



Goss
Memorial
Church

Constitution and By-laws

Revised and Approved
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CONSTITUTION
OF
GOSS MEMORIAL CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Goss Memorial Church of Akron, Ohio, ordains this Constitution and By-Laws to be its fundamental law for government, doctrine, and worship to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

This constitution shall not be suspended or abrogated, and shall remain in force as presently formulated or as duly amended until this corporation is legally dissolved.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be GOSS MEMORIAL CHURCH OF AKRON, by which name it is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this organization to establish in its community, a Christian congregation desiring to maintain itself as a church for the worship of God, the preservation of the faith, and the propagation of that faith through Godly living in the family and community and in evangelistic and missionary enterprises until the Lord comes.

ARTICLE III

ARTICLES OF FAITH

A. We believe in ONE TRIUNE GOD eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfection, including holiness, love, wisdom, mercy, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience and righteousness. References for reading: Matthew 28:19, Deuteronomy 6:4, John 10:30, II Corinthians 13:14.

B. We believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, second person of the Trinity. The primary and essential facts concerning Him are well authenticated: (1) super-natural birth, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, begotten by God the Father, and born of a virgin; (2) sinless life; (3) substitutionary death; (4) bodily resurrection; (5) ascension into Heaven; (6) sending forth of the Holy Spirit; (7) the Rapture, which we believe will be personal, premillennial, and before the Tribulation - for His saints and (8) the Millennium, which follows the Tribulation, with His saints to reign a thousand years on this earth. References for reading: Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew

1:23; Luke 1:30-35; John 8:46; Romans 5:6-8; I Corinthians 5:21; I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 7:26; Revelation 19:19-20:5; Acts 1:10.

C. We believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT, third person of the Trinity. He carries out His functions, as the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth in this age, by convicting and regenerating sinners. He indwells, baptizes, teaches, guides, comforts, seals, and sanctifies believers. References for reading: John 16: 7-11; John 3:5; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:10-16, 6:11.

D. We believe in THE HOLY SCRIPTURES accepting them as being divinely inspired in their entirety, therefore inerrant as originally given. They are an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. References for reading: Psalm 119:89; John 10:35; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21.

E. We believe in THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN. Man was created by the Word of God in His image. Man was not in any sense the offspring of any animal ancestry. By deliberate disobedience to the will of God, man became a sinful creature, the fall affecting the whole human race. Being sinful in both nature and practice, he is under the just judgment of a holy God Who has provided the perfect plan of salvation for mankind's recovery and redemption. References for reading: Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 3:1-24; Mark 7:21-23; John 8:44; Romans 3:23, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:18.

F. We believe in THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY OF SATAN. He is the author of all the powers of darkness and sin, the open and declared enemy of God and mankind, and he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. References for reading: Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14: 12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; II Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10.

G. We believe in SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH. Because man is sinful, he is separated from God. Jesus Christ's life on earth, substitutionary death and resurrection result in the only way for man to be reconciled to God. Any man that believes these facts in his heart, repents for sin, and confesses with his mouth, will receive Salvation from eternal damnation, and will be eternally secure in a life forever with God. Salvation is in no way merited by the works of man. References for reading: John 10:28, Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:5-6.

H. We believe in FUTURE LIFE AND ETERNAL EXISTENCE. There will be a resurrection of the bodies of both the just and the unjust. The spirits of believers at death depart immediately to be present with the Redeemer until the rapture of the church when their bodies are to be changed into the likeness of His own glorified body. The spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades, the place of punishment where they are kept awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment at which time they will be assigned to the Lake of Fire, the place of final and everlasting punishment. References for reading: Luke 16:19-31; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15: 51-58; II Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20: 5-6, 11-15.

I. We believe in ONE TRUE CHURCH. It is composed of all born-again believers and is known in Scripture as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. All believers are exhorted to observe the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and are expected to assemble themselves with one another in local congregations for worship, prayer, fellowship, witnessing, and personal spiritual growth. References for reading: Ephesians 4:3-6, 5:25-32; I Corinthians 11: 23-34; Hebrews 10:24-25.

