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## CONSTITUTION

### GUYTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

#### PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Guyton Christian Church, a congregationally governed body, in order to do the work of the Church in the spirit of Christ and thus advance His Kingdom, do ordain, establish, and adopt this constitution.

#### ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

##### Section A. NAME

The name of this organization shall continue to be the Guyton Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This organization shall be affiliated with the brotherhood known as the Disciples of Christ, cooperating with the Christian Churches of Georgia, Inc., the International Convention of Christian Churches, and the United Missionary Society, and shall be committed to the historic principles of these bodies.

“This church” or “the church” used herein shall mean the Guyton Christian Church.

##### Section B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be, as revealed in the New Testament, to win people to faith in Jesus and commit them actively to the church, to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ that increasingly they may know and do His Will, and to work for the unity of all Christians and with them engage in the common task of extending the Kingdom of God.

#### ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of those who are now identified as members of the congregation and those who shall unite with it by confession and baptism (immersion) or by transfer of membership, either by letter or by statement.

Voting privileges shall be accorded to all members who are sixteen (16) years old or older.

### ARTICLE III. OFFICERS

This church shall be governed by a representative group of church members called the General Board. The following officers shall be elected by the General Board at its annual business meeting for a term as designated for each, or until such time as a successor is elected and assumes office.

#### Section A. OFFICERS (EXECUTIVE BOARD)

1. Chairperson: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
2. Vice Chairperson: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
3. Secretary: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
4. Treasurer: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
5. Assistant Treasurer: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
6. Clerk: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
7. Trustees: not to exceed three (3) in number, one of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years;
8. Historian: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
9. Music Director: to be elected each year for a term of one (1) year;
10. Honorary Officers: Those officers whose service and consecration to the church merits the honor, may be nominated by the Nominating committee and be elected by board approval to the status of Officer Emeritus, thereby requiring no further reelection, and shall be known as Elder Emeritus, Deacon Emeritus, or Deaconess Emeritus.

#### Section B. OTHER OFFICERS (MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL BOARD)

The following officers shall be elected by the congregation at its annual election meeting for a term as designated for each, or until such time as a successor is elected and assumes office.

1. Elders: not to exceed eighteen (18) in number, one third (1/3) of whom shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.
2. Diaconate: not to exceed twenty-four (24) in number (12 Men and

12 women), one third (1/3) of whom shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

## Section C. QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

### 1. Chairperson

The chairperson of the General Board shall be a member of the board, twenty-five (25) or more years of age, with at least two (2) years of active-service membership in the church. The chairperson shall conduct business, fulfill the usual duties of such an office, call and preside at all regular or special business meetings of the congregation and serve as Chairperson of the General Board. He/she shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church.

### 2. Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson of the General Board shall be twenty-five (25) or more years of age, with at least two (2) years of active service in this church. The Vice Chairperson shall fulfill the usual duties of such an office, call and preside at all regular business meetings of the church in the absence of the chairperson and serve as Vice Chairperson of the General Board.

### 3. Secretary

The secretary shall keep minutes of all regular and special business meetings of the church, serve as secretary of the General Board, keep records of all regular and called meetings and perform such duties as may be assigned by the General Board or the chairperson.

### 4. Treasurer

The treasurer shall receive and disburse all funds of the church and complete all related financial reports, according to the authority designated by the General Board; serve as a member of the Finance, Stewardship and Outreach Committee; and make regular reports at each regular meeting of the board and a yearly report to the church.

### 5. Assistant Treasurer

The assistant treasurer shall have the same duties as the treasurer but will make the reports only in the absence of the treasurer.

### 6. Clerk

The clerk shall keep a complete record of the church membership and vital Statistics, such as births, deaths, baptisms, and weddings; and

receive all applications for church letters and issue them under the authority delegated by the General Board.

7. Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) persons thirty (30) or more years of age who have been resident members of the church for at least ten (10) years. They shall be property owners and active members of the church. The trustees shall act as the legal agents of the church in all business matters, under the direction of the General Board and subject to the approval of the church. They shall approve the use of all endowment and trust funds and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of Georgia.

