

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF GC2 CHURCH**

(Ratified February 2017, Revised Dec. 2019)

## **PREAMBLE**

This Constitution is written and ratified to help:

1. Preserve the mission and core values of our church.
2. Preserve and secure the articles of our faith.
3. Provide for an orderly system of governance for our church.

We as a church community, however, recognize that a constitution in itself cannot substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit and everyone working together in humble love for the glory of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while we shall abide by the requirements of this Constitution, we shall also abide by the “law of God’s love” and strive as necessary to go beyond what is constitutionally required so that our church may enjoy the greatest mutual respect, communication, unity and success possible while upholding Scriptural truth.

## **ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION**

### **I. Name**

The name of this church is GC2 Church. GC2 stands for the Greatest Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

### **II. Mission**

The mission of GC2 Church is to glorify God by loving Him, loving people, and making disciples locally and globally.

### **III. Core Values**

The core values of GC2 Church are:

- A. RELATIONSHIPS – We believe that the best context for ministry and spiritual development is personal relationships where there is love, respect, friendship, and trust.
- B. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE - As God unconditionally loves the world, we also strive to love all people unconditionally, serving them in the name of Christ.
- C. LIVES TRANSFORMED BY SCRIPTURE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT – We commit to be changed and empowered by Scripture and the Holy Spirit in order to be more like Christ and to do His will.
- D. ETHNIC AND GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY – We are committed to being a church that brings people of varied backgrounds together into one body.
- E. SHARING THE GOSPEL – The Gospel is the ultimate answer to the needs of our troubled and broken world. Out of love for others we commit to sharing the Good News so that people will choose Christ as their Savior and follow Him.

### **IV. Association and Cooperation**

GC2 Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs according to the Holy Bible, this Constitution, and its Bylaws, independent of any denominational control. This church voluntarily associates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions so that it can combine its energy and resources with other churches in the convention to build God’s Kingdom and be more effective in its ministries. This church also cooperates with other Christian churches and Christian organizations of its choosing to further the work of God’s

Kingdom as long as such cooperation does not violate its conscience, its loyalty to Christ, and Scripture.

## V. Articles of Faith

### A. The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible is the result of God guiding and directing men to write its content. Its author is ultimately God Himself who reveals Himself, His standards, His judgments, His love, and His plan through the Bible. Therefore, all of Scripture is true, trustworthy, and inerrant in all that it asserts. It serves as the basis for unity among Christians and is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, philosophy, and religious views should be judged. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is the focus of divine revelation. We as a church are united in our commitment to honor, study, and obey Scripture.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

### B. God

There is one and only one eternal, living, and true God. He is an all-loving, all-intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinitely holy, perfect, and just. God is all-powerful and all-knowing; His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. God exists and reveals Himself to us as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

#### 1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all people, but God is Father only to those who become His children through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

#### 2. God the Son

Christ is God the Son eternal. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Temporarily setting aside the prerogatives of His divinity, Jesus Christ perfectly revealed and did the will of God the Father, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored God's divine law by His personal obedience, and His substitutionary death on the cross provided for the redemption of people from sin and the reconciliation of God and people. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator between God and humans, fully God, fully human. He now dwells in all believers

as the living and ever-present Lord. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

### 3. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through His illumination He enables people to understand the Truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He draws people to the Savior, and causes the regeneration of their heart, mind, and spirit. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He dwells within the believer, cultivates Christ-like character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the Church to worship, evangelize, and serve. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

### C. Humanity

All people are the special creation of God. The sacredness of every person is evident in that God created people in His own image, knew and formed every person in the womb, and loves every person. Therefore, every person of every race or ethnicity possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. God created the human race male and female as the crowning work of His creation. God in His sovereignty has immutably and wisely determined each person's gender in keeping with their God-given biological sex at birth. In the beginning people were innocent of sin and were endowed by God, their Creator, with freedom of choice. By their free choice Adam and Eve, the first humans, sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan humanity disobeyed the command of God and fell from its original innocence. All of posterity has inherited a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as people are capable of moral action, they will sin and become transgressors. Their transgressions alienate them from God and each other, cause all of creation to suffer, and result in their condemnation to physical and spiritual death. Only the grace of God can restore people, bring them into fellowship with God, and enable them to fulfill God's creative purpose.

<sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. <sup>15</sup>

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, <sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalms 139:13-16 (NIV)*

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

#### D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood and death obtained eternal salvation for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Salvation is a gift from God and is not obtained by one's own works.

1. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart brought on by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Repentance is a genuine turning away from sin toward God. Faith is the belief in Jesus Christ and the commitment to make Him Lord and Savior.
3. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ and the imparting of Christ's righteousness to them. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.
4. Sanctification is the process, beginning with regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to live for God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Sanctification should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
5. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and eternal state of the redeemed with Christ in glory.
6. All true believers endure to the end. God has redeemed them in Christ and sanctified them by His Spirit. Therefore, they will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their access to God's grace and comfort, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:4; 7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.  
Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11;

Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

#### E. Ordinances

1. Baptism: GC2 Church practices baptism for those who have chosen to accept Christ as Savior and Lord by immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Pastors may make exceptions to immersion due to unusual circumstances.) Baptism is an act of obedience, symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, the spiritual resurrection into a newness of life in Christ Jesus, and the physical resurrection of the believer when Christ returns.
2. The Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

#### F. The Local Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of believers. The congregation is bound together by a common faith, a common love for one another, and by the Gospel. The congregation observes the two ordinances of Christ: the Lord's Supper and baptism. It is governed by Scripture and the Holy Spirit, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges given to them according to Scripture, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of Lead Pastor and Elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

#### G. The Christian Home

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

1. God ordained marriage to be the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. Marriage as God designed is His unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church. It provides the framework for intimate companionship, the channeling of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Sexual intimacy is to occur only between a man and a woman married to each other.
2. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marital relationship between the husband and wife should be modeled after the love relationship between Christ and the Church.
3. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and gift from the Lord. Parents have the primary responsibility to educate and disciple their children in the truth of God. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to love their children and teach them Biblical morals and values and to lead them, through

consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

#### H. The Christian Life

It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be fully set apart for God, being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, thereby receiving power for holy living and effective service. Therefore, the Christian should aim to love God supremely and others sacrificially, and to do the good works that God has prepared for him to do. The Christian life is lived by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit with care for one another, compassion toward the poor, and justice for the oppressed. We unite together in the local church and make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and actions.

Deuteronomy 10:12; Proverbs 22:22; 29:7; Matthew 22:37-38; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:5, 17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:8-10; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 10:25; 11:1-6; James 1:21; 1 John 2:15-16.

#### I. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings and abilities, temporal and spiritual, and they are to be used for the glory of God and the blessing of others. In addition, God has given creation, the welfare of others, and the spreading of the Gospel as sacred trusts to his followers. For these reasons and in gratitude for Christ's sacrificial death on the cross for us, Christians should lovingly, and sacrificially serve Christ with their time, talents, and material possessions. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute from their financial means willingly, cheerfully, regularly, and sacrificially, for the advancement of the work of God's Kingdom on earth including their own local church.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19 .

#### J. Human Life

All human life is sacred and created by God in His image and begins at the moment of conception. Human life is a gift from God that is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. The Bible does not give any person the right to end one's own life or the life of another person except in the cases of self-defense, war, and the administration of civil justice.

Genesis 1:1; 1:27; 9:5-6; Exodus 20:13; 21:22-23; Deuteronomy 27:25; 32:39; Job 10:8-12; 31:15; Psalm 127:3-5; 139:13-17; Isaiah 44:2; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Amos 1:13; Matthew 7:12; Luke 1:39-41; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

K. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The redeemed in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

L. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every believer in Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Therefore, evangelistic and missionary effort on the part of all believers is a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every believer to constantly seek to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

M. These Articles of Faith do not exhaust the extent of GC2 Church's beliefs. The Bible remains the definitive authority for all matters of faith and practice. For the purposes of doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Elder Council, which includes the Lead Pastor(s), is the final interpretive authority for GC2 Church on the Bible's meaning and application in matters not stated in this constitution.