J. We believe THE GREAT COMMISSION is the charter of the Church as given by Christ. All duty and privilege belonging to the Church are explicitly and implicitly included in it. This task laid upon the Church is Christ's answer to the need of mankind. The Great Commission is Christ's way of giving Himself to the world as He has given Himself for the world. The Great Commission imposes upon the Church one single supreme function - to know Christ and make Him known through a program of missions and evangelism. References for reading: Matthew 28: 18-20; II Timothy 4:1-5.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ and having received Him as Savior may be eligible for membership in Goss Memorial Church. The individual will make written application and then be interviewed by the Pastor and/or Board of Elders as to their Christian experience and the basis of salvation. Church membership in no way should be interpreted as a requirement for Salvation. The individual will be required to assent to the foregoing Articles of Faith and submit to this constitution of the church. Upon approval by the Board of Elders, the applicant shall be presented to the congregation.

We recognize the Holy Scriptures as the final rule of faith and practice and members guilty of misconduct, which brings reproach upon Christ, and His church shall be disciplined. All actions of discipline, except in the case of the Senior Pastor, lie in the hands of the Elders and the Senior Pastor as provided in the By-laws.

Persons who have been received into its membership and have not been excluded by the process of Christian discipline, shall be communicant members of this congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges as provided in the By-laws.

ARTICLE V

GOVERNMENT

The supreme legislative and administrative power of the church is vested in the membership, assembled in meeting duly and legally called as provided in Article IX. It is the prerogative of the membership to decide such questions as the buying, selling, or leasing of property or facilities, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the call and rejection of a Senior Pastor, and questions of policy of the membership as well as changes in the Constitution and By-laws. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the church is entrusted to the Official Board, chosen as provided in the By-laws. The Official Board shall be defined as the Trustees of the church, which is incorporated in the State of Ohio, and these Trustees shall exercise all of the authority assigned by the laws of the state.

ARTICLE VI

CHURCH OFFICIALS

A. Official Board

The Official Board shall be composed of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons as voting members. Non-voting members shall include all Pastors and Directors on staff. It shall have jurisdiction and oversight of the congregation and all its organizations. It shall have the care and control of the property of the church whether real or personal as a sacred trust. Fifty percent of its voting members shall constitute a quorum.

The manner of election, terms of office, and rights and duties of the officials are defined in the By-laws.

B. Officers

The Official Board shall elect a president, vice-president, and secretary from its members, and appoint a treasurer and a financial secretary from the church membership - all for a term of one year. The president, vice-president, and secretary shall be the officers of the corporation.

ARTICLE VII

AUTHORIZED BOARDS

A. Board of Christian Education

1. Organization

The Board of Christian Education shall be appointed annually by the Official Board.

2. The functions of this Board shall be:

- a. To coordinate, promote, and evaluate the educational work - to be consistent with the Articles of Faith.
- b. To define the objectives and policies of the educational program with emphasis on evangelism, worship, education and missions, subject to review and approval of the Official Board.
- c. To select Biblical curricula materials to achieve the objectives.
- d. To prescribe operating procedures for Christian Education programs such as Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, children's programs and sports programs.
- e. To appoint annually the Sunday School Superintendent.
- f. To be responsible for the selection and training of teachers and leaders, and to appoint them to serve on an annual basis.
- g. To recommend financial policies for the educational program to the Official Board to assist in the preparation of the annual budget.

B. Missionary Council

1. Organization

The members of the Missionary Council shall be approved annually by the Official Board.

2. The functions of this Council shall be:
 - a. To consider perspective missionaries and make recommendations to the Official Board regarding missionary support.
 - b. To supervise the missionary education program of the church and to seek to enlist all members in a continuous missionary effort.
 - c. To encourage and coordinate communications with the missionaries.
 - d. To maintain a missionary handbook containing the policies and procedures of the missionary program, which are subject to the approval of the Official Board.

ARTICLE VIII

SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS

The Official Board shall have the power of general oversight and control of all subordinate organizations. The head of each such organization shall be responsible for a written report at the annual business meeting of the church. This report shall be submitted to the secretary of the Official Board at least two weeks prior to the annual business meeting. The heads of these organizations must be members of this church in good standing and approved by the Official Board.

