

CONSTITUTION OF GURNEE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Adopted by the Congregation June 5, 2011

Amended: November 4, 2012

Amended: June 12, 2016

Amended June 9, 2019

ARTICLE I – NAME AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The name of this church is the **GURNEE COMMUNITY CHURCH**, hereafter referred to as the “**Church**” or the “**Congregation**”. The official corporate title of the church is filed as **CHURCH OF CHRIST AT GURNEE**.

This church is congregationally governed. All officers are elected by, represent, and are responsible to the total membership of the church under the guidelines of this constitution.

ARTICLE II – FAITH AND MISSION

Section 1 – Faith Statement

God: There is one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing as three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible: God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the sufficient revelation of His character and will for salvation. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition: God created mankind in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with first humans created, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus, Israel’s promised Messiah, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ: Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, convicts the world of its guilt, regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church: The true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living: God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return: Our Lord Jesus Christ will return in bodily form, at a time known only to God. This imminent return demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny: God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.

Section 2 – Mission Statement

It is the mission of this church to lead people to a growing faith in Jesus Christ, through love, service, and encouragement, as we journey toward full devotion to God.

ARTICLE III – THE SACRAMENTS

Section 1 – Church Sacraments

This Church practices the sacraments of Communion (The Lord's Supper) and Baptism.

Section 2 – Communion

The Sacrament of Communion (The Lord's Supper) shall be scheduled by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders, and shall be observed at least six times per year. Any person who is earnestly seeking to be a follower of our Lord shall be welcomed to partake.

Section 3 – Baptism

Baptism may be of infants or children of a believer, or of believers in Jesus Christ. Infant baptism shall be available to any parent(s) who have made a commitment to bring up their children in the Christian faith as led by Christ and the church. Believer's baptism shall be available to any who, declaring themselves followers of Christ, wish to testify to the stand they have taken. The mode of baptism may be by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, at the choice of the believer. A service for the dedication of a child to God shall be available for those preferring to observe baptism as a believer's experience.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications

The church will welcome into its membership any believer in Christ who accepts the Faith and Mission Statements of the church contained in Article II.

Section 2 – Reception of Members

Under the guidance of the pastors and Board of Elders, new members are to be welcomed and recognized at a service of the public worship of God, whether by transfer, confession, or reaffirmation of their faith.

Section 3 – Duties

Members are expected to be faithful in the duties essential to the Christian life; to regularly attend worship services; to participate in congregational meetings; to give regularly for the support of the church and its benevolence; to share in its organized work; and to diligently seek the spiritual and general welfare of its members and others.

Section 4 – Termination

Termination of membership shall be by:

- A. Letter of withdrawal or transfer;

- B. Retirement. Members who have not participated in the activities of the church, or contributed to its support may be removed from the roll of active members after a diligent attempt has been made to contact them;
- C. Death;
- D. Removal for cause by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE V – GURNEE COMMUNITY CHURCH GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Section 1 – Organizational Structure

This organizational document is intended to provide a stable and effective organizational structure to aid this Church in accomplishing its mission. The sections that follow specify a model that keeps the roles of Senior Pastor, Board of Elders, staff and Congregation distinct and effective for church health and growth.

- A. The role of the Congregation is to serve as the primary ministers of the Church.
- B. The role of the Board of Elders is to establish Guiding Principles (Article VI, Section 3.A.) for the Senior Pastor's leadership.
- C. The role of the Senior Pastor is to lead the Church to accomplish its mission.
- D. The role of the staff is to manage the ministries of the Church, directed by the Senior Pastor.

Section 2 – Congregation

The primary role of the Congregation shall be to serve as the ministers of the Church in carrying out the mission of the Church. The following decisions of the Church shall require the approval of the Congregation by a simple majority of those Members present and voting:

- A. Calling or dismissing a called pastor
- B. Amending the Constitution
- C. Electing members to serve on the Board of Elders
- D. Ratifying the annual budget
- E. Buying or selling real estate
- F. Committing the Church to new debt
- G. Dissolving the corporation
- H. Conferring of ordination

Section 3 – Board of Elders

The primary role of the Board of Elders shall be to provide accountability and support for the Senior Pastor by writing concise Guiding Principles as depicted in Article VI, Section 3.A.

Section 4 – Senior Pastor

The role of the Senior Pastor is to lead the Church to accomplish its mission. The Senior Pastor shall lead the Congregation by teaching biblical truth, casting vision, and advancing the mission.