8. Historian

The historian shall gather and preserve data pertaining to the historical life and work of the church, making available for publication any materials authorized by the church and present such historical statements to the General Board at the annual meeting.

9. Music Director

The music director will be in charge of all music for the church and the Sunday School. He/she will appoint and assist the choir director or serve as choir director, if necessary.

10. Honorary Officers

Honorary officers may be relieved of all regular duties.

11. Other Officers

a. Elders

An elder shall be a person twenty-five (25) or more years of age, who has been an active member of the Guyton Christian Church at least two (2) years. This membership requirement may be waived in the event of transfer of an active elder from a Disciples of Christ Church. Elders, in cooperation with functional committees, shall promote the growth and general welfare of the church; give spiritual oversight to the members with respect to regular attendance to the Lord's Supper; provide visitation to the sick and concern for the morally delinquent and spiritually indifferent; give thoughtful consideration to, and encourage by example and work, the missionary, evangelistic, educational and stewardship responsibilities of the church; and serve at the Lord's Table.

b. Diaconate

A Deacon/Deaconess shall be a person twenty-one (21) or more years of

age, who has been an active member of the Guyton Christian Church for at least one (1) year. This membership requirement may be waived in the event of transfer of an active deacon from another Disciples of Christ Church. Deacons, in cooperation with the Eldership, will minister to the congregation in the following ways:

- Distribute the Lord's Supper and receive the offerings.
- Share in promoting the growth and general welfare of the congregation.
- Encourage, by example and leadership, the missionary, evangelistic, and educational responsibilities of the church.
- Participate in visitation projects that will enable the Church to fulfill its complete mission.
- Prepare candidates for Baptism.
- Assist in financial canvasses and stewardship responsibilities of the church.
- Give counsel and service in the business affairs and program activities of the church.
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned.

#### Section D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the chairperson, approved by the General Board and announced to the congregation at least four weeks prior to the annual election to secure the consent of candidates and to nominate candidates for office in the church. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members of the General Board, two (2) of whom shall be elders, four (4) of whom are members of the Diaconate and whose terms do not expire at the end of the current year, and three (3) members of the congregation, who are not members of the Board.
  - a. Regarding the election of officers listed under Article III, Sec. A, the Nominating Committee will prepare a list of candidates for the offices and recommend this list to the General Board for election. These officers shall be approved by the General Board.
  - b. On the day set for the annual election, the nominations for other officers as listed under Article III, Sec. B, shall be submitted to the congregation on a ballot. Qualified nominees who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected. If more persons are nominated than are required to fill the vacancies, those receiving the highest number of votes (provided they have received a *simple* majority) shall be declared elected. The chairperson shall appoint three (3) members who are not on the Nominating Committee to be tellers to tabulate the vote. The tellers shall report the outcome of the election immediately after the count.
2. Vacancies in any office or any special committee of the church shall be filled for the remainder of the term by appointment by the chairperson of

the General Board, in consultation with the minister and confirmed by the General Board.

## Section E. THE GENERAL BOARD

1. The General Board shall consist of:
  - a. The elected officers of the church (as listed under Article III, Section A);
  - b. A board of elders with a possible number of eighteen (18);
  - c. A diaconate with a possible number of twenty-four (24);
  - d. The presidents of the CWF's, the CMF, and the CYF;
  - e. The chairpersons of the functional committees;
  - f. The superintendent of the Sunday School;
  - g. The immediate past Board Chairperson.
  
2. It shall be the duty of the General Board:
  - a. To consider and recommend to the congregation general policies;
  - b. To transact business;
  - c. To administer the programs of the church through the designated functional committees.
  
3. The General Board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in this constitution or as designated to it by the church. The work of the Board will be carried out through seven (7) functional committees:  
Membership and Evangelism;  
Finance, Stewardship and Outreach;  
Education;  
Property;  
Worship;  
Social;  
Personnel.

