

Church Constitution

**Church Planting
Pastor Steve Davis**

By: Joe Fleener

SOME CHURCH SOMEWHERE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Article I. Name

The legal name of this congregation of believers shall be the “?????????”

Article II. Purpose

This body of believers exists for the purpose of making disciples, assimilating them into the church through baptism, and teaching them to put into practice the teachings of the Bible (Matthew 28:19-20). We are to be committed to this mission in our community and in our World until our Lord returns (Acts 1:6-8). The church accomplishes this mission as each believer is committed to serving in the church (Ephesians 4:11-16), living godly in the world (Titus 2:11-12), and sharing Christ with unbelievers (II Corinthians 4:1-16).

In order to accomplish this purpose, we shall endeavor to provide:

1. Regular Biblical teaching and preaching that is relevant to like for adults, youth and children.
2. Special teaching and training for all new members to help assimilate them into the church’s stated purpose.
3. Quality Biblical counseling through the professional staff and trained lay-counselors.
4. “Discipling relationships” for training church leadership in any member who desires individual assistance in personal growth.
5. Ministry opportunities and appropriate training for all members so that they may serve in unique ways.
6. Teaching and training for all members to assist them in sharing their faith with unbelievers.
7. New ministries that promote the development of believers in Christlikeness and the evangelizing of our community and world.

In addition, this institution shall endeavor to provide support for other institutions and person., such as missionaries, mission churches, and Christian organizations that are sound in doctrine and endeavoring to pursue the same goals.

It should be a regular practice of the membership of this church to periodically examine and evaluate the church” over-all ministry performance in light of her stated purpose.

Article III. Membership

Membership shall be extended to all persons who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as the personal Savior and Lord, who have publicly declared their commitment to Christ through baptism by immersion after salvation and who agree to perform the duties of members as stated in this constitution. The Pastor, or a qualified person or committee appointed by the Pastor, shall interview all applicants for church membership and submit the make of all qualified persons to the congregation for approval.

Applicants for membership who have been appropriately disciplined from another evangelical church that is sound in doctrine may not be received into the membership until there is genuine evidence of repentance.

Members are required to be in regular fellowship with the church as evidence of a continuing commitment to Christ (Hebrews 10:22-31; I John 2:18,19). Members who withdraw fellowship shall have their membership removed. The pastors and deacons shall have the oversight of regularly reviewing the membership and they are to be actively involved in seeking to restore members who have withdrawn fellowship.

Members who are under formal discipline may request to have their memberships removed. They should submit their request in writing to the official board (pastor and deacons) and state their reasons for the request. Their request may be read to the congregation and must be approved by the official board and the congregation.

Members who are not under discipline may have their membership transferred to another evangelical church that is sound in doctrine. They should notify the official board in writing of their intention to transfer their membership and their reason for doing so. Their request must be approved by the official board and the congregation. Members who request a membership removal or transfer in a manner that is divisive or slanderous may be subject to formal discipline.

Article IV. Duties of All Members

It is a conviction of this church that those who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will evidence that commitment by the way they conduct themselves in their home, community and world (I John 1-4).

While no believer will ever be without sin on this earth (I John 1:8,10), all believers should be growing and changing with the help and aid of the Holy Spirit as they confess sin to God and the appropriate persons and actively strive to put off sinful habits of thinking and behavior and replace them with Biblical habits of thinking and behavior that please and honor God (Ephesians 4:17-32). We recognize that this is a growing process that will not be completed until we are with Christ.

1. Members are expected to regularly meet together for the purpose of fellowship, instruction from God's Word, encouragement, worship, and remembering the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-46; Hebrews 10:24,25).
2. As members grow in Christlikeness, they are expected to be involved in serving in the church. Though every member does not possess the same gifts or abilities, every member is important and needed in order for the church to accomplish her God-ordained purpose (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:12-25).
3. Members are expected to contribute to the church financially as they are able so that the church's ministry may grow. (I Corinthians 16:1,2).
4. Members are expected to honor and obey the biblical teachings of the pastor, and church leadership who have been set over them by God for their benefit.
5. Members are expected to pursue a lifestyle that is consistent with the clear teachings of the New Testament (I Thessalonians 3:6-15). It is expected that members will sin, but they should not live in continued sin as a way of life (I John 1:8-10; I John 3:2-10).
6. Members are expected to live in harmony with one another and to love each other by seeking to resolve conflict and pursue unity (Matthew 18:15-20).
7. Members are expected to attend and participate in congregational meetings for conducting church business.