The Senior Pastor shall lead the Board by vision-casting. The Senior Pastor shall lead the staff by directing them in their management of all Church operations. With regard to performance, the Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Board of Elders. With regard to job retention, the Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Congregation. The Senior Pastor shall hire, direct, and may terminate any and all Church staff. Church staff hiring and terminations require the approval of the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall establish and recommend changes to Church staff compensation within the congregationally approved budget in compliance with the Guiding Principles established by the Board of Elders.

Section 5 – Staff

The role of a staff person is to manage a specific area of Church operation. The term “staff” shall apply to all ministry leaders appointed for this management purpose, whether they are unpaid, part-time, or full-time with regard to compensation. Staff positions shall be created, filled, vacated, or discontinued based on how effectively they accomplish designated parts of the Mission Principles within the means allowed by the Boundary Principles. Changes to staff positions, as recommended by the Senior Pastor, require approval by the Board of Elders. Immediate family members may not serve on the Gurnee Community Church staff at the pastor or director level (see the Guiding Principles for information on the position of Director) at the same time.

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1 - Membership

The Board of Elders shall consist of at least 7 and no more than 9 members including the Senior Pastor, who shall be a voting member and the only staff person on the Board. The other six to eight Members shall be active Church Members selected for 2-year terms by the following process:

- A. Nominations for the Board of Elders shall be submitted to the current Chairperson of the Board of Elders.
- B. Immediate family members may not serve on the Board of Elders at the same time.
- C. The Board of Elders shall present to the Congregation for approval a selection of candidates to serve as Board of Elders members.

Section 2 – Officers

Each year the Board of Elders shall appoint a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board Chair, Secretary and/or Treasurer may sign legal documents as called upon on behalf of the Church.

- A. Chairperson. The Chairperson shall be a lay member of the Church, and shall enforce the Accountability Principles and shall lead the Board when discussing the Pastor's performance and compensation. The Chairperson shall preside at all business meetings of the church membership, both regular and special.

- B. Secretary. The Secretary shall be a lay member of the church, and shall maintain and distribute the current edition of the Guiding Principles and other Board documents. The Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings of the Board of Elders and of the Church, and shall be responsible for maintaining all reports, papers, and documents of the church. The Secretary shall conduct such correspondence as may be required and is responsible for compiling and publishing the Annual Report.
- C. Treasurer. The church treasurer shall be a lay member of the church, and shall ensure that the Board of Elders performs its fiduciary responsibility to the Congregation. The treasurer shall ensure that appropriate financial Boundary Principles are in place and are being followed so as to safeguard the financial position of the church.

Section 3 – Purpose and Duties

- A. The Board of Elders shall draft, revise and approve the following as Guiding Principles:
 - 1. Mission Principles shall define for the Senior Pastor what ends the Church exists to achieve.
 - 2. Boundary Principles shall define for the Senior Pastor what means may not be used in pursuit of achieving those ends.
 - 3. Accountability Principles are operating procedures which shall define for the Chairperson how the Board of Elders is to do its work with integrity.
 - 4. Organizational Principles shall define for the Senior Pastor how the Church shall be organized and function in carrying out its mission.
- B. The Board of Elders shall review on an annual basis the performance of the Senior Pastor in upholding the Guiding Principles of the Church.
- C. The Board of Elders shall meet at least bi-monthly at such time and place as shall be determined or at the call of the Chairperson (giving one week notice). Five voting members shall represent a quorum.
- D. The Board of Elders shall approve the yearly budget presented by the Senior Pastor and submit it to the Congregation for its approval.
- E. The Board of Elders shall approve any distributions recommended by the Endowment Fund Ministry Team.
- F. The Board of Elders shall appoint, create, or eliminate special committees as contained in the Organizational Principles section of the Guiding Principles.
- G. The time and place of the regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be publicly announced at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. Members of the church are welcome to attend any meeting of the Board of Elders with the privilege of entering into discussion on any issue, but shall not make motions, second motions, or vote on any motion. The Board of Elders may hold a closed session during any meeting when it determines that the business under consideration cannot be accomplished in open session.
- H. The Board of Elders may appoint the following to carry out the responsibilities implied:
 - 1. Legal advisor
 - 2. Church historian
 - 3. Financial Advisor
 - 4. Institutional representatives for the scouting programs.

