

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
OF
GATEWAY BIBLE CHURCH
MORGANTON, NC**

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be "Gateway Bible Church".

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Our purpose in forming Gateway Bible Church is twofold: (1) to have a church which will provide opportunity for spiritual growth and service; (2) to be a group that can point the way to God for those who do not know Him.

We seek to worship God without any particular slant or emphasis other than that found in the Word of God. We desire not to promote any doctrine or portion of doctrine above the rest of the teaching of the Word of God.

We seek a close fellowship where we can encourage one another, share one another's joys and burdens, and be committed to each other in a covenant relationship. We shall seek to support one another's ministries wholeheartedly as we grow in a united Body, allowing the Holy Spirit to work creatively through us both in the secular and in the religious realms. We shall consciously encourage one another in the faith.

It is our intent to learn to walk by faith individually and collectively, and learn of our Lord Jesus Christ, rather than emphasize visible and physical signs. We will be seeking to build up each other, helping each other to discover and develop his spiritual gifts.

It is our desire to be a mission-conscious church, actively seeking God's guidance regarding the prayer and financial support of home and foreign missions.

Recognizing that the church is to send forth workers, we will seek the Lord's guidance in this. At the same time, we recognize that no form of service and no location of service are superior to another. We are all called to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; He will lead us and use us as He wills, for the building up of the Body of Christ anywhere in the world.

ARTICLE III TERM

The term of this church shall be perpetual.

ARTICLE IV STATUS

This church shall remain a non-denominational church; it shall be independent in nature, and not affiliated with any denominational organization; however, this status statement is not meant to discourage fellowship with any other Christian group.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP

A. Qualifications

Membership in this body hereafter referred to as the "Body" shall be by profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and satisfactory evidence of regeneration. Applicants for membership must be able to give a clear witness of salvation through acceptance of Christ as personal Savior. They shall be willing to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this church and to sign a Declaration of Covenant card. We recommend that those not previously baptized as believers shall be baptized.

B. Covenant

Members shall sign the Declaration of Covenant statement (see Addendum "A") which states confession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, commitment to the Lord's church in its local expression at Gateway Bible Church, and covenant to use time, talent, prayer, resources and gifts for the building of His Church.

C. Acceptance

Prospective members are encouraged to fellowship with us for a period of time and to identify with this church before seeking membership. Any person wishing to become a member shall make such desire known to a member of the Board of Elders. Therefore, a mutually agreeable date shall be set for the applicant to meet with at least two members for the Board of Elders. Applicants shall be interviewed to determine that they possess the required qualifications for membership. Following the interview, the applicant must be recommended to and accepted by the Board of Elders. Upon acceptance new members shall be introduced and welcomed during a regular church service.

D. Christian Life and Service

Where faith is genuine, it will manifest itself in the life of the believer. The goal of every believer should be to aspire to grow in personal knowledge of Christ. In all areas of Christian life and service, love should be the guiding principle. We should ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" and allow the scriptures, the Holy Spirit, or other believers to provide the answer.

ARTICLE VI

GOVERNMENT

A. Authority

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and this Body recognizes His supreme authority. Under Christ, this church shall be self-governing and independent of all other ecclesiastical bodies or denominations. The government of this church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, shall be vested in its Board of Elders as limited by this Constitution and Bylaws.

B. Character of Leadership

Understanding that leaders set the example of Godly living for the Body to emulate, they should be set apart by noble character, above reproach, causing no brother or sister to stumble. These leaders should do nothing out of vain conceit, but, in humility, consider other better than themselves, looking to the interests of others, and having the attitude of Christ Jesus. (1 Peter 5:1-3; Philippians 2:3-11).

C. Officers

During the start-up phase of Gateway Bible Church, a Steering Committee shall act as the Board of Elders until the first Board of Elders is established.

1. Elders

A. Purpose and Number. The responsibility of the Elder is that of the spiritual oversight of the Body. This Board shall always normally number not less than three (3) men, in addition to the Pastor. This number may be increased, depending on the needs of the Body and the leading of the Holy Spirit, as determined by the current Board of Elders.

B. Qualifications of Elders. The members of the Board of Elders will be spiritually mature men who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and who have been selected according to the appropriate procedures. A man must have been a member of the Gateway Bible Church for a period of one year to be considered as an Elder (except for the initial Elders).

C. Term of Office. The Elders shall be active members of the church who are mature Christians. They shall be affirmed by the congregation for terms of three (3) years unless otherwise specified at the time of affirmation. A serving Elder may be retained for up to an additional year, based on the needs of the church. If the Elders decide to retain a serving Elder, they will announce this to the congregation prior to the end of the initial term.