## VI. Church Government

GC2 Church is governed by Lead Pastor(s), an Elder Council, a Ministry Council, and Members as follows:

A. Lead Pastor(s)

1. GC2 Church may have up to two Lead Pastors.
  - a) If there are two Lead Pastors, they will act as co-Lead Pastors and divide pastoral responsibilities of the church between themselves based on their spiritual gifts.
  - b) The Elder Council shall determine if there should be a change in the number of Lead Pastors with an approval vote by the membership.
  - c) In the absence of a Lead Pastor, the Elder Council shall assume the responsibilities of the Lead Pastor.
2. Qualifications

A Lead Pastor shall be a male who pledges to uphold the GC2 Church Constitution and Bylaws. His character shall be consistent with the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Additional qualifications for a Lead Pastor shall be drafted by the Elder Council with input from the members.

3. Authority and Responsibilities
  - a) Shepherd, teach, and counsel the church towards biblical maturity and unity.
  - b) Work with the Elder Council, the Ministry Council, and others as required to develop long term and short-term goals in order to accomplish the mission and vision of the church.
  - c) Oversee the administration and planning of the church to fulfill its mission, vision, and goals.
  - d) Hire and terminate paid staff with the support of the Elder Council and budgetary approval of the Ministry Council.
  - e) Direct and supervise ministerial and administrative staff.
  - f) Direct and plan the pulpit ministry.
4. Accountability: Lead Pastor(s) shall be accountable to the members through the oversight of the Elder Council.
5. Calling
  - a) Examination: The Elder Council shall appoint a search committee to assist in identifying and examining candidates and presenting one or more qualified candidates for evaluation and approval of one candidate by the Elder and Ministry Councils to recommend to the membership.
  - b) Approval: Lead Pastors must be approved by at least a three-quarters majority of all voting members. The vote shall be conducted by secret ballot.
6. Terms of Service
  - a) A Lead Pastor shall serve until he resigns or is terminated.
  - b) Termination of a Lead Pastor shall be approved as follows:
    - (1) The Elder Council shall initiate the termination process of a Lead Pastor by agreeing to terminate a Lead Pastor with a simple majority vote of the Elder Council not including the Lead Pastor under consideration.
    - (2) The Ministry Council agrees to terminate the Lead Pastor through a simple majority vote of the Ministry Council not including the Lead Pastor under consideration.
    - (3) The Elder Council and the Ministry Council shall then recommend to the church membership to terminate the Lead Pastor. A simple majority vote of all voting members shall make the termination official. The membership vote shall be conducted by secret ballot.

**B. Elders and Elder Council**

The Elder Council shall be comprised of no fewer than five and no more than nine men, including the Lead Pastors. The Lead Pastor(s) are permanent members of the Elder Council. The remaining members of the Elder Council are chosen from the Elders (see Section VI.B.1) of the church. Non-pastoral staff members and other pastors may not serve on the Elder Council.

**1. Qualifications of an Elder**

An Elder must be male and have been a member and actively involved in the ministry of GC2 Church for at least one year prior to his nomination. All Elders are required to meet the qualifications for elder/overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Titus 1:5-9. The Elder Council may add to the qualifications as needed.

**2. Authority and Responsibilities of the Elder Council**

- a) The Elder Council is responsible for working with the Lead Pastors to oversee the

spiritual health and direction of the church by:

- (1) Working with the Lead Pastor(s) to refine the long-term vision for the church.
  - (2) Advising the Lead Pastor(s) regarding serving and shepherding the church.
  - (3) Recommending new members to the membership and terminating membership in accordance with the membership requirements of this constitution.
  - (4) Monitoring and assisting in the care of the members and guests in accordance with 1 Peter 5:1-3.
  - (5) Helping resolve conflicts within the church. Any complaints or concerns regarding the Lead Pastor(s), or specific Elders, will be directed to and handled by the Elder Council in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Timothy 5:19-21.
  - (6) Working with the Lead Pastor(s) on matters that require church discipline.
  - (7) Working on specific projects as directed by the Lead Pastor(s) and agreed upon by the Elder Council.
  - (8) Providing a support system for the spiritual, familial, and personal needs of the Lead Pastor(s).
  - (9) Resolving differences between the Lead Pastors. The Elder Council will be the final decision-maker on matters the Lead Pastors cannot agree on after they have come to an impasse.
  - (10) Assessing the Lead Pastor(s)' performance, setting the Lead Pastor(s)' job description, and recommending compensation for the budget. The Elder Council will conduct annual reviews of the Lead Pastors.
  - (11) Calling and terminating Lead Pastor(s) according to Sections VI.A.5 and VI.A.6.
  - (12) Taking up Lead Pastor responsibilities or making provisions for an Interim Lead Pastor in the absence of a Lead Pastor
  - (13) Taking on joint responsibilities with the Ministry Council as listed in Section VI.C.3.
  - (14) Serving as the final interpretive authority for GC2 Church on the Bible's meaning and application in matters not stated in this constitution.
3. Elder Council Voting
    - a) Unless otherwise stated in this Constitution all measures brought to a vote in the Elder Council shall be approved by a simple majority of all votes cast, excluding abstentions.
    - b) For the following items, three-quarters of the Elder Council member approval is required to pass.
      - (1) Recommend a Lead Pastor candidate to the membership.
      - (2) Recommend the purchasing, renting, or selling of real estate.
      - (3) Recommend any revision and/or amendment of the church Constitution to the Ministry Council.
      - (4) Nominating a new Elder.
  4. Leadership and Accountability:
    - a) The Elder Council shall be chaired by one of the Lead Pastors or his designate except in the matters under Section VI.B.2.a.11 through 13.
    - b) In the absence of a Lead Pastor, the Elder Council shall appoint an Elder to serve as the Interim Chairman.
    - c) The Elder Council is accountable to God and the membership for carrying out its duties with integrity, faith, love, and commitment to the mission, vision, core values, and stipulations of the GC2 Church Constitution and Bylaws.
  5. The Selection, Resignation and Dismissal of Elders
    - a) Elders are nominated by the Elder Council as needed. They are confirmed by a vote of

the church membership. Once confirmed, Elders remain Elders unless they resign or are dismissed. Elders may or may not serve on the Elder Council.

- b) Service as an Elder may end through resignation, relocation, or removal by a simple majority vote of the Elder Council, excluding the Elder in question, due to moral failure or prolonged failure to carry out his responsibilities.
6. Terms of Service on Elder Council
- a) Elders will serve a three-year term on the Elder Council.
  - b) Elders may serve two consecutive terms followed by a mandatory one-year sabbatical. Elder terms should be staggered.

### C. Ministry Council

#### 1. Qualifications

- a) All Ministry Council members must have been a member of GC2 and actively involved in the ministry of GC2 Church for at least one year prior to his or her nomination. They are required to meet the qualifications for elder/overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, except that Ministry Council members may be male or female. They have the spiritual maturity and leadership ability to lead a Ministry Team, give overall direction to the church, and work well with other leaders.
- b) The Elder Council may add to the qualifications as needed.

#### 2. Authority and Responsibilities

The Ministry Council members are responsible for working together to plan and operate the church's programs so that the church achieves its mission and vision, while being true to its core values. In doing so the Ministry Council shall assist the Lead Pastor(s) to:

- a) Develop goals, plans, programs, budgets, and policies for the church and individual ministries.
- b) Create Ministry Teams that are responsible for the work of the church and place qualified leaders over them.
- c) Create project teams who are responsible for specific tasks with limited scope and duration. Project teams will report to the Ministry Council.
- d) Coordinate the work of the church.
- e) Give overall direction to the church's ministries, evaluate their effectiveness, and make changes as needed.
- f) Keep the members informed about the status of the church's direction, plans, and programs.
- g) Manage the finances of the church by proposing an annual budget to the members and making needed adjustments to the budget during the year.
- h) Call membership meetings.
- i) Help the Pastor(s) develop new leaders.
- j) Appoint and remove officers of the church.
- k) Be responsible for creating and updating the church's Bylaws.