Article V. Government

Section 1 – The Governing Board

The Pastors and Deacons shall comprise the official board of the congregation. They shall have the authority to appoint committees and delegate responsibility for official church business, such as the appointment of ushers and offering counters, a treasurer, a Sunday School superintendent, and other committees and personnel.

All members of the governing board shall be under the oversight of the Senior Pastor. They shall meet as directed by the Senior Pastor and at an annual meeting scheduled by the board, they shall appoint committees and personnel for the next term.

The board shall act as a pulpit committee and elect a qualified interim Pastor from among themselves or from without the membership in the event that the church is without a Senior Pastor. The board does not have the authority to elect a permanent Senior Pastor.

The board shall act as a disciplinary committee, hearing and resolving matters of discipline, and recommending unresolved matters to the church for formal discipline. Final discipline is recognized as a congregational matter.

The board shall conduct other matters of business and bring important recommendations to the congregation for approval.

Section 2 – The Congregation

The congregation shall be given the authority to elect or remove from office a Senior Pastor, Pastor or Deacon as specified in this constitution. This authority shall be granted to them when the official board votes by three-fourths (3/4) majority to recommend congregational removal.

At any congregational meeting for conduction business, the congregation may require a reduction in the number of Pastors and/or Deacons serving or the may require additional Pastors and/or Deacons to be chosen for the governing board.

The congregation alone has the authority to carry out the final step of church discipline, declaring a professing believer to be functioning as an unbeliever and praying for God's formal discipline in his life.

The congregation must approve an annual budget by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote and is to be properly informed by the financial secretary and finance committee regarding the handling of the church's finances.

Though the congregation recognizes that the Pastor and Deacons have been given the authority and responsibility of leading the church. They should not hesitate to lovingly and humbly confront those who are in positions of authority when they are clearly violating the scripture (Matthew 18:15-20).

Article VI. The Pastors

In the scriptures, the terms Pastor, Bishop, and Elder are interchangeable and refer to the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7). This local fellowship has chosen to elect a Senior Pastor who shall have oversight over all the church's ministries who may request that the congregation elect other Pastors to serve with him in this oversight. All Pastors must meet the qualification as stated in this constitution.

Section I – Qualifications of Pastors

The Pastors of this body of believers must be above reproach, faithful to their wives, self controlled, wise, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, not violent but gentle, not contentious, not desirous of money or gain, patient, not argumentative. They are to be an example in the way they manage their families, they must be experienced in the Christian life, and have a good testimony even among unbelievers. They must not be stubborn (self-willed) or quick-tempered. They must be just, devout, and love what is good. (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

Furthermore, they are to have a solid knowledge of sound theology so that they may be able to expose false doctrine and rightly expound the Word of God. (Titus 1:7-9; I Timothy 1)

Section 2 – Responsibility of the Pastors

The Pastors shall devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of God's Word. Though they may serve in other capacities, their primary function is teaching, counseling, discipling, preaching, evangelism, restoration and other duties related to the ministry of God's Word.

It is the duty of the Pastors to faithfully and correctly study and expound Scripture in a manner that relates to the lives of those to whom he is ministering. He is to teach, reprove, encourage, and counsel both publicly and individually for the purpose of maturing saints into Christlikeness, that they may be effectively serving in the church and witnessing in the world. (Ephesians 4:11-16; Titus 2,3; II Timothy 2:15-16; Acts 20:17-38)

Pastor shall oversee the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Authority is delegated by the church to the Pastors to appoint and preside over a judiciary committee of the purpose of hearing and resolving matters of discipline between members (I Corinthians 6:1-11).

The Pastors are responsible for interviewing all prospective members and recommending them to the church for membership. They may delegate this task to other church leaders.

By loving example, the Pastors are to provide leadership for the church and oversee all of her ministries.

Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be elected by the congregation by a three fourths (3/4) majority vote and may serve as the Senior Pastor is willing and able to serve or until he is dismissed by the congregation by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote.

He shall serve as the chairman of the governing board and the moderator of the board meetings. An assistant chairman shall be elected annually by the governing board from among the governing board to serve in the absence of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may act as moderator of congregational meetings or appoint another qualified person to serve in this capacity.