D. Selection. The scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit calls men to the office of Elder (Acts 20:28). The following procedure has been established for the Gateway Bible Church to identify and recognize the work of the Holy Spirit.

(1) Prompting of the Holy Spirit. Each year men who feel the Holy Spirit leading them to the work of an Elder will offer their name to the current Board of Elders as possible candidates for this position. The prompting of these candidates may come from the Holy Spirit in many forms including encouragement from the members of the Body.

(2) Counseling and Instruction. The current Elders will offer counsel and instruction to these men concerning the Biblical qualifications of an elder as well as the ministry responsibilities of an Elder at Gateway Bible Church.

(3) Presentation of Candidates. Those men who have completed the counseling and instruction by the Elders and aspire to the office of Elder (1 Timothy 3:1) will be presented to the members as candidates.

(4) Congregational Comment. The members will each be given an opportunity to comment on the qualifications of each candidate in light of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 by completing a Good Report Ballot. This ballot will be a form to be filled out by the members relating any positive, negative, or constructive comments regarding the candidate. The members will have two weeks to complete these Good Report Ballots and turn them in to the Board of Elders. Only signed ballots will be used by the Board for purposes of their review. All information on the Good Report Ballot will be limited to the Elders, the member submitting the ballot, and the candidate. The name of the person submitting the ballot will not be revealed to the candidate without permission of the person submitting the ballot. Any comments not affirming a candidate will be examined by the Elders. If the Elders feel there is a possible cause for disqualification, they will interview the candidate concerned. A candidate will be disqualified only if the proper evidence has been presented and substantiated (2 Corinthians 13:1).

(5) Vote of Affirmation. They shall be affirmed by a vote of affirmation by the Body in an expression of their support.

E. Presentation of New Elders. All men affirmed through this process will be presented to the Body as new Elders.

F. Organization, Meetings and Quorum. At the first meeting of the Board of Elders after the annual congregational meeting, the Elders shall elect from their number a Chairman, a Secretary and other officers they deem appropriate. They may also appoint such committees as are necessary for the effectual oversight of the activities of the church. The regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be at least monthly at such time and place as the Board may determine. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Board, or a majority of the Elders. Notice of a regular or special meeting of the

Board shall be given from the pulpit, in the bulletin, or by telephone at least one day prior to the meeting. A majority of all Board members shall constitute a quorum for the Board, and the acts of a Board unless otherwise specifically required by the law or by this Constitution and Bylaws.

G. Responsibilities. The Elders shall comprise the ruling Body of the church and shall have the power and authority to act on behalf of the church except as limited below in section (H). It shall be the duty of the Elders to care for the church in its spiritual condition, to the word of God. The Elders shall be responsible for examining all who seek membership in the church. They shall act for the church in the acceptance and dismissal of members and shall maintain an active membership roll. They shall assist the Pastor in counseling with the erring and needy, comforting and praying for the sick and afflicted, and in supplying the pulpit in his absence. They shall present the names of candidates nominated for church offices at the annual congregational meeting. They shall appoint officers and committees as may be necessary. They shall inform the congregation of all major decisions made in their meetings.

H. Limitations. The Board of Elders shall not assume any of the following prerogatives without express congregational consent:

- (1) To amend this Constitution and Bylaws.
- (2) To call or dismiss a Pastor or Pastoral Staff Member
- (3) To purchase, sell or mortgage real property.
- (4) To make purchases or incur any expense beyond those allowed by the annual budget.
- (5) To adopt an annual budget.
- (6) To adopt any home or foreign missionary for regular monthly support or alter the amount of regular support given to any missionary of the church.
- (7) To infringe upon any other right reserved to the congregation by civil law or by the Articles of this Constitution and Bylaws.

I. Termination. The office of Elder shall be considered vacant when any one of the following occurs:

- (1) Death.
- (2) Resignation
- (3) Absence from three (3) consecutive business meetings of the Board without an excuse which is accepted by a vote of the Board at a duly called meeting of the Board of Elders.

(4) Removal by a vote of the Board at a duly called meeting of the Board of Elders if *he*:

(a) Shows himself by person or attitude to be disturbing the purity, peace or unity of the church or has admitted to changing his views regarding the Statement of Faith or fails to live in harmony with the standards expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the church.

(b) Refuses to fulfill the responsibilities designated in this Constitution and Bylaws.