ARTICLE VII – PASTORS

Section 1 Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor of the church shall accept the provisions set forth in this constitution and shall function as the administrator of the church, overseeing the total operation of the church within the guidelines of this constitution and the Guiding Principles adopted by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall directly or indirectly supervise the work of the staff members of the church, and establish their job descriptions, their performance evaluations, and salary recommendations. The Senior Pastor shall directly or indirectly review these job descriptions annually and/or following the resignation of any staff member and the Board of Elders shall approve any changes recommended. In addition to these general responsibilities, the Senior Pastor's specific responsibilities and duties are outlined in a job description. This job description shall be formulated by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall review this job description annually and/or following the resignation of the Senior Pastor.

Section 2 Associate Pastor(s)

The Associate Pastor (s) of the church shall accept the provisions set forth in this constitution, and shall work under the general guidance and direction of the Senior Pastor. The specific responsibilities and duties of the associate pastor(s) are outlined in a job description(s).

Section 3 Pastoral Elections

The Senior Pastor and the associate pastor(s) shall be elected by the church pursuant to the following:

- A. Within two weeks of the Senior Pastor and/or Associate Pastor giving notice of resignation, the following issues shall be examined:
- B. In the case of an Associate Pastor, the Senior Pastor shall determine whether or not it is necessary to fill this position and shall make a recommendation to the Board of Elders.
 1. How the position of Senior Pastor or associate pastor shall be filled on an interim basis during the search for a permanent replacement.
- C. These determinations having been made, the Chairperson of the Board of Elders, shall nominate a pulpit search committee, representing as much as possible a cross section of the Congregation. Upon approval by the Board of Elders, the pulpit search committee shall be responsible for seeking and recommending a pastoral candidate to the Board of Elders.
- D. The Board of Elders shall consider the recommendation of the pulpit search committee, and if approved by no less than two-thirds of the entire Board of Elders, shall recommend the candidate to the Congregation, having the candidate conduct a regular Sunday worship service and deliver the sermon. One week following the regular worship service, in a special meeting of the Congregation called by the Chairperson of the Board of Elders, the members shall vote by ballot to accept or reject the recommendation of the Board of Elders. The will of the majority of those entitled to vote shall prevail. In case one-third or more of the Board of

Elders members present at such meeting shall dissent from the majority vote, they may, at their discretion, offer to members of the church a minority report, which shall contain the number of dissenting votes.

- E. Only one prospective candidate shall be submitted to the Congregation for consideration at one time.
- F. The election, retention or dismissal of a Congregationally-called pastor shall be based upon a recommendation from the Board of Elders, approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board at a special meeting called for such purpose or at any regular meeting. All Board of Elders members shall be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours beforehand of such meeting. The recommendation of the Board of Elders shall then be passed on to the Congregation at a special meeting called for such purpose or at any regular meeting. Congregational members shall be notified at least (2) weeks beforehand of such a meeting. The members shall vote to accept or reject the recommendation of the Board of Elders. The will of the majority of those present shall prevail.
- G. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section E., above, the Senior Pastor may dismiss with the approval of the Board of Elders, but without Congregational approval, an Associate Pastor if the Senior Pastor determines that the performance of the Associate Pastor is unsatisfactory.
- H. The Board of Elders shall review the performance of the Senior Pastor at least once each year to determine if the Senior Pastor is achieving the Mission Principles and respecting the Boundary Principles. Salary adjustments shall be made by the Board of Elders based on the Senior Pastors performance. The Board of Elders shall also confer with the Senior Pastor concerning duties, vacations, and policies pertaining to the pastor's welfare and the welfare of the church.
- I. The Senior Pastor and the associate pastor(s) shall give the church sixty (60) days written notice for resignation and the Congregation shall give the pastor(s) sixty (60) days written notice for dismissal.

Section 4 Temporary Pastoral Services

In the absence of a pastor, temporary preaching and pastoral services shall be arranged by the Board of Elders and the general supervision of the church shall be with the Chairperson of the Board of Elders.

Section 5 Licensure

A person seeking to become ordained may first enter into the process of licensure. Licensure is an intermediary status granted temporarily to persons called to a profession in the ministry and undertaking the process of seminary education and training to become an ordained pastor.

In the case of Gurnee Community Church, licensure signifies approval on the part of the Board of Elders, and ultimately the Congregation of the progress of the licentiate toward ordination and engagement in the activities for ministry. Under this temporary status, the licentiate is authorized by Gurnee Community Church to administer the sacraments, perform marriage ceremonies (as permitted by local and state laws), and conduct all the normal duties of a minister of the gospel as directed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders.