The Senior Pastor shall be in charge of the teaching and counseling ministry of the congregation and should delegate responsibility to Pastors, Deacons and other qualified persons to assist in the teaching and counseling ministry. Because of his involvement in ministry, he may have special knowledge of the spiritual conditions of certain church members, and as such, his recommendations should be given special consideration by the board, especially in the matters of appointing personnel to committees and positions of service.

Persons who are hired by the church as paid staff members, including secretaries, assistants and Pastors must be approved by the board and the Senior Pastor and will be responsible to the Senior Pastor.

Section 4 – Length of Terms

The Senior Pastor shall serve as long as he is willing and able to serve the congregation or until he resigns by giving appropriate notice or is dismissed by the congregation by a 2/3 majority vote. The official board may make a recommendation to the congregation that the Senior Pastor be removed from office.

Associate Pastors and Assistant Pastors who are hired to serve on the church's paid staff may serve as long as they are willing and able to serve the congregation and as long as they perform their duties to the satisfaction of the Senior Pastor. They shall be under the direct supervision of the Senior Pastor. They must be approved by the Senior Pastor, the official board and the congregation before being hired. They may be dismissed by the Senior Pastor.

A schedule of the terms of office with the names of the persons serving those terms including the dates their terms expire shall be filed in the church office and appropriately posted for the congregation.

Article VII. The Deacons

Section 1 – Qualifications

The deacons of this church must be worthy of respect, sincere, not addicted to wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must be committed to the truths of God's Word in their own lives with a clear conscience. No one is to be elected as a deacon until the congregation has had ample time to observe their life and character. Their wives are to be women who are worthy of respect, who do not gossip, who are self-controlled, and who can be completely trusted in every area of their lives. Deacons must be devoted to their wives and able to manage their children and house well (I Timothy 3:8-12). Any man from the congregation who is twenty-one (21) years of age and older may be nominated for the consideration of the office of deacon.

Section 2 – Responsibility of Deacons

It is the responsibility of the deacons to assist the pastors in their work of ministering to the congregation. In addition to serving as members of the governing board, they shall assist the Pastors in the teaching and discipling ministry of the church. They may be appointed to serve as small group leaders, but will not be required to serve in this capacity. They should also be willing to serve on committees and in appointed positions as they are needed in order to lift the burden of administrative matters from the Pastors. The deacons are to be involved in the active ministry along with the Pastors.

Section 3 – Election

Deacons shall be elected by the congregation and shall serve a two (2) year term and may be re-elected by the congregation. The process shall be (1) nomination by the congregation, (2) interview and approval by the Senior Pastor and two official board members elected by the congregation for such a purpose, (3) election by the congregation from among approved persons and (4) final public recognition by the Pastor(s) commissioning them to the office of deacon.

A schedule of the terms of office with the names of the persons serving those terms including the dates their terms expire shall be filed in the church office and appropriately posted for the congregation.

Article VIII. Church Discipline

Because the church is comprised of sinners, problems are inevitable. But, the scriptures plainly set forth the specific steps that are to be followed by the members when problems arise. The purpose of these guidelines is to preserve the unity of the church, to properly help members who are harming themselves and

Members who continue to refuse to with this local body of believers and refuse to make a commitment to another local body of believers of like faith, after the church has made repeated attempts to restore them to fellowship shall be removed from the church membership and declared to be functioning as an unbeliever (I John 2:18,19).

Member may not take other members to court unless they have followed the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 and I Corinthians 6:1-6 and received permission by the judicial committee overseeing the matter of dispute.

Article IX. Meetings

Since the establishment of the Church at Jerusalem in A.D. 30, the Christian Church has assembled together on Sunday, the first day of the week for the purpose of worshipping together, receiving instruction from God's Word, fellowship, prayer and celebrating the Lord's resurrection. This local church shall be committed to upholding this New Testament tradition.

The times and number of meetings to be held by the church leadership shall be under the supervision of the official board who will take into consideration the needs and wishes of the congregation.

Meetings may be canceled by the Senior Pastor at his discretion.

Special meeting and speakers may be scheduled by the Senior Pastor at his discretion.

Article X. Amendments and Purpose of this Document

This constitution has been established to provide guidelines for this local body of believers as we seek to obey the great commission of Jesus Christ. Amendments should be made without hesitation should anything unbiblical be found to be contained herein. Changes should also be made which do not violate scriptures if they would enable the church to be more effective in following her mission.

Specific policies should be placed in the church's *Policy Manual* rather than the constitution.

This constitution may be changed upon a (3/4) majority recommendation of the official board and a (2/3) majority approval by the congregation.