#### 3. Authority and Responsibilities Shared with the Elder Council

- a) Pray for the church.
- b) Make joint recommendations with the Elder Council to call a Lead Pastor, purchase, rent, or sell any land or buildings, revise or amend the constitution, or merge or dissolve the church.
- c) Set an example of spiritual maturity and leadership for the church.
- d) Give feedback and recommendations to the Lead Pastor(s) regarding the vision of the

- church.
- e) Give feedback and recommendations to the Lead Pastor(s) regarding ministerial staff-led ministries.
4. Composition
    - a) The Ministry Council shall be composed of the Lead Pastor(s), two Elders from the Elder Council, and Ministry Team leaders.
    - b) As chosen and deemed helpful by the Ministry Council individual pastoral staff members will be selected to be non-voting members of the Ministry Council. These staff members will not be involved in employment or personnel discussions or decisions.
    - c) The number of voting members in the Ministry Council shall not be less than seven and no more than eleven.
    - d) Both men and women can be Ministry Council members.
  5. The Selection, Resignation, and Dismissal of Ministry Council Members
    - a) Nominees for Ministry Council members other than Pastors, staff, or Elders shall be selected by the Ministry Council and a confirmation vote of the church membership.
    - b) The process for selecting new Ministry Council members shall start in the month of September and nominees who are confirmed by the membership shall begin their service on the subsequent year in January.
    - c) Service in the Ministry Council may end prematurely through resignation, relocation, or removal by a simple majority vote of the Ministry Council, excluding the Ministry Council Member in question, due to moral failure or prolonged failure to carry out his/her responsibilities. The Ministry Council shall appoint an Interim Ministry Council member to serve the remainder of the term.
  6. Term of Office
    - a) Ministry Council members other than Pastors, Elders, and staff shall serve a two-year term and may serve up to two consecutive terms.
    - b) For every two consecutive terms served they are required to take a one-year sabbatical from the Ministry Council before being eligible to return to the Ministry Council.
  7. Ministry Teams
 

The Ministry Council must create and appoint leaders for Ministry Teams that will at a minimum provide leadership and workers for the following areas:

    - a) Missions
    - b) Small Groups
    - c) Finance
    - d) Spiritual Growth
    - e) Local Outreach
    - f) Strengthening Marriages and Families
  8. Finance Ministry Team
 

The Finance Ministry Team is responsible for all the financial transactions of the church and shall handle church finances in an honest and transparent manner.

    - a) Accountability: The Finance Ministry Team shall report to the Ministry Council.
    - b) Financial Procedures: With the approval of the Ministry Council the Finance Ministry Team shall develop, document, and implement Financial Procedures that ensure the integrity of all financial transactions of the church. The Financial Procedures shall:
      - (1) Define the limits of authority for disbursing and accessing funds. Pastors must not be able to withdraw or transfer the financial holdings of the church.

- (2) Define procedures that maintain traceability, transparency, and accountability between members of the Finance Ministry Team for accessing and disbursing funds.
  - (3) Prohibit immediate family members or business partners from serving simultaneously on the Finance Ministry Team.
  - (4) Require background checks of all Finance Ministry Team members.
9. Ministry Council Voting
- a) Unless otherwise stated in this Constitution all measures brought to a vote in the Ministry Council shall be approved by a simple majority of all votes cast, excluding abstentions.
  - b) For the following items, a three-quarter majority approval of the Ministry Council's voting members is required to pass.
    - (1) Recommend an annual budget to the membership.
    - (2) Recommend the purchasing, renting, or selling of real estate.
    - (3) Recommend any revision and/or amendment of the church Constitution to the membership.
    - (4) Change the Bylaws.
    - (5) Nominate new Ministry Council members to the membership.
10. Leadership and Accountability
- a) A Lead Pastor shall either serve as the Ministry Council Chair or appoint a Ministry Council or pastoral staff member to be the temporary chair.
  - b) In the absence of a Lead Pastor, the Elder Council shall appoint an Interim Chair from among the Elders, Ministry Council members, or pastoral staff.
  - c) The Ministry Council is accountable to God and the membership for carrying out its duties with integrity, faith, love, and commitment to the mission, vision, core values, and stipulations of the GC2 Church Constitution and Bylaws.
- D. Membership
- 1. Purposes of Membership
    - a) Provide a tangible means for believers to express their commitment to being members of one another (Romans 12:4-5), members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27), and partners in the mission, vision, and core values of GC2 Church.
    - b) Provide a means for believers who are involved in and committed to GC2 Church to have a voice in the major decisions of the church.
  - 2. Qualifications for Membership
 

