

## **Constitution of SouthField Community Church**

### **I. Name**

The name of this church is SouthField Community Church. This organization is affiliated with the Converge Worldwide and Converge Mid America.

### **II. Incorporation**

This organization was incorporated by the state of Illinois on June 2, 1884. The church was reincorporated by the state of Illinois on July 29, 1992.

### **III. Purpose**

The purpose of this organization is to foster life-change by leading people toward full devotion to Jesus Christ, to engage in religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent work, and to own and maintain such property and equipment as may be needed to carry out this purpose.

### **IV. Statement of Faith**

#### **The Word of God**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

#### **The Trinity**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

#### **God the Father**

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

#### **Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

#### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

#### **Regeneration**

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

#### **The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and

fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

#### **Christian Conduct**

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

#### **Marriage and Family**

We believe that the institution of marriage is a sacred covenant designed by God to model the love of Christ for His church and to serve as the basic building block of human civilization. Marriage is intended by God to be a lifelong, covenant partnership between one man and one woman. God desires that sexual intimacy and procreation be reserved for this union. We are called to uphold God's marriage design and to minister in Christ's name to all who suffer the consequences of its brokenness.

#### **The Ordinances**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

#### **Church Cooperation**

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

#### **The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

### **V. Participating Membership**

#### **Participating Members**

Those who choose to become participating members of this church are making a commitment to attend regularly, to serve faithfully, to support the leaders and direction of the church wholeheartedly, to give sacrificially and to reach out to lost people intentionally. Participating members exhibit a desire to grow in full devotion to Christ, and believe in mutual accountability for living up to this standard.

#### **Qualifications for Participating Members**

The membership of this church shall consist of those who have confessed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and who, through faith and repentance, have acknowledged Him as Forgiver of their sins and Leader of their lives. They have given testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism by immersion. They acknowledge and submit to the authority of Scripture in every area of life and are in full agreement with the Purpose and Statement of Faith of this church.

### **Admission to Participating Membership**

Candidates for membership shall attend a membership class where the Purpose, Statement of Faith, and other pertinent information is presented. Required attendance at this class may be waived by the overseers.

Each candidate shall submit an application and shall meet with the overseers, who will determine if the applicant meets the qualifications and is ready for membership. Upon unanimous vote of the overseers that the applicant meets the membership requirements, participating membership shall be granted.

Pastors and their spouses shall become participating members the day they begin their duties at the church.

### **Expiration of Membership**

The membership of any person who ceases to participate with some degree of regularity for a period of six months, unless hindered by illness, disability or other valid reason, shall expire upon the unanimous vote of the overseers.

Membership shall also expire for the following reasons:

1. Request of the member.
2. When the member joins another church.
3. Unanimous vote of the overseers through the process of church discipline. See section IX-4.

### **VI. Government of the Church**

The government of the church is vested in the body of believers in Jesus Christ who compose it, and it shall exercise its authority through business meetings and through its overseers. The church assembled in a duly convened business meeting shall have sole authority in the following matters:

1. The election of overseers.
2. The amending of this constitution.
3. The adoption or amendment of the annual budget.
4. The church's denominational affiliation.
5. The calling and dismissal of the senior pastor.
6. The approval of purchase, sale, conveyance or mortgage of real property.
7. Any item that the church, in a duly convened business meeting, shall deem to be the sole authority of the church membership.

### **Qualifications for Overseers**

The person being considered for overseer should exhibit the characteristics presented in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

### **Responsibilities of Overseers**

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| 1. Lead by example.           | 1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7, 17                        |
| 2. Teach Biblical principles. | 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9                             |
| 3. Protect the believers.     | Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9                             |
| 4. Pray for the sick.         | James 5:14   |
| 5. Manage the church of God.  | 1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 15:1-2, 6, 22 |

- a) Pray for wisdom and direction.
- b) Represent the church in solving problems and making decisions.
- c) Direct the ministry and business of the church through the oversight and delegation of responsibilities to church staff, ministry teams and other volunteer workers.
- d) Develop and update long-range plans for the church.
- e) Exercise general oversight of all financial matters of the church, including presenting an annual budget to the church.
- f) Develop and maintain job descriptions for staff, leaders and ministry teams.
- g) Hold in trust all properties belonging to the church and represent the church in legal matters.
- h) Submit the names of candidates for overseer to the church for approval at the annual business meeting.
- i) Appoint leaders.
- j) Receive and dismiss members.
- k) Propose amendments to the constitution.
- l) Serve as Senior Pastor Search Committee.
- m) Exercise all other powers delegated by the church.

#### **Election and Term of Overseers**

Overseers, who must be members of the church, shall be nominated by the overseers. They shall be elected by the church by written ballot and must receive favorable votes from three-fourths of the members present. They shall serve for two years, with no limitation on terms served. Terms shall be staggered so that a proportionate number of overseers' terms expire each year. An overseer may be removed by the unanimous decision of the other overseers. The board shall consist of no fewer than four members including the Senior Pastor.

#### **Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor**

1. Study, preach and teach the Word of God.
2. Guide the spiritual life of the church.
3. Serve as an overseer.
4. Serve as chairman of the church.
5. Supervise associate pastors and other staff.
6. Serve as an ex-officio member of all ministry teams and committees.
7. Perform other functions as directed by the overseers or the church.