ARTICLE IX

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The business meetings of this church shall have as a goal to find God's will and be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Ten percent of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum. Members must be present to vote.

A. Annual Congregational Meeting

An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held each year for the transaction of regular business including the election of officers. Members of the congregation in good and regular standing shall be entitled to vote at all elections for Senior Pastor, Elders, Deacons and on any question submitted to the congregation for action as provided in the by-laws. The annual reports shall be available to the church membership one week prior to the meeting.

B. Special Congregational Meetings

Special congregational meetings may be held for the purpose of dealing with one specific issue. One week's previous public notice shall be given of the time, place, and purpose of this special congregational meeting.

The Official Board may call a special meeting of the congregation.

At the written request of ten percent of the members in good standing, the membership may call a special meeting of the congregation. The Official Board will announce this special meeting within two weeks of receiving the request.

ARTICLE X

ORDINATION

It is our hope that Spirit-filled men may be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. Such men shall appear before an ordination council composed of the Pastor, the Board of Elders, and such other men as they may invite to participate, and who are

unanimous in their conviction that the candidate has the suitable gifts and a call to the ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. They may then be given a commission to preach and administer the ordinances by a two-thirds vote at a duly called congregational meeting.

ARTICLE XI

ORDINANCES

A. The Ordinance of Baptism

Baptism shall be administered to believers by the Pastor or one appointed by the Pastor or the Board of Elders. The mode shall be by sprinkling or immersion unless the candidate requests another mode approved by the Elders.

B. The Ordinance of Communion

Communion shall be observed at least six times a year by the church and as often as the Official Board may deem best or on special occasions by the order of the Pastor and the Official Board.

C. Dedication of Infants

Dedication of Infants shall be administered by the Pastor or one appointed by the Pastor or the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XII

PROPERTY

The church may, in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold, purchase, and receive title by gift, grant, or other conveyance of and to any property real or personal with power to mortgage, sell, or convey the same, within the provisions of the laws of the state of Ohio. No real property may be purchased, sold, exchanged, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered except by two-thirds vote of the membership present at a duly called congregational meeting.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

Additions and/or alterations to this constitution may be proposed in any duly called meeting of the congregation. The proposed additions and/or alterations shall be referred to the Official Board, which shall consider the same and report at a subsequent meeting of the congregation. Said additions and alterations can be adopted only by at least a two-thirds majority of all voting members present.

ARTICLE XIV

BY-LAWS

By-laws may be added from time to time for clarification and implementation of the constitution. The by-laws may be amended in any duly called meeting of the congregation by at least a two-thirds majority of all voting members present.

***** BY-LAWS *****

I. MEMBERS

A. Admittance to Membership

1. Any Person desiring membership with this church shall make written application and then be interviewed by the Senior Pastor and/or Board of Elders, as described in Article IV except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) following.
2. An exception to the requirement of appearance before the congregation may be permitted in case of invalids who are unable to attend the public services of the church.
3. Missionaries, evangelists, or Christian workers whose circumstances make it impossible for them to appear before the Pastor and/or Board of Elders may make application by written certification of acceptance of the constitution including Articles of Faith accompanied by a statement of their personal faith and Christian experience. Upon approval from the Board of Elders, their membership will be announced to the congregation.
4. The Church office shall keep a correct list of all members and their addresses showing the dates of their admission and of their withdrawal.

B. Privileges

All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and the spiritual blessings of the church and to the services of its pastor(s), officials, and other workers, as well as the Christian sympathy and support of all members. Members of this congregation in good standing are entitled to voice, vote, and hold office unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or By-laws. Voting privileges shall be limited to those sixteen years of age or older.

C. Duties

It is the duty of all members to take an active part in the life of this church for the glory of God and the uplifting of mankind. This includes regular attendance at the worship and study services; fervent prayer for the welfare of the church; supporting the spiritual training of our youth; liberal financial and moral support towards the maintenance and benevolent undertakings of this church; obedience to her established law and authorities, untiring zeal in bringing the lost under her influence; and participation in the organizations of the congregation wherever possible.