Chairpersons of each committee will be appointed by the newly elected officers of the General Board (as listed under Article III, Section A), in consultation with the minister. Members of the congregation will be asked to serve on these committees. (See 3A for duties and membership of the Personnel Committee. ) The committees shall consider any church business that falls in their area of work and shall make recommendations to the General Board.

The General Board shall meet every other month on a date selected by the Board. The General Board meeting requires a quorum of twenty-five percent (25%) of its membership. (Honorary Officers shall not be counted when calculating the necessary quorum.) In a case in which there is not a quorum, business may be transacted by the officers (as listed under Article III, Section A) of the Board in the presence of those present and must be ratified by a quorum at the next official meeting. The General Board shall hear regular reports from its functional committees.

The Personnel Committee will function to oversee the church secretary, youth director, nursery worker, custodian and all other paid auxiliary personnel.

#### DUTIES OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE WILL INCLUDE:

1. Recommendation for employment and dismissal;
2. Recommendation for salaries;
3. Recommendation of hours to be worked;
4. Analysis of personnel needs;
5. Semiannual written evaluation for each paid auxiliary employee;
6. Consideration of concerns from paid auxiliary personnel.

#### MEMBERSHIP OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The personnel committee will consist of a chairperson and five (5) committee members, to be selected by the chairperson. Two members will rotate off the committee and two new members will be selected to replace the two who rotate off the committee each year.

Any member of the personnel committee who has a conflict of interest on a particular issue due to a family connection will abstain from voting on that particular issue.

#### 4. THE MINISTER'S CABINET

The minister's cabinet shall consist of the officers of the General Board (as listed under Article III, Section A), the representatives of the auxiliaries (CMF, CWF's, and CYF), the chairpersons of the functional committees, the chairperson of the elders, and the chairperson of the diaconate.

The cabinet shall meet during the months that the General Board does not meet, and will discuss motions regarding the general welfare of the church, improvements in the church program, and other business of concern to the church. **THE MINISTER'S CABINET SHALL HAVE NO OFFICIAL POWER** and will function only to consider recommendations to be made to the General Board.

#### 5. MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Ministerial Relations Committee shall consist of the Pulpit Committee acting at time of call, the chairperson of the General Board and the minister, and will meet quarterly to discuss progress in commitments of both church and minister. After a minister has been called and served for one full year, two members shall rotate off this committee each year and two new members shall be appointed by the Chairperson and approved by the Board. This rotation will coincide with the annual appointment of other functional committee positions.

## 6. MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

The Ministerial Accountability Committee shall consist of the following: Chairperson of the General Board, Chairperson of the Ministerial Relations Committee, Chairperson of the Elders, Chairperson of the Diaconate and Chairperson of the Personnel Committee.

This committee shall convene at least semiannually and more frequently, if deemed necessary by the Board Chairperson, to assess and formally evaluate the minister. Results of each assessment shall be discussed with the minister and reported to the General Board in a timely manner. After an Interim Minister has been employed, the Ministerial Accountability Committee shall supervise, evaluate and manage any issues that may arise with the interim minister.

## ARTICLE IV. THE MINISTER

### Section A. DUTIES

The minister shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office, act as spiritual administrator of the church, and shall be an ex officio member of all organized groups, auxiliaries and committees.

### Section B. SELECTION

The minister of the church shall be chosen by the church as herein provided:

1. A representative committee of five (5) to seven (7) persons, two (2) or more of whom shall be members of the General Board, shall be nominated by the Chairperson of the General Board to serve as the Pulpit (Pastoral Nominating) Committee. This committee shall be responsible for recommending a prospective minister to the General Board.
2. The General Board shall consider the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee and, if said recommendation is approved, recommend the prospective minister to the congregation. It shall be the policy of the church to consider only one minister at a time.
3. Before a call may be extended, the recommendation of the General Board must be accepted by at least a two thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting in a regular or special meeting of the congregation.
4. A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be made in duplicate, one copy for the minister and one for the church records.
5. The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party.