2. Deacons

Gateway Bible Church has grown to sufficient size that it is needful of the service of members to be appointed to the role of deacons, the definition of the role of deacon and requirements for this office shall be established by the Board of Elders.

3. Church Treasurer

The Board of Elders, at its first meeting of the fiscal year, shall elect from its membership, a member of the Body who will serve as church treasurer. This person, with the assistance and oversight of the Board of Elders, shall oversee the payment of all bills that have been duly authorized, keep a full account of all monies received and paid out, and submit written monthly, quarterly and annual reports to the ministry councils on the financial condition of the church.

ARTICLE VII

CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

A. Congregational Meetings

1. The Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting of the church shall be held. The agenda for this meeting shall include:

- * The presentation of the budget by the Board of Elders (except for the initial budget which shall be submitted by the Steering Committee) for congregational approval.
- * The presentation of candidates for Elder and Deacon by the Board of Elders for congregational affirmation.
- * Such other business as may properly come before the congregation.

2. Special Congregational Meetings. Special congregational meetings may be called at any time at the request of the Pastor, the Board of Elders, or at the written request, addressed to the Board of Elders, of not less than twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership of the church. Announcement of any special business meeting shall be given from the pulpit or in the bulletin on two (2) consecutive Sundays and notice of the time, place, and purpose of said meeting shall be announced in like manner.

B. Quorum and Conduct of Business

1. A quorum for the transaction of business at all congregational meetings shall not be required. An eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast shall prevail unless the vote of a greater number is required by law or by this Constitution and Bylaws.

2. Absentee Ballots. A member who wishes to participate in a congregational business meeting, but is unable to attend, may request an absentee ballot. This request must be in writing, signed by the member and received in the church office prior to the meeting being called to order. The number of ballots requested will be supplied to the chair before the meeting. Only if the vote on any matter considered by the meeting is sufficiently close that the absentee ballots could mathematically affect the result, will the absentee ballots be issued. In this case, the vote results will not be announced until the absentee ballot process is completed. Ballots will be mailed as soon as possible after the meeting. Completed and signed absentee ballots must be received in the church office within 14 days of the meeting in order to be considered. Ballots will be opened and tallied as they are received, and the results made public as soon as mathematically settled.

3. In all congregational business meetings, the chairman of the Board of Elders, or someone to be appointed by the Elders, shall preside.

4. In the transaction of business, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII

PASTOR

A. Selection

In the event of a vacancy in the pastorate of this church, the Board of Elders shall appoint a Pulpit Committee of not less than three (3) or more than five (5) people, representative of the whole congregation, to arrange for pulpit supply in each regular service and to investigate prospective candidates for the pastorate. The candidate of their choice for the pastorate shall be a man of satisfactory theological training, high moral reputation, and evident spiritual discernment and gifts, who [is or will] subscribes without reservation to the Statement of Faith, the Constitution, and the Bylaws of the church. After being interviewed by the Board of Elders and recommended to the congregation by them, the Pastor shall be elected by an eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast at a special congregational meeting duly called and constituted for the express purpose of considering such a recommendation. Only one candidate shall be

considered at any one meeting.

B. Termination

It shall be the prerogative of the Pastor to dissolve the pastoral relationship by giving two months' notice of such intention, or less if mutually agreed. Likewise, the church may initiate termination of the pastoral relationship by calling a special congregational meeting to consider the question. Such a meeting shall be called by an eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast at a duly constituted meeting of the Board of Elders, or by a petition submitted to the Board of Elders signed by not less than twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership. An eighty percent (80%) majority of the vote cast at that congregational meeting shall be sufficient to cause termination. In this latter case, the Pastor shall be entitled to one month's salary after the state of termination set by the congregation.

C. Duties and Privileges

The Pastor shall function as one of the Elders (he becomes both Elder and member upon election) and with them shall oversee the spiritual welfare of the church, teach the Word, and otherwise be responsible for the regular services of the church, oversee the administration of the ordinances, and exercise watchful care for the spiritual needs of the congregation. His counsel and advice shall be considered by the officers of the church and in all the ministries of the church. He shall be authorized to perform marriages and conduct funerals.

ARTICLE IX PAID MINISTRY POSITIONS

In addition to the position of Pastor, other paid ministry positions may be established according to the needs of the Body. When this need has been recognized by or presented to the Elders, it is their duty to evaluate and determine whether a paid ministry position needs to be established. It is the responsibility of the Elders to create a job description for any new ministry position being considered.

Any person chosen to fill a ministry position with Gateway Bible Church should have a high moral reputation and evident spiritual discernment and gifts, who subscribes, without reservation, to the Statement of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws of the church. He may aspire to serve as Elder on the same basis as a congregational member.