D. Termination of Membership

Membership in this church may terminate in the following ways:

1. By death.
2. By dismissal.
 - a. Any member who is out of harmony with the beliefs and practices of this church or who lives inconsistent with their Christian profession, or any person who seeks to disturb the unity and peace of the church, may be dismissed from

church membership after receiving discipline according to the principles established in Matthew 18:15-17 and a hearing in front of the Board of Elders.

- b. Any member who fails to attend the regular services of the church for a period of one year unless prevented by a reason acceptable to the Official Board may be dismissed.
3. By request.
4. By joining another church.

II. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The annual meeting shall be held on the third Sunday in the month of November each year unless otherwise announced. Only such business as has been announced in the call may be transacted at any special meeting. A two-thirds majority vote shall prevail in all cases.

III. DUTIES OF THE OFFICIALS

A. Elders

An Elder is a member of the church chosen by the congregation and ordained to his office. He shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. An Elder shall take heed to himself that he may be an example unto others, watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation, maintain order in the House of God, aid in visiting the sick, and minister according to his ability. The Board of Elders shall approve all appointments to positions of leadership in the church and in its subordinate organizations.

B. Deacons

A Deacon is a member of the church chosen by the congregation and ordained to his office. He is responsible primarily for the physical welfare of the church. He shall aid in securing the funds necessary for the support of the church in its various activities, in fostering the principles of stewardship, and in dispensing the charity of the church.

C. Senior Pastor

1. Shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and ministration of the ordinances of the church.
2. Shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees connected with the church or any of its organizations.
3. Shall counsel the needy, comfort the afflicted, systematically visit the membership, prospects, and sick, and conduct training classes for applicants seeking church membership.
4. Shall do the work of an evangelist by seeking to win the lost of our community.
5. Shall perform the duties of a pastor-teacher with a view to training the membership to do the work of the ministry as set forth in the fourth chapter of Ephesians.
6. Shall conscientiously perform such duties as may be arranged between the Board of Elders and himself.
7. No outside minister shall perform any ceremony in the church without the consent of the Senior Pastor. To invite a speaker either during a temporary absence of the Pastor or for special occasions, the consent of both Pastor and Board of Elders is necessary.

8. The Pastor's salary shall be paid promptly in semi-monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve him of temporal cares as far as possible and to preserve the dignity of his calling, subject however, to the provisions of the contract between the Pastor and the church

D. Additional Church Staff

The Official Board may hire additional Officials, such as Christian Education Director, Youth Director, Associate Pastor or Music Director, as necessary, to better serve the congregation. Job descriptions will be developed prior to the hire of any position and contracts are agreed upon prior to employment.

E. Officers

1. President

The president shall preside at all congregational and Official Board meetings. He shall see that all business meetings and Official Board meetings are duly called by the secretary, and see to the execution of all resolutions. He shall announce, or remind the Pastor to announce all regular and special meetings of the congregation; or in case it is so decided by the Official Board, instruct the secretary to send a call for such meetings to every member by mail. He also is empowered with the secretary to sign all contracts, loans, and deeds in the name of the congregation. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church and its organizations.

2. Vice-President

The vice-president shall preside at all meetings where the president is not present and also when business pertaining to the president is before the Board or congregation. He shall do all in his power to help the president to make his administration more effective.

In the event any Board meetings are held where neither the president nor the vice-president can be present, it shall be the duty of the president, or in case of inability on his part, the vice-president, to appoint an Elder or Deacon to preside for this one meeting.

3. Secretary

The secretary shall keep a record of all transactions at the meetings of the congregation and of the Official Board, issue the call to all regular meetings at the request of the president, and attend to all correspondence. He shall, with the president, sign all contracts, loans, and deeds.

4. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall receive, record, and deposit all moneys as instructed. He shall obtain receipt for the same. He shall send yearly statements to all members. He shall give bond to the amount decided by the Official Board and receive an annual salary.

5. Treasurer

The treasurer shall have charge of all moneys for congregational support received from the financial secretary, give his receipt for the same, and make all payments by vouchers as ordered by the Official board. He shall render a monthly

and an annual report to the Official Board. He shall give bond to the amount decided by the Official Board and receive an annual salary.