Members of GC2 Church must have:

    - a) Made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for salvation.
    - b) Have been baptized by immersion (unless an exception to immersion is approved by a Lead Pastor) as believers and as a testimony of salvation.
    - c) Made GC2 Church their spiritual home for worship, fellowship, growth, and service.
    - d) Completed a GC2 Church membership class that covers membership, the history, mission, vision, doctrinal beliefs, philosophy, and programs of GC2 Church.
    - e) Agreed to GC2 Church's Articles of Faith, mission, vision, and core values.
    - f) Committed to abiding by the GC2 Church Constitution, Bylaws, and Membership Covenant (Appendix A).
  - 3. Responsibilities of Members
 

Members are responsible for fulfilling the commitments contained in the GC2 Church Covenant.

4. Reception into Membership
  - a) Anyone may apply for GC2 Church membership.
  - b) The qualifications of applicants must be reviewed by the Elder Council.
  - c) The applicant shall become a member after recommendation by the Elder Council and a three-quarter majority vote of voting members present at a GC2 Church member's meeting.
5. Termination of Membership

Membership in GC2 Church will be terminated by any of the following events:

  - a) Death of the member.
  - b) Request of the member.
  - c) Termination by the Elder Council according to following conditions:
    - (1) The member's life and conduct are not in accordance with the membership covenant or hinders the ministry influence of GC2 Church in the community.
    - (2) Procedures for dismissal will be according to Matthew 18:15-17.
  - d) Failure to renew membership.
6. Renewal of Membership
  - a) The Elder Council will be responsible for maintaining the GC2 Church membership rolls.
  - b) At least every three years, the Elder Council will ask all members to renew their membership by renewing their commitment to the GC2 Church Membership Covenant.
  - c) The Elder Council shall diligently attempt to communicate with members who do not renew their Membership Covenant, but shall suspend or terminate the membership of those who do not desire to renew their membership or do not respond to the church's inquiries for renewal.
7. Inactive Members
  - a) Some members who have permanently or temporarily moved away and are not attending the church may still desire to be members of the church. The Elder Council shall designate these members as inactive members.
  - b) Inactive members do not have voting privileges and are not counted in any vote tally.
  - c) The Elder Council may restore inactive members to active membership when they return to the church and ask for their membership to be restored.
8. Accountability
  - a) Members are accountable to one another and to the Lord.
  - b) Members shall acknowledge the spiritual authority of the church and be willing to accept moral counsel and church discipline from the members of the Pastoral Staff and/or Elder Council. (1 Peter 2:13-14; Matt. 18:15-19).
9. Membership Meetings

There shall be at least one membership meeting per year with the minimum purpose of the Ministry Council presenting reports to the congregation, receiving feedback from the members, and approving an annual church budget.

  - a) Membership meetings shall be chaired by a member of the Elder Council. It is the discretion of the chair to entertain items not on the agenda.
  - b) Membership meetings shall be open to non-members.
10. Rights of Membership
  - a) All members have equal rights and privileges.
  - b) Only the matters listed below require membership approval, for which members 16 years old and above are eligible to vote:

- (1) The calling or termination of a Lead Pastor.
  - (2) The confirmation Elders.
  - (3) The confirmation of Ministry Council members who are not Pastors, staff, or Elders.
  - (4) Approval of new members
  - (5) Approval of annual budgets.
  - (6) The purchase, sale, and lease of real estate.
  - (7) The revising and amending of the church constitution.
  - (8) The confirmation of pastoral staff upon recommendation of the Ministry & Elder Councils when the church does not have a Lead Pastor.
  - (9) Proposals to merge or dissolve the church (Section XI).
- c) In the event the leadership is perceived to have failed to abide by the Constitution or Bylaws of this church, ignored the desires of the general membership, or led the church towards a destructive direction, and after exhausting all processes prescribed by the church's Constitution and Bylaws, the membership of the church may hold a membership meeting and vote to enlist the assistance of an outside Southern Baptist consultant to mediate. Such a decision must be carried by a simple majority of all votes cast including abstentions and at least one-half of all eligible voting members must have cast a vote, which will be by secret ballot.
  - d) Before a membership meeting any member may request the Ministry Council Chair to place a matter for discussion in the agenda of membership meetings. Granting of such a request will be at the discretion of the Ministry Council. If 10% of the membership, however, signs a petition to place a matter up for discussion, the Ministry Council must place the matter in the meeting agenda.
  - e) A members meeting shall be convened by the Ministry Council if 25% of the members sign a petition calling for a meeting concerning one or more specific topics. The meeting must be held within a month of the presentation of the petition to the Ministry Council.
11. Membership Voting
- a) Unless otherwise stated in this constitution all measures brought to a vote by the membership must be approved by a simple majority of all votes cast, excluding abstentions.
  - b) At least 50% of all members eligible to vote must cast a vote of yea, nay, or abstain in order for a vote to be valid.