A. Selection

It will be the responsibility of the Elders to appoint a search committee of not less than three (3) or more than five (5) members to seek a person of suitable qualifications to fill any new or vacant ministry position. After being interviewed by the Board of Elders and recommended to the congregation by them, a candidate shall be elected by an eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast at a special congregational meeting duly called and constituted for the express purpose of considering such a recommendation.

B. Termination

It shall be the prerogative of any paid ministry person to dissolve his/her employment with us by giving two months' notice of such intention, or less if mutually agreed. Likewise, the church may initiate termination of a paid ministry person in the same manner as Pastor. (See Article VIII, B)

C. Vacancy

In the event that a paid ministry position becomes vacant, the Elders will reevaluate the position and, if it is determined to still be a legitimate need of the body, they are to appoint a search committee which will seek a person to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE X

LICENSURE AND ORDINATION

This church may exercise the power to license and ordain ministers. When the congregation shall vote at the recommendation of the Board of Elders to ordain any individual, the Board of Elders shall call an Ordination Council who shall examine the candidate as to his call to the Christian ministry, gifts, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, and doctrinal beliefs.

This church shall ordain only those who can fully accept the doctrinal standards of the church without question or reservation. It shall be within the power of the Board of Elders to revoke the ordination credentials of any person found guilty of doctrinal heresy or immoral conduct.

A minister disciplined under this provision shall have right of appeal to the congregation within sixty days.

ARTICLE XII

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

A. This church is organized exclusively for charitable religious and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), including for such purposes, the making of distribution to organizations under Section 501 (c) (3).

B. No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, Trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the church shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Law.

C. Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

D. If there are excess funds at the end of a fiscal year, the Ministry Council of Stewardship shall recommend, for approval by the congregation, how those funds be disbursed.

ARTICLE XIII

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

A. This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended in the following manner:

1. Bylaws. The Bylaws may be amended by the vote of any duly constituted congregational meeting of the church.

2. Constitution Articles V and following. These articles may be amended by an eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast at any annual or regular or special congregational meeting provided the proposed amendment has been published in the bulletin and read to the congregation from the pulpit on at least two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.

3. Constitution Articles I through IV. These articles may be amended by two successive actions of eighty percent (80%) majority of votes cast at two separate congregational meetings separated by at least six months. The proposed amendment must be published in the

bulletin and read to the congregation from the pulpit on at least the two Sundays preceding the date of each meeting.

ARTICLE XIV

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

Every five years or sooner, if the Elders deem it necessary, a committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders to study and if necessary, revise this Constitution. The Committee shall present the revised Constitution to the congregation for their review and adoption in accordance with the procedures of Article XIII hereof.

BYLAWS

Section I Definition, Scope, Purpose and Authority

A. Definition

A bylaw is a policy or procedure to guide the way things are done in carrying out the ministry tasks of the ~~Burke Community~~ Gateway Bible Church.

B. Scope

In order for a concern to be addressed by a bylaw, it should be of significant importance and affect a significant portion of the ministry activity of the church.

C. Purpose

The purpose of the bylaws is to provide a level of consistency and continuity to the church's functioning.

D. Authority

1. Provisions of the bylaws shall have the same weight and authority for governing church activities as any other provision of this Constitution.

2. If any provision of these bylaws is determined to be in conflict with any provision of the Articles of this Constitution, the Constitutional provision will prevail.

Section II Amendment

This is addressed in Article XIII, Section A of the Constitution.

Section III Organization

Section IV contains the body of bylaws and has lettered subsections specifying which portion of the church's ministry is being addressed. The application of a bylaw will be limited to the subsection under which it is listed. The subsection must be specified at the time a bylaw is enacted. New subsections may be added as needed.

Section IV The Bylaws

A. Congregational Meetings

1. The first item of business at any congregational meeting will be for the chair to appoint a clerk who will record the minutes for that meeting. These minutes will be presented to the church secretary no later than seventy-two hours after the meeting. After transcription, the minutes will be submitted to the Board of Elders for approval. An archive of approved minutes will be maintained in the church office. Additionally, an index of actions of the congregational meetings along with the date will be maintained.

A. The minimum content of the minutes of congregational meetings shall be:

The date, time and place of the meeting

The name of the person presiding

The name of the clerk appointed

The text of each motion (including the index caption) brought before the meeting along with the name of the member bringing the motion and the one seconding.

The vote and disposition of each motion
The subject of any matters tabled for later consideration