6. The minister shall terminate his or her ministry by written notice to the General Board, in care of the General Board chairperson. A sixty (60) day termination period shall be considered in force upon affirmative action by the General Board. Congregational action is not necessary, nor may the congregation act on such notice prior to General Board action.
7. The Ministerial Accountability Committee may, when deemed necessary, recommend termination of the ministry to the General Board. The church may terminate the ministry upon recommendation of the General Board to the congregation at a congregational meeting and by at least a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting. A sixty (60) day termination period shall be considered in force upon affirmative action by the congregation.
8. The Pulpit Committee (PNC) may recommend an interim minister to serve while the search for a permanent minister is being conducted. In such cases, the interim minister shall be called by Board approval. (The interim minister may serve for an indefinite period with salary and length of service to be negotiated by the Pulpit Committee.) Each negotiated period would constitute contract terms and a contract period that are independent of previous and subsequent negotiated terms. The interim minister shall serve at the pleasure of the Board with no long-term obligation on either part except as approved in advance by the General Board.
9. During any period that the church is without a minister, on any occasion that the minister shall be absent, or upon request that anyone other than the regular minister fill the pulpit, the Worship Committee shall have the authority to decide who may or may not speak in the pulpit during Sunday Morning Worship, Sunday Evening Worship, or any other occasion.

## ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

### Section A. MEETINGS

1. An annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held within the first fifteen (15) days of the month of October.
2. An annual election meeting of the congregation shall be held within the first fifteen (15) days of the month of December.
3. The last regular General Board meeting of the calendar year (the November meeting) shall be considered the Annual Meeting of the General Board.
4. In all action taken by regular or special General Board meetings or congregational meetings, the majority rule (constituted by fifty percent [50%] plus one [1] of those present and voting) shall apply, provided quorum requirements are met and unless otherwise stipulated in this constitution.

5. Regarding a congregational meeting which cannot be attended by a regular church member, an absentee vote may be cast under these conditions:
  - a. The church member must have attended at least one (1) worship service at their home church within the four (4) weeks prior to the meeting; and
  - b. the business which is to be voted on has been previously announced to the congregation. The absentee vote must be received prior to the congregational meeting.

#### Section B. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the congregation or the General Board, as required or needed, are to be called by the chairperson or vice chairperson of the General Board, upon request of the General Board, or upon written petition signed by ten (10) or more members of the church.

#### Section C. NOTICE OF REGULAR OR SPECIAL MEETINGS

Notice of all regular or special meetings of the congregation shall be given at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting and there shall be a quorum consisting of forty-five percent (45%) of the active participating members of the congregation.

#### Section C. QUORUM FOR REGULAR OR SPECIAL MEETINGS

For regular or special meetings of the congregation, a quorum shall consist of forty-five percent (45%) of the active participating members of the congregation.

### ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

#### Section A. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any congregational business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting on the amendment(s), provided the amendment has been recommended by the General Board and that written notice of the proposed amendment has been read and published at a regular Sunday worship service at least two (2) weeks before the vote is taken.

#### Section B. REVISIONS

This constitution may be revised or altered at any congregational business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting on the revision(s) or alteration(s), provided any revision or alteration has been recommended by the General board and written notice of any proposed revision or alteration has been read and published at a regular Sunday worship service at least two (2) weeks before the vote is taken.

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1. All newly elected officers and committee chairpersons will take office at the beginning of the new calendar year; however, some of these people may have planning and other responsibilities prior to the new calendar year.
2. Members of functional committees are selected at a joint meeting of all newly appointed committee chairpersons, the General Board chairperson, and the minister.
3. The Elders should meet to choose a chairperson each January.
4. The Diaconate should meet and choose a chairperson each January.
5. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the first Monday of every other month beginning in January of each year. When an official holiday falls on the first Monday of the month, the regular Board or Cabinet meeting shall be held the following Monday.
6. The minister presides at the Minister's Cabinet meeting.
7.
  - a) The chairperson of the General Board will not be allowed to vote at General Board meetings except in case of a tie.
  - b) The chairperson of the General Board will not be allowed to vote at congregational meeting except in case of a tie.
8.
  - a) The minister will not be allowed to vote at General Board meetings.
  - b) The minister will be allowed to vote at congregational meetings.
9. Quorum, for purpose of congregational meetings, can be figured by taking forty-five percent (45%) of the number of participating members sent in to the yearbook at the end of the previous year.
10. Quorum for General Board meetings can be determined from the list of people who comprise the Board for the current year. The number is based on the individuals rather than the positions on the board, as one person may fill more than one position.
11. The Nominating Committee recommends new officers of the Board to the General Board for election and recommends elders and members of the diaconate to the congregation for election.
12. Ballots for election of elders and diaconate shall always include blank spaces labeled "other candidates" for write-in votes.
13. Timetable for selection of officers:

- a) September - During the regular September Board meeting, the Chairperson of the General Board appoints a Nominating Committee for approval by the General Board.
  - b) October - At the annual business meeting of the congregation, the Chairperson of the General Board announces the members of the Nominating Committee. (This announcement must be made at this time to provide four (4) weeks' notice before the annual election.)
  - c) November - At the regular November Board meeting, the Nominating Committee recommends the list of new officers (see Article III; Sec. A) to the General Board. (The Nominating Committee already will have contacted these people to get their consent.) The General Board will vote to elect officers.
  - d) December - At the annual election meeting of the congregation in December, nominations are submitted to the congregation on paper ballots.
15. In November or December, newly elected officers of the General Board (see Article III, Sec. A) and the minister shall meet and appoint (and contact for consent) chairpersons for the seven (7) functional committees and any special committees.
  16. In December, there shall be a meeting of the newly elected chairperson of the General Board, the newly appointed committee chairpersons and the minister to select committee members to begin work on January 1.
  17. It is the policy of the Pulpit Committee to withdraw and reconsider recommendations to the General Board regarding calling or dismissal of a minister that does not have at least two-thirds (2/3) support of the General Board.
  18. This policy information may be changed or amended by action of the General Board.
  19. Guidelines for duties and responsibilities of each functional committee are outlined in a separate attachment to the Constitution and Policy of the church.
  20. A financial review will be conducted every five years to ensure that proper financial procedures and documentation are in order.
  21. Child Protection Policy Development. As is prudent for all churches, Guyton Christian Church will develop policies and guidelines consistent with the protection of children and vulnerable adults at Guyton Christian Church. Said policy will include background checks and training for all volunteers engaged in church programs involving children or vulnerable adults. The Governing Board is requested to form a team to develop this policy.
  22. Regarding Senior Pastor Responsibilities. All weddings, funerals or memorial services occurring on the property, or under the auspices, of Guyton Christian Church will be at the discretion of the Senior Pastor, and under the direction of the Senior Pastor or that Pastor's designee. The Senior Pastor will be

responsible to the General Board for the impact of decisions made under this policy.

23. Advisory Statement Regarding Nominations for Elders, Deacons and other offices at Guyton Christian Church. Following consideration at the Elders' meeting on 9/10/2018, the Elders at Guyton Christian Church submit the following statement of guidance to the General Board and the Nominating Committee:

Nominees for Elder, Deacon or office positions at Guyton Christian Church should be members of good standing in the congregation. The Nominating Committee should consider matters of membership standing, Christian character and likely support of the congregation in the selection of nominees.

Remembering that no one can meet the high standards set in scripture, Nominating Committee members are nevertheless asked to consider Biblical guidelines set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 in their nominee selections.

December 2003, number of elders revised from 12 (twelve) to 18 (eighteen) Page 2, Section B, 1

December 12, 2004, wording on Deacons/deaconesses changed to diaconate Page 2, Section B, 2. Description of diaconate changed accordingly Page 4, Section C, 11, B

September 2007, revised for congregational approval: grammatical errors, inclusive language, addition of the Ministerial Relations Committee and addition of Ministerial Accountability Committee.

November 6, 2012, added to item number 20 regarding financial review to Policy.

September 10, 2018, added Item 21 regarding Child Protection Policy.

September 10, 2018, added Item 22 regarding Senior Pastor Responsibilities.

September 10, 2018, added Item 23 regarding Advisory Statement from the Elders on responsibility of the Nominating Committee.