## **VII. Security**

### **A. Children and Youth Security**

The Ministry Council is responsible for creating policies and procedures that protect children and youth during church activities. These policies and procedures must:

1. Require Ministry Council or Church Staff to approval church volunteers and workers to work with children and youth under age 19. Approval must include but is not limited to background checks. Anyone with any prior criminal conviction must first be approved by the Elder Council before being allowed to work with children and/or youth. The Elder Council has the discretion to choose to inform the parents or legal guardians of their decision to allow such a person to work with children or youth. Approval must include training about children and youth security.
2. Require at least two approved workers to be present at all children and youth meetings.

### **B. General Security**

The Ministry Council is responsible for creating policies and procedures that protect the physical security of church members while on church grounds. The policies and procedures must:

1. Provide bodily and property security of worship services attendees.
2. Include the creation of a trained security team.

#### **VIII. Officers**

In compliance with California law, the officers of GC2 Church shall consist of a President, Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer. The officers are responsible for carrying out all legal matters of the church, including acquisition and selling of properties and obtaining financing for projects voted on by the church members.

#### **IX. Indemnification**

GC2 Church will indemnify and hold harmless any and all officers, Elder Council members, Ministry Council members, paid staff, and Pastors as stipulated by the Bylaws.

#### **X. Nonprofit Status and Liquidation**

This church is a non-profit organization. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description shall be paid over and transferred at the discretion of the Ministry Council.

#### **XI. Merging and Dissolution of the Church**

For any merging or dissolution of the church to occur at least three-quarters of the Ministry Council and Elder Council members combined must agree to recommend such actions to the church membership. It must then be approved by a three-quarters majority of all votes including abstentions with at least one-half of all eligible members voting.

#### **XII. Revisions and Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended or revised provided the proposed changes are first presented in writing to the membership by the Ministry Council at least one month in advance. Amendments and revisions to this Constitution shall be approved by the membership according to the requirements of Section VI.D.10 and 11.

**APPENDIX A:**

**GC2 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

*Having put my faith in Christ alone for my salvation and in keeping with Scripture's teaching ...*

**I. I commit to growing as Christ's disciple by:**

- *Allowing the Holy Spirit and Scripture to transform me.*
- *Praying and meditating on Scripture regularly.*
- *Inviting others to pray for me and minister to me.*
- *Participating regularly in GC2 Church's small groups, worship, and other ministries that will help my spiritual development.*

**II. I commit to making GC2 Church my local church by:**

- *Praying for the church, its people, and its ministries.*
- *Serving in its ministries in harmony with others and with respect for the church's leadership.*
- *Giving financially and sacrificially to it, not under compulsion but cheerfully for the Lord's sake.*
- *Loving others, appreciating the uniqueness of each person, extending grace, and resolving conflicts.*
- *Avoiding gossip and rumors.*
- *Abiding by the church's constitution, bylaws, doctrines, mission, and vision.*
- *Contributing ideas for the betterment of the church.*

**III. I commit to expanding God's kingdom by:**

- *Living a Christ-centered life in the world, telling others about my faith, and sharing the Gospel.*
- *Helping GC2 Church love and reach lost people with the Gospel.*
- *Helping GC2 Church strengthen other disciple-making churches and ministries.*

With my signature I signify that I have read this membership covenant and the GC2 Church Constitution and agree to abide by them.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_