6. Sunday School Superintendent
 - a. Shall be the chief executive officer of the Sunday School.
 - b. Shall perform such duties as are prescribed in the constitution of the Sunday School.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICIALS AND TERMINATION OF SERVICE

The church officials who shall be elected by the membership include the Senior Pastor, the Elders, and the Deacons. All other staff members shall be hired by, and are responsible to, the Official Board.

A. Senior Pastor

1. Election

The membership shall elect its Senior Pastor. The Official Board shall nominate the candidate to be voted upon by the membership. Only such men shall be considered as can and will conscientiously and without mental reservation subscribe to the Articles of Faith and this constitution and by-laws. The membership shall consider only one candidate at a time and vote by ballot for or against his election. If he is elected by at least a two-thirds majority of voting members present, the Official Board shall tender him a call. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period and be admitted to membership. Each year the Official Board shall conduct a written performance evaluation of the Senior Pastor.

2. Termination

A three-fourth's affirmative vote of the membership of the Official Board shall be required to recommend to the congregation that the Senior Pastor be removed from office. Upon recommendation from the Official Board, the Pastor shall be removed from office by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members of the church present and voting at a meeting of members called for that purpose by notice given at public worship on the two preceding Sundays. A six weeks' notice shall be given by either the membership or the Pastor in order to terminate this relation unless by mutual consent.

The Official Board may appoint an Interim Pastor to fill a vacancy of the pulpit until a Pastor is duly elected and called.

B. Elders

1. Election and Qualifications

Elders shall be nominated by the Official Board and public notice of the nominations shall be given from the pulpit at least one week before the election. One additional nomination may be made by the membership at the annual congregational meeting. There shall be four Elders composing the Board of Elders elected by the membership for a term of two years. Their terms of office shall be so arranged that one-half of the Elders' terms of office shall expire each year. An Elder that has served two consecutive terms must allow one year to elapse before being eligible for election again as Elder. One who has served as an Elder may without interruption of service be elected to serve as Deacon. They shall be ordained and installed before they may serve. They shall be male members in good standing,

possessing the qualifications of chapter 3 of I Timothy and chapter 1 of the book of Titus, as determined by the Board of Elders, and shall have served here previously in the office of Deacon for at least one term. The Elders shall elect the chairman of the Board of Elders.

2. Elder Emeritus

In recognition of outstanding service to this church, the Official Board, by a two-thirds favorable vote, may appoint a member to the position of Elder Emeritus. To qualify for this honorary position, a member shall have faithfully served as an officer of the church for a minimum of sixteen years, at least four of which were in the office of Elder and shall have reached the age of sixty years. Elder Emeritus will serve with full voting privileges.

C. Deacons

1. Election and Qualifications

Deacons shall be nominated by the Official Board and public notice of the nominations shall be given from the pulpit at least one week before the election. One additional nomination may be made by the membership at the annual Congregational Meeting. There shall be eight Deacons composing the Board of Deacons elected by the membership for a term of two years. Their terms of office shall be so arranged that one-half of the Deacons' terms of office shall expire each year. A Deacon that has served two consecutive terms must allow one year to elapse before being eligible for election again as Deacon. One who has served as a Deacon may without interruption of service be elected to serve as Elder. They shall be ordained and installed before they may serve. They shall be male members in good standing, possessing the qualifications of chapter 3 of I Timothy and chapter 1 of the Book of Titus, as determined by the Board of Elders. In order to be nominated for election to the Board of Deacons one must have been a member in good standing for a period of at least one year, be at least 18 years of age and not be a novice in Christ. The Deacons shall elect the chairman of the Board of Deacons.

D. Vacancy in the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons

When a vacancy occurs by death or resignation or any other way, the Official Board may appoint a qualified member in good standing, possessing the qualifications of chapter 3 of I Timothy and chapter 1 of the Book of Titus, as determined by the Board of Elders, to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

V. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Other documents referred to in this Constitution and By-Laws are The Missionary Handbook and the Sunday School Constitution. These documents are maintained by the respective organizations, approved by the Official Board and describe policy, guidelines, goals and procedures for their specific facet of church life.

The Official Board may from time to time, create other guidelines and/or position papers which upon approval by the Official Board, reflect Goss Memorial Church's policy and position on matters.