#### **Calling and Termination of the Senior Pastor**

Upon recommendation of the overseers, a senior pastor shall be called at a special meeting of the church assembled for that purpose. Public notice of the meeting shall be given on the preceding two Sundays as well as notification by mail to all members. Of all votes cast, three-fourths must be favorable. Voting shall be by written ballot.

The pastoral relationship may be terminated by:

1. The senior pastor giving at least sixty days notice to the church through the overseers.
2. The church by majority vote at a meeting where a quorum of one-third of the members are present. Public notice of the meeting shall be given on the preceding two Sundays as well as

notification by mail to all members. This meeting shall be called by the overseers or it may be called by written petition of a majority of the membership.

### **Church Staff**

All staff, except the senior pastor, shall be hired, evaluated and terminated by the overseers. Compensation and job descriptions shall be set by the overseers. These responsibilities shall be carried out in consultation with other church leaders, when appropriate.

### **Appointed Leaders**

The overseers shall appoint people to the following leadership positions who are members and who exhibit clear qualifications to carry out their assigned tasks.

#### Overseer Chairman

The overseer chairman shall serve as the pastor's assistant and, in the pastor's absence, shall serve as chairman of the church. In the absence of both pastor and overseer chairman, the overseers shall choose an acting chairman.

#### Clerk

The clerk shall keep the minutes of business meetings, handle correspondence and keep orderly records of membership and baptisms.

#### Treasurer

The treasurer shall pay all obligations incurred by the church as approved in the church budget or as directed by the overseers or the church. The treasurer shall submit current reports at business meetings and make the financial records available for audit.

#### Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall keep accurate records of all money received by the church, keep confidential records of individual contributions and issue receipts. The financial secretary shall make the financial records available for audit.

#### Ministry Team Leaders

Team leaders shall provide direction to a group of people responsible for a major ministry area of the church.

### **Ministry Teams**

Ministry teams shall be formed by the overseers to direct major areas of the church's ministry. These areas may include, but are not limited to education, pastoral care, property, etc. Team members shall be recruited by the ministry team leader.

### **Senior Pastor Search Committee**

The overseers shall serve as the Senior Pastor Search Committee and may appoint additional members as needed. Their responsibility shall be to compile a list of pastoral prospects, to gather and to screen information concerning those prospects, and to make a recommendation to the church membership.

## **VII. Meetings**

### **Moderator**

The chairman of the church shall preside at business meetings.

## **Agenda**

The agenda shall be prepared by the overseers. Any member may request that an item be placed on the agenda by delivering a written request, including the agenda item, to the overseers at least one week prior to the meeting.

## **Voting**

Any members age eighteen or older may vote. There shall be no absentee voting.

## **Annual Business Meeting**

The annual business meeting shall be held in January. A written annual report shall be presented. Elected positions and the annual budget shall be voted upon.

## **Special Business Meeting**

A special business meeting may be called at any time by the pastor or overseers or by written petition of one-fourth of the membership. Public notice of the meeting shall be given on the preceding two Sundays.

## **Quorum**

Any number of members present shall constitute a quorum at any business meeting of the church except for voting upon the following items:

1. The calling or dismissal of the senior pastor.
2. The amending of this constitution.
3. All legal matters.

For these items, the necessary quorum shall be one-third of the total members, age eighteen or older, excluding shut-ins and non-residents incapable of attending.

## **Guide for Meetings**

In case of questions regarding parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, latest revision, shall be used as a guideline.

## **VIII. Fiscal Year**

The church fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

## **IX. Church Discipline**

Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his/her walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among non-believers.

Scripture encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being and teaches them to confront in truth and love where there is evidence of ongoing sin without repentance.

We shall follow the procedure stated in Matthew 18:15-17 for such confrontation:

1. Go promptly to confront the individual in private.
2. If there is no expression of repentance, reprove the individual in the presence of two or three witnesses.
3. If there is still no repentance, bring the matter before the overseers as representatives of the church.
4. If there is still no repentance, the overseers shall by unanimous vote revoke the individual's membership and believers should break fellowship with the individual until there is repentance (1 Corinthians 5:11; Titus 3:10-11).

Scripture teaches that confrontation should be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern and humility and it should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is repentance on the part of a fellow believer.

The same biblical principles apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body of Christ. In such cases, Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly to the brother/sister when offended or after doing the offending.

#### **X. Disposition of the Church**

If at some time the merger with another church seems advisable, the overseers shall be empowered to negotiate the terms as relating to property, subject to the church's approval.

In the case of a division in the church, the church property shall belong to those members abiding by this constitution.

If the church shall cease to function and dissolve, its property shall be transferred to Converge MidAmerica with the expressed desire of using these funds toward a future church plant in the Joliet area.

#### **XI. Amendments**

This constitution may be amended, repealed or replaced at a business meeting. Such changes shall be introduced by the overseers. These changes shall be submitted to all members in writing at least two weeks prior to the business meeting in which they will be introduced. Such changes must be introduced to the church at a business meeting, at which time modifications can be made to the proposal. It will be voted upon at a subsequent business meeting held no less than 30 days after the meeting where the proposal was made. The proposed amendment will be voted upon as a package with no modifications possible. Any action on the amendment at either meeting requires a two-thirds favorable vote of the members present at the meeting.