In all circumstances, as noted above, licensure is a temporary status expressly reserved for persons answering a call to pursue ordination and a profession in the ministry.

More details regarding the qualifications for licensure, the process required for licensure, and the relationship between the church and the licentiate are contained in the full definition of licensure. This definition is maintained by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VIII – ELECTIONS AND TENURE OF OFFICE

Section 1 – Election of the Board of Elders Members

The members of the Board of Elders shall be elected by the Congregation at a meeting called by the Chairperson for that purpose. The term of office for members of the Board of Elders shall be two years. Members may serve up to four consecutive two-year terms.

The persons elected shall take office the first day of the fiscal year, and shall be recognized and installed during a worship service during the first month of the fiscal year.

If any member of the Board of Elders is unable to fill the term of office (or is removed from the position), a Congregationally-elected replacement, meeting all requirements for a member of the Board of Elders, shall serve out the remaining vacated term of office. No person may hold nor serve in more than one congregationally elected position at one time.

ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 – Organization Meetings

- A. A meeting of the church Congregation shall be called by the Board of Elders to act on the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year prior to the start of the fiscal year.
- B. The Annual Report shall be published and made available to the congregation for review no later than 90 days after the start of the fiscal year.
- C. No congregational business meeting shall be conducted or solicited on the church premises before, during, or after a worship service or church activity without the approval of the Board of Elders.
- D. Special congregational business meetings of the church may be called upon one week's notice to the members. Such notice must state the purpose of the meeting. If such a meeting is called by someone other than the Board of Elders, it must be in writing to all members on the resident active roll and must be signed by at least 20% of the resident active members.
- E. All congregational meetings and all meetings of the Board of Elders shall be conducted under the guidance of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section 2 – Meetings for the Worship of God

The Board of Elders shall review the schedule of weekly worship services and church school. Any permanent or seasonal change must be approved by a majority of the Congregation at a regular or special congregational meeting. Special or holiday services may be scheduled by the Senior Pastor.

ARTICLE X – ENDOWMENT FUND

Section 1 - Purpose

The endowment fund is operated exclusively for religious, benevolent, and capital improvement purposes. It is intended to provide funds for purposes, which go beyond the reach of the established programs within the church, which are funded through the current giving of its members, the regular operating budget, and the gifts and memorials fund.

Section 2 - Regulations

The operation of the endowment fund shall be under the guidance of the Endowment Fund Ministry Team. The ministry team will consist of a chairperson and at least four members, all being members of the Gurnee Community Church. Should, under extraordinary circumstances, there be a need to transfer funds that represent the original donation to the fund principal from the endowment fund to other church funds, it must be approved by the Endowment Fund Ministry Team, the Board of Elders, and by a two-thirds vote of approval by the Congregation.

Section 3 – Endowment Fund Bylaws

The Endowment Fund Ministry Team will work under the provisions found in the Gurnee Community Church Endowment Fund Bylaws. The endowment fund bylaws may only be changed by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. At no time may the endowment fund bylaws be changed to eliminate congregational control of the fund.

ARTICLE XI – THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1 – Regulations for Amendment

The constitution may be amended only after said amendment has been adopted by the Board of Elders by a two-thirds majority and then presented to the Congregation at a regular Sunday morning worship service or in writing to all members, at least two weeks prior to the Congregation voting thereon. Further, a two-thirds majority of those voting thereon shall be essential in order for the amendment to be passed and become effective.

Section 2 – Availability

Copies of this constitution shall be provided to each member of the Board of Elders, and are available to any member of the Congregation.

Section 3 – Stature

This constitution shall not be superseded by any other Gurnee Community Church rules, Guiding Principles, or standard operating procedures.

ARTICLE XII – QUALIFICATION AS EXEMPT ORGANIZATION AND DISSOLUTION

Section 1 – Exemptions

Anything in this constitution or bylaws notwithstanding, the purpose or purposes for which this corporation is organized are limited to those that will qualify it as an exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as tax-exempt organizations under such code.

Section 2 – Legislation

This corporation shall not, as a substantial part of its activities, carry on propaganda or otherwise attempt to influence legislation. This corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3 – Dissolution

No part of the net earnings, properties or assets of this corporation, on dissolution or otherwise, shall inure to the benefit of any private person or individual or any member or officer of this corporation. On liquidation or dissolution all properties and assets of this corporation remaining after paying or providing for all debts and obligations shall be distributed and paid over to such fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for charitable, religious or educational purposes as the Board of Elders shall determine, and shall at the time qualify as a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code.