation to the Delegates**

In this season, we are undertaking a thorough revision of our bylaws so that we can address several matters together with clarity and care. Many of these concerns have already been prayerfully discussed at prior Delegates' Meetings; other adjustments flow naturally from those conversations and the changes they may require. Our aim in this revision is to gather the Region's shared commitments and requirements into language that is as concise and understandable as possible, and to update wording that more accurately reflects our life together as a Region. We have also removed material that belongs not in bylaws, but in a companion Delegates Manual of Policies and Processes that outlines practical procedures. That manual will be presented to the Delegates alongside these bylaws; by approving the bylaws, the Delegates affirm the presence of such a manual, while the manual's specific contents can be reviewed and refined at a later Delegates' Meeting.

### **Overall: Change to Non-Gendered Pronouns**

This revision updates the bylaws to replace gendered pronouns with non-gendered language throughout the document. The change is editorial in nature and does not alter the intent, authority, or responsibilities described in the bylaws. This update reflects the Region's commitment to clear, gracious, and inclusive language that honors the full diversity of those who serve and lead among us.

### **Overall: Change from Biennial Gathering to Annual Meeting**

Based on vote by the delegates, we are reinstating an annual meeting schedule instead of a biennial meeting schedule. The wording throughout the bylaws has been adjusted to specifically refer to an Annual Meeting. This Annual Meeting will be assumed to happen within an Annual Gathering but if, in the future, Gatherings are rescheduled, the Annual Meeting can still happen within the designated Delegates Meeting frameworks without affecting the Bylaws.

### **Overall (Primarily Articles IV and V): Board Term Length Revision**

Delegates previously affirmed, in principle, a return to three-year board member terms, reversing the current four-year structure. This bylaw revision simply formalizes that decision by restoring language similar to what was in place prior to the shift to four-year terms, for the sake of clarity and consistency. This change also aligns with the Region's return from Biennial to Annual Meetings, a move that was approved by the Delegates at an earlier meeting and is already reflected elsewhere in the bylaws (including references to the Annual Meeting in current governing documents).

### **Overall: Proposed Change—Vice President → President-Elect**

This proposal changes the title of *Vice President* to *President-Elect* to more clearly reflect the purpose of the role as intentional preparation and training for service as President. While the responsibilities of the position already function in this way, the title *President-Elect* provides greater clarity for Delegates, officers, and member churches, strengthens leadership continuity and succession planning, and aligns with common nonprofit governance practice. This change does not alter the authority, term, or duties of the position.

### **Article V, Section 1: Clarification of Pastoral Delegate Representation**

This revision adds the terms “**senior**” and “**designated staff**” pastor to clarify which pastor represents a congregation as a Delegate when multiple pastoral staff are present. The intent is simply to identify **one pastoral delegate per church**, ensuring that all churches have the same number of delegates regardless of size or staffing configuration. This clarification promotes fairness and consistency while recognizing the variety of pastoral leadership models across our congregations.

### **Article IX, Section 3: Permanent Council Membership Clarification**

This revision adjusts the language describing at-large (non-officer) membership on the Permanent Council to explain the absence of term limits while continuing to emphasize continuity, active participation, and broad representation. Rather than applying board-style term structures, the updated wording recognizes the discernment-based and pastoral nature of this work, allowing members to serve in response to the needs of the Region. The intent is to provide flexibility and stability in the ordination and recognition process, not to reduce accountability or oversight.

### **Deletion of Article XI (with renumbering of following Articles)**

Article XI contains advisory language directed toward self-governing member churches and does not establish governance requirements enforceable by the Region. As such, this content is more appropriately housed in a Delegates Manual of Policies and Processes as recommended, non-binding guidance.

### **Insertion of Article XI: Rules of Order and Governance**

Although there is no legal requirement to have a specific method of decision-making listed in nonprofit bylaws, it is considered a “best practice” for reduction of confusion and conflict. This revision replaces a fixed reference to Robert’s Rules of Order that previously followed the bylaws with broader language that identifies a primary framework for orderly decision-making while allowing the Delegates flexibility in how meetings are conducted. The updated wording preserves structure and clarity, while intentionally leaving room for the Delegates to choose alternative approaches—such as consensus-based decision-making—when appropriate. This change is meant to support faithful discernment and effective participation, not to limit the Delegates’ authority over how they conduct their work together.

### **Additional Clarifying Revisions**

In addition to the substantive items noted above, a small number of other minor revisions have been made throughout the bylaws for the purpose of **clarity and consistency**. These changes are editorial only and do not change the meaning, authority, or intent of the bylaws; they are intended to make the document clearer and easier to understand and use.